NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA

THESIS

THE INNER COLD WAR: STATE PARTY CONTROL AND EAST GERMAN SOCIETY

by

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June 2014

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.

1. AGENCY USE ONLY *(Leave blank)*	2. REPORT DATE June 2014	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's Thesis	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE THE INNER COLD WAR: STATE PARTY CONTROL AND EAST GERMAN SOCIETY		5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Nicholas A. Willet			
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING /MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A		10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	

11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government. IRB protocol number ____N/A____.

12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited	12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE A

13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)

The twentieth century suffered from deep ideological conflict linked to the epoch of total war and the divided character of the international political economy, punctuated by a struggle between Eastern and Western ideas, communism versus liberal democracy. To the surprise of many, this struggle culminated with the complete collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in 1989, symbolized by the tearing down of the Berlin Wall between the German Democratic Republic (GDR or East Germany) and Federal Republic of Germany (FRG or West Germany). However, the end of the Cold War shed little light on how the so-called second world held itself together for nearly a half-century.

This thesis examines the forces and logic that sustained East Germany as a sovereign state in the Soviet bloc from 1945–1949 to 1989. The research is framed partly as a historical narrative of the GDR and partly as a historical analysis of the state's collapse. This thesis proves how the party, secret police, army, and church permitted East Germans to exercise citizenship within the constructed mass organizations of the GDR, and how the interplay between the party and social institutions in East Germany first sustained, then subverted the totalitarian order.

14. SUBJECT TERMS German Democratic Republic, East Germany, Federal Republic of Germany, West Germany, GDR, DDR, FRG, Stasi, SED, Church, NVA, Ministry of State Security, MfS, Soviet Union, education, Honecker, communism, Lenin, Marx	15. NUMBER OF PAGES 97
	16. PRICE CODE

17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UU

NSN 7540-01-280-5500

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 2-89)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. 239-18

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THE INNER COLD WAR: STATE PARTY CONTROL AND EAST GERMAN SOCIETY

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN SECURITY STUDIES
(EUROPE AND EURASIA)**

from the

**NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
June 2014**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ADGB   Allgemeiner Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (General German Trade Union Federation)

CDU   Christian Democratic Union

DDR   Deutsche Demokratische Republik (German Democratic Republic)

FDGB   Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (Free German Trade Union Federation)

FDJ   Freie Deutsche Jugend (Free German Youth)

FRG   Federal Republic of Germany

GDR   German Democratic Republic

GST   Gesellschaft für Sport und Technik (Society for Sport and Technology)

IM   Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter (unofficial informant)

KGB   Komitet gosudarstvennoy bezopasnosti

KPD   Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (Communist Party of Germany)

MfS   Ministerium für Staatssicherheit (Stasi)

MVD   Ministerstvo Vnutrennikh Del (Ministry of the Interior of the Russian Federation)

NVA   Nationale Volksarmee (East German Army)

SBZ   Sowjetische Besatzungszone (Soviet Zone of Occupation)

SED   Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (Socialist Unity Party)

SMAD   Sowjetische Militäradministration in Deutschland (Soviet Military Administration of Germany)

SVAG   *Sovetskaia Voennaia Administratsia v Germanii* (Soviet Military Administration of Germany)

USSR   Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to take the opportunity to thank Dr. Carolyn Halladay and Dr. Donald Abenheim for taking me under their wings and giving me the necessary guidance to accomplish this work. It has been an honor and a privilege to work with such highly influential professionals who always put the needs of the students above their own. Their commitment always has, and always will be, a commitment to the intellectual development of military officers that will go forth to proudly extoll the virtues of the Naval Postgraduate School and its impact on this nation. It has been an extremely humbling experience to work with these consummate professionals, and I sincerely thank them both.

I would also like to thank my wife, who held down the home front while I was working to complete academic goals that I never thought I would achieve. Your dedication to our family has been awesome these last 18 months. To my three children, who did not always understand why I continually had to go to school on the weekends, thanks for being bright eyed and truly happy to see me when I came home.

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I.   INTRODUCTION

The twentieth century suffered from deep ideological conflict linked to the epoch of total war and the divided character of the international political economy. This process resulted in two ideological poles that dominated, especially Europe, for nearly 50 years following the end of the Second World War, punctuated by a struggle between Eastern and Western ideas, communism versus liberal democracy. To the surprise of many in the East and West, this struggle culminated with the complete collapse of communism in Eastern Europe, symbolized by the tearing down of the Berlin Wall between the German Democratic Republic (GDR or East Germany) and Federal Republic of Germany (FRG or West Germany) in November of 1989.

Scholars, historians, and experts of, and in, the East did not anticipated the speed, and in East Germany's case the peaceful nature, of the revolutions throughout the Eastern bloc that heralded the end of the Soviet system. Contemporaneous studies, books, and analysis emerged amid abundant and many times contradictory to the West's preponderant assumptions of the East. With the fall of East Germany now a quarter century in the past, a more accurate and less ideologically laden analysis can be made of the character of power, state, citizenship and ideology in state and society of the GDR.

A.   MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTION

The life of an East German citizen from 1949 until 1990 was defined by a more or less complete and total usurpation by the Stalinist party state that sought to eradicate the lines between private citizenry and proud party participant. The citizen of the GDR was coopted in many ways to participate within the party, the Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (SED), through apparatus of the Ministerium für Staatssicherheit (MfS or Stasi) and compulsory service within the Nationale Volksarmee (NVA); no personal social outlet—no private sphere, in the Toquevillean sense—existed as might have been the case in the Western democracies, with the circumscribed but absolutely vital exception of the church, grudgingly accepted by the powers-that-were. This thesis asks: How did the SED, Stasi, Volksarmee, and church in the GDR permit East Germans to

exercise citizenship within the construct of the GDR, and how did the interplay between the four predominant social institutions in East Germany first sustain and then subvert the totalitarian order in which they operated?

B.   IMPORTANCE

The dissolution of the GDR and reassembly with West Germany into a single Germany attracted little sustained attention by the United States because of rising tensions within the Middle East, the Soviet thaw, and the wider dissolution of the Eastern Bloc during the late 1980s and 1990s. For example, the National Security Strategy of 1988 was dominated by objectives geared toward the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, whereas the National Security Strategy of 1993 changed the tone and focused on transitioning countries, such as the Middle East and South Asia. Many of the lessons that could have been gleaned from the reorganization of half a continent were not realized.

Mary Fulbrook, quoting Max Weber, notes "that it is both in principle possible, and indeed the historian's distinctive task, to seek to understand the world-views of others, and to explore the consequences of people's perceptions, beliefs, and values for their actions, under the given historical circumstance in which they find themselves."[1] In other words, we must look beyond the obvious, institutionalized repression of the East German system to explain why and how it held together for four decades. Fulbrook continues: "[W]hat is required is an understanding of the complexities, the shades of grey, the moral choices within given circumstances, that people had to face in the most curious historical conditions."[2] This observation is just as relevant today as it was during the Cold War. Reorganizations of countries, such as Africa and the Middle Eastern regime changes are not going away. While the lessons are not direct links, the analysis of how a regime can coopt a society and bend the will of the people has some merit.

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[1] Mary Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship: Inside the GDR, 1949–1989* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), vi.

[2] Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, x.

C.   PROBLEMS AND HYPOTHESES

The GDR was an artificial regime with heavy Soviet influence, and from the outset, the SED was alienated from and suspicious of the population over which it presided. After all, while the future East Germans had spent World War II variously embroiled in the Nazi regime, which, among other things, was dedicated to the eradication of communism—and communists. David Childs explains: "By July 1952, the SED leadership was enough out of touch with reality to proclaim…that the GDR was embarking on 'building socialism.'"[3] The SED intensified its effort to institutionalize the class struggle within the GDR, which further alienated its citizens and caused many to flee to the West before the border was secured. This exodus, in turn, deepened the chasm between party and citizen, which was problematic with the mixed message of the centrality and importance of the workers and peasants to the ideology of Marxism-Leninism. Still, even after the 1953 workers' uprisings throughout the GDR, the basic idea coming from East Berlin was that the population would be won over to the socialist cause through the achievements of the new East German state—but the party-state coupled this aspiration with repressive policies and practices to enforce social conformity.[4]

Somewhere in the process, the people were supposed to form some kind of evolved attachment to a state that desperately sought a unique identity as it was rebuilding in the aftermath of the Second World War. The GDR brought to this problem a totalitarian regime with the organs of state that functioned with the efficiency of the former Nazi regime's Gestapo coupled with the invasiveness of the Soviet societal norms. The state artificially and effectively assimilated each citizen through the varying state apparatus and provided a framework of existence through coercion and cooption into the mythology of East German society. All acts and omissions were, by definition, political and, therefore, subject to direction and surveillance by the state. As a consequence, the conventional forms and expressions of citizenship—military service or

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[3] David Childs, *The GDR: Moscow's German Ally*, 2nd ed. (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), 27.

[4] Hans-Joachim Maaz, *Behind the Wall: The Inner Life of Communist Germany* (New York: WW Norton, 1995).

political engagement—came to mean something else, namely state coercion, deprivation of personal liberties, or rigid conformity to an often shifting ideal of the "socialist personality."

Only the church provided one of the few outlets with any legitimacy of protection from the state—and that, only gradually. Otherwise, people came to accommodate the intrusions of the party state into their lives and the manipulations of the state security machine. And eventually, some basis for citizenship formed and flourished. One hypothesis holds that East German citizenship developed as it did in spite of the repression and coercion. An alternate hypothesis—not necessarily exclusive of the first—is that the totalitarian aspects of the GDR did, in fact, encourage citizenship. Either way, the problem, from East Berlin's perspective at least, was that in 1988 and 1989, millions of these East German citizens rejected the SED's rule, if not the East German state.

D.   LITERATURE REVIEW

1.   East German Exceptionalism within the Eastern Bloc

The East German system was unique from its Eastern Bloc counterparts. Christian Joppke illustrates in East German dissidents and the Revolution of 1989 how the GDR was exceptional among a series of states, which were not considered sovereign, but more as "Soviet replica regimes,"[5] possessing all of the attributes of a successful Soviet cooption. He continues to explain that without a national foundation, "East Germany was nothing but a Leninist regime, and socialism was elevated to a quasi-national, state- and society-defining ideology."[6] Joppke explains how it was difficult to manufacture dissent among the citizenry with no nationalistic ties and where, as he explains, "the one who did not comply with the socialist creed had to appear as a 'traitor.'"[7] If a significant portion of society subscribed to socialist ideology, then it would be difficult to break the mold and show discontent with the establishment. The communists' rejection of Nazism and

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[5] Christian Joppke, *East German Dissidents and the Revolution of 1989: Social Movement in a Leninist Regime* (Washington Square, NY: New York University Press, 1995), 28.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., 29.

Fascism was a catalyst for solidarity by providing a morally palpable ideology rather than the region's amoral Nazi predecessors. Joppke explains two opposition movements that were gaining momentum within the GDR. One movement wanted to reform the GDR's communism into a successful system, and the other movement consisted of dissidents who wanted to vacate the GDR. The GDR's response was to deport the proponents of reform and keep the people who wanted to leave, causing a dangerous ideological combination within the state.[8]

2. Methodology of Control

Coopting society was integral to the East German regime. The youth, which Mary Fulbrook defines as from birth to young adulthood in the East German regime, is an important aspect of programming societal norms. Hans-Joachim Maaz explains in Behind the Wall that internally to East Germany, there existed "a banal but very effective system of behavioral conditioning consisting of reward and punishment were used in the total subjugation of a people."[9] He continues to explain: "The means of exerting pressure—existentially, psychologically, and morally—were so comprehensive that they had to seriously affect most people"[10] breeding a system that required total conformity, where any type of spontaneity would be met with stiff resistance. The consequences of either conformity or spontaneity would be dire at best. The unpredictability of youth can be a dangerous element in an unpopular society, however, the East Germans attempted to answer the question of their volatility. Every institution that the GDR youth could participate in was up for state control. The East German model felt that "it was necessary also to instill in young people from their earliest years the sense of belonging to a larger community, having wider responsibilities for a collective future."[11] Fulbrook accurately explains that "on the appropriate education and training of young people rests the future

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[8] Joppke, *East German Dissidents*, 28–31, 56, 69–70.

[9] Maaz, *Behind the Wall*, 8.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Mary Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005), 115.

of any modern state; all advanced industrial states rely on the fostering and development of relevant technical expertise and an enhanced capacity for flexibility and innovation."[12]

The GDR manufactured groups that the youth could be a part of, such as the Freie Deutsche Jugend (Free German Youth or FDJ), Pioneer association, and the Unified Socialist Education System, to indoctrinate the population at the youngest possible age. The SED was highly effective in using the duality of education for political complicity through indoctrination and providing a highly skilled workforce to modernize and rebuild the eastern realm. In 1947, Edith Bauman succinctly described the goal of total control as the head of the FDJ in Alan Nothnagle's *Building the East German Myth* when she says:

> Let us combine the political open-mindedness and youthful combat readiness, which has survived from the Burschenschaften to the Communist Youth organization, with the nature loving life of the Wandervogel groups, and the Christian tolerance of the confessional organizations, into a unified, free youth organization encompassing all of German youth.[13]

Nothnagle explains this as the "'transmission belt' between the Party and the younger generation," which would lead to many future leaders of East Germany into the upper strata of party apparatus by creating strong bonds as early and as pervasively as possible.[14] From cradle to grave, the SED attempted to scientifically engender a socialist personality of its citizens. Carolyn Höfig's dissertation explains, "By the end of the socialist republic, every man, woman, and child in the GDR was organized 3.2 times in parties, groups, organizations, and clubs."[15] The all-encompassing, absolute nature that the GDR undertook via social engagement is illustrated across much of the historical literature.[16]

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[12] Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 120.

[13] Alan L. Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth: Historical Mythology and Youth Propaganda in the German Democratic Republic, 1945–1989* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 13.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Carolyn C. Höfig, "'Organized Cheerfulness:' A Regional Study of Popular Culture and Identity in the German Democratic Republic" (PhD dissertation, University of California, Santa Cruz), 3.

[16] Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 120–121.

The church presented a problem to the SED, which officially embraced Soviet-style atheism. However, religion, particularly Lutheranism, retained its cultural meaning as well as its spiritual connections to many East Germans, and as the SED began to tolerate some aspects of German society that predated socialism, the church found a small but secure toehold. Fulbrook discusses the difficulty of the state to mesh the secular values of the party with the resonant religious values of the citizenry. She describes the state's attempt to resuscitate "an older secular ceremony for youth, the *Jugendweihe*, in 1954."[17] Fulbrook continues to explain that even though the party resurrected an established tradition, this tradition was still in potential conflict with a citizen's religious beliefs. Religious defiance occurred between the state and the church when pastors refused to give religious burials to anyone who had taken part in *Jugendweihe*. She continues to explain that there was a rise in "religiously rooted dissent in schools."[18] She attributes some of the religious dissent of the 1960s as "part of a wider pattern of developments characteristic of the in part religiously influenced growth of grass-roots political activism in the 1980s."[19]

Peter Grothe's book, *To Win the Minds of Men*, describes the dissent of the church and explains that "any study of counter-communist propaganda is incomplete without examining the role of the Christian community in East Germany."[20] Where Fulbrook had the luxury of dissecting the past as a historian, Grothe wrote his interpretation of the struggle between Christianity and communist atheism in 1958, but even then, this observer-participant was prophetic in accurately identifying an integral player in the struggle for freedom. Grothe describes the role of Bishop Dibelius, from his continued friction between the party and the church, as well as how he was no stranger to church friction. Dibelius worked on behalf of the protestant church under the Nazi's and, up until his death, against the SED. The party sought to invade and exterminate every aspect of religion within East Germany, although freedom of religion was allowed under the

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[17] Ibid., 123.

[18] Ibid., 124.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Peter Grothe, *To Win the Minds of Men: The Story of the Communist Propaganda War in East Germany* (Palo Alto, CA: Pacific Books, 1958), 213.

GDR's constitution. Fulbrook's analysis on the role of religion is buttressed by authors such as Grothe when he explains that "if the Communists are to change the consciousness of the East German People, they must reckon with the massive roadblock of Christianity,"[21] because to erase the deeply held ideological belief that is religion proved much more difficult than the SED thought. The pushing and pulling between the state and the church left the youth between two ideologies and would take 20 years of incubation until that generation would more openly question state control.[22]

3. The Nationale Volksarmee as the Basis of a National Identity

Why did the Nationale Volksarmee fail to create, instill, and perpetuate an East German identity, with its corresponding mythology, in similar ways that were successful in Prussia, Nazi Germany, nineteenth-century France, or the twentieth-century United States? According to Morris Janowitz:

> the contributions of the military to political modernization... are not only economic; the military also serves as an agent of social change. At a minimum, this implies that the army becomes a device for developing a sense of identity—a social psychological element of national unity.[23]

He continues to say that this is especially important when a nation is a former colony or if it possesses a diverse ethnic background. This was not the case in East Germany; however, the SED leadership felt that it was important to use the military as a nationally unifying force for the new country. According to Gose's dissertation, "the Soviet and East German leadership made conscious on going decisions to use the military in creating new political and cultural identities, as well as for reinforcing the legitimacy of the new communist regime on a national level."[24] The academic understanding of the utilization of the NVA to generate a new East German identity existed; however, the

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[21] Grothe, *To Win the Minds of Men*, 224.

[22] Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 115–140; Grothe, *To Win the Minds of Men*, 212–224.

[23] Morris Janowitz, *The Military in the Political Development of New Nations: An Essay in Comparative Analysis* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), 80.

[24] Mark N. Gose, "The Role of the Military in Building Political Community: The Case of the Two German States" (PhD dissertation, University of Colorado, 1995), 104.

implementation of the new identity failed to take root for various reasons that Gose points out and is alluded to through the description of the psychology of East German citizens.[25]

Peter Grothe's description of the party leadership in 1958 described the SED as being isolated from its citizens. This isolation would be pervasive throughout the duration of the regime and extend to any state apparatus, such as the military, where an average citizen would mentally exclude any citizen working for the state, as the embodiment of the state. Only during the Vietnam War, did an overwhelming portion of the private citizenry in the United States view the soldier as an extension of the state, rather than as a representation of American idealism and values imbued within the soldier. Every other time in American history, the private sector of society viewed the American soldier as representing themselves and American values as a citizen soldier. This was not necessarily the case in the East German epoch. Gose illustrates the heavy handedness by the SED to infiltrate the soldier into society through pairing of military units with "schools, local governments, and factories in so-called 'patron relationships.'"[26] The logic of the SED was that increased presence directly correlated to increased influence, however, this did not necessarily reflect the feelings of society by its disconnected nature.

E.   METHODS AND SOURCES

The primary literature covers a historical analysis of the unique, if stylized, East German civic narrative, as well as through, but not restricted to, the following additional works: *Building the East German Myth*,[27] *German Democratic Republic*,[28] and *Behind the Wall: The Inner Life of Communist Germany*.[29] In this aspect, the proposed research will employ the methods of contemporary history, an approach that applies historical analysis to events of the recent past and even the present.

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[25] Janowitz, *Military in the Political Development*, 80–82; Gose, "Role of the Military in Building Political Community," 100–106.

[26] Gose, "Role of the Military in Building Political Community," 110.

[27] Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth*.

[28] Mike Dennis, *German Democratic Republic: Politics, Economics, and Society* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1988).

[29] Maaz, *Behind the Wall*.

It also will borrow some concepts and frameworks from the subfield of "domination and self-definition" (Herrschaft und Eigen-Sinn), which, in the case of the GDR, "focuses on the 'changing reciprocal relationship between the dictatorial leadership … and the manifold ways … in which the people dealt with it.'"[30] Thus, other source material will examine everyday life as derived from texts about the SED, Stasi, and church written during the East German regime, as well as texts that focus on a contemporary post-communist historical analysis since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 through the following additional titles: *The Stasi;*[31] *Stasi: Shield and Sword of the Party*;[32] *Origins of a Spontaneous Revolution;*[33] *Germany East: Dissent and Opposition,*[34] "Collective Identity and Informal Groups in Revolutionary Mobilization: East Germany in 1989,"[35] and "Dissident Groups, Personal Networks, and Spontaneous Cooperation: The East German Revolution of 1989."[36]

F.   THESIS OVERVIEW

This thesis is organized into six chapters. The failure of the East German regime cannot be parsimoniously summed up into a few faults or flaws in its implementation of control. The chapters will provide a broad framework to incorporate a range of characteristics of the East German regime in order to frame the narrative in a way to show how each component of the GDR worked in concert. Chapter I will serve as the introduction and detail the appropriate questions to be answered. Chapter II will historically frame the idea of East German exceptionalism among the Soviet Bloc

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[30] Höfig, "'Organized Cheerfulness,'" 9.

[31] David Childs and Richard J. Popplewell, *The Stasi: The East German Intelligence and Security Service* (New York: New York University Press, 1996).

[32] John Christian Schmeidel, *Stasi: Shield and Sword of the Party* (London: Routledge, 2007).

[33] Karl-Dieter Opp, Peter Voss and Christiane Gern, *Origins of a Spontaneous Revolution: East Germany, 1989* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1995).

[34] Bruce Allen, *Germany East: Dissent and Opposition* (rev ed.) (Cheektowaga, NY: Black Rose Books, 1991).

[35] Steven Pfaff, "Collective Identity and Informal Groups in Revolutionary Mobilization: East Germany in 1989," *Social Forces* 75, no. 1 (1996): 91–117.

[36] Karl-Dieter Opp and Christiane Gern, "Dissident Groups, Personal Networks, and Spontaneous Cooperation: The East German Revolution of 1989," *American Sociological Review* 58, no. 5 (Oct. 1993): 659–680.

satellite states and show how the previous Nazi regime set the Soviet Union up for successful cooption of society. Chapter III will historically frame how the SED amalgamated key aspects of society—from the intellectuals, education of its citizens, and mass organizations—to the political. Chapter IV will discuss the methodology of control by the SED, focusing on the Stasi as the primary player and agent of control, as well as, the seeming impenetrability of the church. Chapter V analyzes how the SED recognized the importance of the Volksarmee as an agent of national unity and how it failed to provide that service throughout its history. Chapter VI will connect the comprehensive nature of total control of GDR citizenry and explain its ultimate failure as a state with dissent within and through the church as the primary actor.

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II.   FROM NAZIS TO EAST GERMANS

The East German case of Soviet cooptation is unique because East Germany's domestic situation allowed the Soviet Union to graft its communist ideology and methodology of control onto former Nazi Germany, at least in its own zone of occupation. The preconditions under which this transformation took place are important in order to make sense of the extreme methods of control at the height of the GDR.

Moscow's first challenge in German territory was overcoming the intellectual and emotional legacy of the war—in which the Nazi side pledged the complete annihilation of all things Soviet. To mitigate any remnant anti-bolshevism, Stalin employed the "Moscow" German communists, who had spent the Nazi years in exile in the Soviet Union. They provided the German face of Marxism-Leninism in the Soviet Zone of occupation—while remaining absolutely loyal not just to the Soviet Union but to Stalin, in particular.

A.   CONDITIONS FOR REFORM

As Nazism was in its final throes, David Childs explains, the Germans observed the Allies invading from both directions, wresting control of the Fatherland from the Nazis. Only then "most of them soon recognized the true face of National Socialism and turned to other values."[37] At the end of the war with the total collapse of the Third Reich, any narrative sounded better to the German population than National Socialism, which had brought so much destruction and misery. At the same time, the German population was accustomed to a highly structured environment, which Hitler used as a way to organize, mobilize, and weaponize the masses. The incoming regime in the Soviet Zone of Occupation (SBZ) would take advantage of this desire for order in the wake of the war.[38]

To be sure, few Germans were in the market for more ideology. Against the backdrop of acute devastation within the Soviet Zone, the German society was shattered

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[37] Childs, *The GDR*, 3.

[38] Ibid., 2–4.

and existed at the edges of the basic levels of survival, where "not utopian hopes" as described by Fulbrook, "but everyday fears and struggles for physical and psychological survival"[39] dominated the day-to-day psyche of Germans. The Communists knew it—and used the circumstances to their advantage. As Anton Ackerman, a member of the Ulbricht team who returned to Germany even before the war officially ended to stake the Communist claim, recalled:

> What we met was a people in agony. That is the truth. They were paralysed by the poison of despair equally weighed down by the traumatic experience of nightly air raids and the other horrors of war, the carefully nurtured fear of bolshevism and the awareness of their shared responsibility for the fate that had befallen Germany.[40]

The fact of the occupation also contributed to the spirit of the times. Childs notes that "some Germans were just too terrified, especially of the Red Army, to do anything other than obey their new masters."[41] The battle would be uphill because of the long-standing fear of bolshevism and distaste for the Russian occupants within eastern Germany, however, through careful political rhetoric that would change.[42]

Marxism-Leninism, propagated by the Moscow German communists, presented itself as a powerful path to peace. Ulbricht's Party rhetoric at the same time linked Western powers and Nazism together as the collective enemy to peace and reconstruction. Nothnagle describes how the communists seized on this situation for the creation of an "anti-fascist myth" or what he terms as "ex post facto antifascism,"[43] conceived as an extension of capitalism, the prime ideological foe of communism. The future argued for communism in Germany, according to the new leadership in the SBZ.[44]

So did the past, it turned out. The Nazi regime that preceded the GDR set the stage for a Marxist interpretation of a post-war German state and, with a minor

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[39] Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 29.

[40] Dennis, *German Democratic Republic*, 1.

[41] Childs, *The GDR*, 3.

[42] Dennis, *German Democratic Republic*, 1–3; Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 29; Childs, *The GDR*, 3.

[43] Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth*, 94.

[44] Dennis, *German Democratic Republic*, 11–17; Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth*, 93–100.

rebranding of German history, fit within the aims of the returning communist party. On the one hand, the connection to the past was negative: Nazi malfeasance led to the allied invasion of Germany and all the destruction that went with it. Because the National Socialists always stood opposed to organized labor and the socialist-inflected parties, however, the communists could, on the other hand, connect the SBZ/GDR to the "progressive" aspects of German history.[45] Mike Dennis writes that the manufactured narrative of the incoming communists held that "the GDR depicts itself as the culmination and embodiment of the long history of the German labour movement."[46]At last, with the coming of the Moscow German communists, at least a part of Germany was poised to realize the promise as the birthplace of Marx and Engels and a former shining light of socialist activism.[47]

Many of the prominent communists in Germany during the war either fled Germany or were interred by the Nazis. The return of these men offered legitimacy to communism's cause by highlighting their imprisonment and struggles during the war. This allowed the communists to quickly insert the narrative that, as Childs explains, "represent the KPD as the only political party to have defended the interests of the workers, resisted militarism and imperialism and to have waged the struggle against fascism with determination and from an early date."[48] However, Fulbrook notes that the efforts of these men were "conducted from the relative safety of Stalin's Soviet Union."[49] Their stay in the Soviet Union allowed for a closer relationship to their communist brethren when rebuilding the state. Corey Ross's position on the new German communist leader's interpretation of Soviet intervention is in conflict with the feeling of German society. The German communists attempted to construct a new historical narrative positing that "the Soviets were seen as crucial to the establishment of the GDR, any

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[45] Dennis, *German Democratic Republic*, 3–17.

[46] Ibid., 2.

[47] Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth*, 93–100; Dennis, *German Democratic Republic*, 1–3, 7–10.

[48] Dennis, *German Democratic Republic*, 8.

[49] Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 24.

notions of 'imperialism' or outright 'dependence' were emphatically rejected."[50] The official narrative that gained wide acceptance was that "the creators of the GDR were German communists,"[51] which was essential due to German distrust and contempt for the Soviets. It additionally provided legitimacy and the needed veil of sovereignty over German territory, rather than the common perception of Soviet control.[52]

By manufacturing the mythology of a workers' struggle, GDR historians addressed the actions of a significant number of KPD members. Continuity of a struggle was paramount to their case so they could overcome the ubiquitous feeling of increasing Sovietization. Nothnagle's interpretation is that the KPD members, Pieck, Ulbricht, and Honecker, who fled to Moscow adopted the legacy of antifascists under Nazi rule as "a moral imperative" to direct "the struggle against both the FRG and opposition within the GDR," emphasizing "a direct continuation of the antifascist resistance struggle."[53] Nothnagle also concedes that antifascist sentiments among the communists were not always clear through their actions during the war, however, the German communists' rhetoric accentuated their struggle against the Nazis. Nothnagle claims that a bipolar relationship existed where "the Communists wavered in their policies toward the National Socialists and alternately fought them and cooperated with them in their mutual struggle to overthrow the Weimar Republic."[54]

Nothnagle notes that a coherent political position for or against National Socialism stemmed from the German communists' confusion regarding National Socialist platforms in the early 1920s. The interaction between the two groups was not as black and white as the relationship between National Socialism and Judaism illustrated by the actions of communists interred in the concentration camps during the war. Nothnagle describes how "communist inmates systematically collaborated with the SS in

[50] Corey Ross, *The East German Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of the GDR* (London: Arnold, 2002), 152.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Dennis, *German Democratic Republic*, 8–9; Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 24; Ross, *The East German Dictatorship*, 152.

[53] Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth*, 94.

[54] Ibid., 97.

order to save the lives of their comrades."[55] Whether this was done for self-preservation or the preservation of the party is up for debate, however, the collusion with the Nazis in order to obtain preferential treatment, as well as avoid eventual extermination, is undisputable. In an effort to overshadow unfavorable elements of history, the communists emphasized Marx's inevitable class struggle and simultaneously downplayed the role of their willing assistance in the prison camps. The necessary invention of a communist "'us'" versus a capitalist "'them'" mantra helped create an ideologically tangible and contrastable duo.[56]

The communists carefully constructed a Marxist-Engelsian interpretation of German history, positing Nazism and fascism as the ultimate stage of capitalist development before an impending proletarian revolution. As Dennis writes, "according to GDR accounts, national socialism is not an accident in German history but an intrinsic product of capitalism."[57] Thus, the incoming leadership provided a path-dependent chronology of how the GDR should be constructed and eventually function in the future if it wanted to achieve full communism, while avoiding a reversion into fascism or even any of the dangerous tendencies that might allow fascism to bloom again. Highlighting the impending (and ever-present) encroachment of fascism invoked an external historical threat during postwar reconstruction; the GDR leadership's consistently insisted that "capitalism in the Federal Republic can still serve as an incubator of fascism."[58] The physical condition of the Soviet Zone and the desperate state of the German people set the ideological battlefield between the East's communism and the West's capitalism—and, in the event that the West seemed to pull ahead materially (which was not always so

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[55] Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth*, 99.

[56] Mike Dennis and Norman Laporte, *The Stasi: Myth and Reality; Themes in Modern German History* (London: Pearson Longman, 2003), 19–20; Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth*, 94–99; Dennis, *German Democratic Republic*, 3–6.

[57] Dennis, *German Democratic Republic*, 3.

[58] Ibid.

evident until well into the 1960s), the East had its ideological superiority. The only precondition was accepting the Soviet Union as a mentor state in the indeterminate transformation.[59]

B.   CHANGE IN COURSE FROM ANTI-BOLSHEVISM TO TRUSTED SOVIET AGENT

Mary Fulbrook describes the German sentiment of Soviet control:

> The replacement of Nazi dictatorship by a communist dictatorship—with a very different ideology and in principle far more humanistic set of goals, yet with a comparable disregard for individual human rights and liberal notions of freedom—was for many Germans a traumatic experience.[60]

She acknowledges that this explanation of German society applied variously among the different sectors of society, and in some cases the adjustment to communism was "class-specific, and highly variable according to political and moral standpoints."[61] Jochen Laufer explains the dismantling of the German state in the Soviet Zone, administered by the Soviet Military Administration called the SMAD or SVAG, as "an instrument aimed at weakening the German grande bourgeoisie."[62] He continues that the majority of the population was opposed to the Soviet dismantling of Germany because "[they] saw their own existence threatened by the drastic measures employed,"[63] which is a natural response when a new regime attempts to redistribute and reorder society. Additionally, the German people were determining how to come to grips with the long-term effects of this new order as well. Laufer notes that "the 'antifascist democratic transformation' of society promoted by the SVAG and the SED led to conditions in the SBZ that were increasingly similar to those of other states within the Soviet sphere of

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[59] Childs, *The GDR*, 20–25; Dennis, *German Democratic Republic*, 17.

[60] Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 4.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Jochen Laufer, "From Dismantling to Currency Reform: External Origins of the Dictatorship, 1943–1948," in *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, trans. Eve Duffy, ed. Konrad Hugo Jarausch (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999), 84.

[63] Ibid.

influence."[64] The next logical step of analysis would lead to the conclusion that the Soviets executed a coherent policy in all of their satellite states, but this was not necessarily the case.[65]

The Soviets worked through the process of controlling and coercing the differing Eastern Bloc states, more by feel than strategic grand design. Ross concedes that a coherent Soviet policy toward Germany did not exist in the way it was portrayed by the West. He concluded that many of the Soviet goals were contradictory and erratic. Even through the explanation by official documents that were discovered in the East German archives from 1990 to 1991, little light was shed on the coherency of policy toward a positioning of a unified or divided Germany in the eyes of the Soviets.[66]

C.   THE SED'S COALESCENCE INTO A DOMINANT POLITICAL FORCE

The method for how to reorganize society lay in the German desire for a high degree of organization. The SED's answer was through political apparati that were in the process of being built in concert with the rest of the infrastructure within the SBZ. In the SED's view, all mass organizations are inherently political, and these mass organizations would become the primary transmission belt between the party and the people. The first hurdle was to create a strong central political party whose message could be promulgated as a single voice, and this streamlining of the political required the consolidation of political parties in order to assert control. The SED became the primary organ and had its origins within a loosely aligned set of bodies that promoted communist ideologies.

The SED was composed of the convenient marriage between the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) and the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD). The two parties were at odds with each other and from "1929 onward SPD and KPD usually faced each other as bitter enemies."[67] Dennis notes that as the threat of fascism grew, the two groups could no longer effectively oppose each other, while effectively fighting against

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[64] Ibid., 85.

[65] Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 33; Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 4, 29; Laufer, "From Dismantling to Currency Reform," 74–78, 85.

[66] Ross, *The East German Dictatorship*, 159–165.

[67] Dennis, *German Democratic Republic*, 10.

the Nazis. This provided a platform where "in 1936 and at the 'Berne' conference in 1939, it proposed a broad alliance with other antifascist groups culminating in a democratic people's republic,"[68] which had reverberating effects in the post war political arena. This was a major step in cementing the alliance and would "provide an element of legitimacy to the attempt to implement an antifascist democratic revolution."[69] In the end, the Nazis were unknowingly instrumental in aligning these political parties during the Third Reich, which gave them immense power after the war. Anti-fascist galvanization occurred while the non-NSDAP parties were excised from Germany during the war, many ending up in the USSR.[70]

The KPD's leadership's expulsion during the Second World War allowed for a closer relationship to emerge between them and the Soviets. Part of this relationship was through Stalin's purges, as he would have allowed only the Germans who were most ideologically devoted to communism to remain. Nothnagle explains that "by 1945 the majority of German Communist party members had been liquidated by either the Nazis or the Soviets."[71] The few who were left standing, among them Walter Ulbricht, Anton Ackermann, and Gustav Sobottka, were the devoted few that lasted through a period of ideologically personal turmoil in Europe where either the Nazis denounced their affinity for communism, or the Soviets viewed their German nationality as suspect. Through their stay in the Soviet Union during the war were they able to achieve legitimacy as they aided the Soviet Union against the Wehrmacht during the war through the framework of the National Committee for a Free Germany and the Association of German Officers located in Moscow. Their primary role consisted of translating propaganda for the purpose of converting Wehrmacht POWs in the Soviet Union that provided leverage for the USSR and legitimacy for the German communists in Stalin's eyes.[72]

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[68] Dennis, *German Democratic Republic*, 11.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 32, 58, 132; Dennis, *German Democratic Republic*, 10–11.

[71] Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth*, 4.

[72] Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 22–24, 36, 403; Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 29–30; Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth*, 3–4.

Even after the German "Moscow Communists" returned to Germany, the Soviets and German communists continued to enjoy and nurture close relations with their Soviet handlers during reconstruction. Bruce Allen affirms that the erection of the East German state "commenced with the arrival of the Red Army together with the émigré leadership of the German Communist Party."[73]

If, then, the path to legitimacy lay with the restoration of basic services, the communists were able to achieve all of the above with the help of the Soviet Military Administration. Allen states that "from the outset the KPD's émigré leadership, functioning under Soviet guidance, started to emerge as the leading social and political force in the Soviet occupied zone."[74] The three main groups that facilitated this were the Ulbricht group, the Ackermann Group, and the Sobottka Group. These groups attached themselves to Berlin, Saxony, and Mecklenburg respectively and were the only groups the Soviets allowed. Their task was to win over the population within their specified areas through propaganda that denounced Nazism, militarism, and racism. Although they were not, at this point, to create an overwhelming communist appearance, they also were sent with explicit instructions to thwart the advent of any truly independent political organizations. They were to grow their movement quietly from within the Soviet Zone in order to change the German sentiments toward Soviet authority and communism. The personnel office that would select and register party officials was to be staffed by "a comrade who in the last few years has worked as an anti-Fascist functionary outside Germany,"[75] leaving only a very reliable few able to serve.[76]

The KPD was not the sole party within the Soviet zone at this time, but it was a predominant party, along with the SPD. The political leadership campaigned for a reversal of policy regarding the German dissatisfaction with the Soviets and disgust for bolshevism in order to facilitate a rapid transition in sentiment toward their post war ally. Dennis also explains that according to Rölf Badstübner, "in 1945 the Soviet Union did

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[73] Allen, *Germany East*, 19.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Childs, *The GDR*, 5.

[76] Allen, *Germany East*, 19–20; Childs, *The GDR*, 4–5.

not wish to impose its own system on the Zone nor to export revolution."[77] Ross shares Naimark's opinion in the argument that "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,"[78] to which he further explains that it was "as much a matter of mentality and social instincts as of articulated policies."[79] This is not to say that the creation of the East German state was a total accident, but more of a continual reaction to unfolding events at the time rather than through the concept of a planned strategic end state crafted by either the Soviets or the German communists.[80]

In a society that yearned for organization, the idea of a desired end state was needed to strengthen the communist mandate, and was thus incorporated into SED narrative to facilitate the inevitability of class struggle. A separate eastern sector of Germany was not the intended political end state for the Soviets, which Dennis posits with "the surprisingly early recognition of political parties, before their authorization in the Western zones, was determined by SMAD's wish to influence the development of political parties throughout the whole of Germany."[81] The Soviets allowed, along with the SPD and KPD, the establishment of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDPD), all of which would form the core of the anti-fascist movement as a reaction to Germany's involvement with Nazism. During this period of restoration, Dennis points out that the KPD enjoyed preferential treatment from the Soviets, which caused some resentment among the other parties. This promoted the merging of political entities into the SED, in order to consolidate power and influence in the Soviet Zone. The renaming of the party to the Socialist Unity Party could also be portrayed as a way to reduce tensions with the West's increasing skepticism of communism. The poor election results in Austria and Hungary hastened the political fusion of the KPD and the SPD into the SED. The merger also provided a way to take

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[77] Dennis, *German Democratic Republic*, 13.

[78] Ross, *The East German Dictatorship*, 163.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Allen, *Germany East*, 19–20; Dennis, *German Democratic Republic*, 13; Ross, *The East German Dictatorship*, 159–165; Childs, *The GDR*, 4–5.

[81] Dennis, *German Democratic Republic*, 14.

advantage of the KPD's preferential treatment by the Soviets, but led to fundamental ideological creep that sought more cooperation with Moscow.[82]

For the rest of the existence of the GDR, the SED was able to play against Ross's two distinct factors. Ross describes how "the GDR had something distinctly 'German' about it that set it apart from other communist states. From Moscow's perspective (as well as East Berlin's) this aspect of the GDR wanted careful refocusing: on its unique relationship with its West German rival state and its attempts to deal with the Nazi past."[83]

Throughout the existence of the GDR, the opposition state of a capitalist Federal Republic simply lay on the other side of the border, a constant a thorn in the GDR's side, as the permeation of Western influence was a continual threat. East Germany was the only Eastern Bloc country that possessed an ethnic twin to which comparisons could also be drawn. The state was constantly unable to fill its utopian promise to its citizens, which caused growing resentment that could only be quelled using the herd mentality of SED sponsored mass organizations.[84] Although they were devout in their belief that communism would overtake capitalism, it was too dangerous for the Party, according to Nothnagle, to "let the younger generation experience the shortcomings of capitalism as practiced in the Federal Republic and West Berlin without letting them experience the benefits as well."[85] The state understood the impact of consumer goods in relation to its Western counterparts with the June 1953 uprising. According to Fulbrook, one of the main lessons learned was that the state needed to attend to the consumer needs of its citizens by making it a top priority.[86] Although consumer socialism grew with goods that the state provided, it never kept pace with Western standards. While the SED's rhetoric was constantly deriding the fascist and capitalist nature of its twin state, the fruits of the GDR's command economy did not overtake the West.

[82] Ibid., 4, 8, 15, 17.

[83] Ross, *The East German Dictatorship*, 168.

[84] Ross, *The East German Dictatorship*, 168; Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 42–44; Maaz, *Behind the Wall*, 3–10; Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth*, 1–12.

[85] Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth*, 5.

[86] Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 42.

In contrast, Nazism was a complex psychological problem for the SED to overcome. The Third Reich had espoused highly polemic racist views as one of its major platforms. Maaz explains that the SED's purging and denazifying of society provided a blanket to cover up the past where "the vast majority of Germans … had been enthusiastic activists or had at least been willing followers."[87] Almost from the beginning, denazification—as a way to zeroize the past—and anti-fascism—whose origins were not to be discussed—became an unquestionable mythology within the GDR. At the top were the SED functionaries who retained legitimacy in the eyes of the people for their struggle against the Nazis during the war years. The denazification of society occurred to varying degrees based on the complexity of the profession and its importance to making society function, however, the hostility and legitimacy of the SED leadership created an environment where the past was discarded regardless of profession in the newly formed environment.

D.   CONCLUSION

The German population was destroyed and shattered in the wake of the Second World War. The dispelled German communists in Moscow during the war manufactured the myth of continuity upon their return and transposed the antifascist disillusionment with the Nazi regime onto the Western zones of occupation. This juxtaposed the anti-bolshevist stance of Nazi Germany with an antifascist position and allowed for the reviled Soviets to remain behind the scenes for a fear of rekindling past hate. Devout communists with a German façade developed the SED to satiate the organizational desires of the citizens of a highly functioning state as Stalin was creating his buffer with the West. Stalin's political acumen allowed him to leave his options open, aiming for a neutral Germany under his influence, but settling for a vital ally in Marxism-Leninism.

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[87] Maaz, *Behind the Wall*, 4.

III.   ACHIEVING TOTAL CONTROL

During the transformation of the Soviet zone into the German Democratic Republic, the party-state formed that insinuated itself deeply and enduringly in the everyday lives of its citizens—making good on both the Marxist-Leninist ideal of the fully politicized "new man" and the Stalinist need for constant social monitoring and control. The only way a system like this could exist is by design. This is not to say that every aspect was planned from the outset; however, using the tools and institutions available, the party-state could coopt and/or control its citizens through carefully crafted mechanisms that thrived for nearly half a century.

Through the use of the intelligentsia, the Germans and Soviets sought to rapidly reestablish institutions that were destroyed during the war, in an effort to control and conform society to embrace the benefits of a worker's paradise and its guiding Marxist-Leninist ideology. The SED understood the impact of state education as a medium for transmitting the ideological message to the youngest citizens and exploited its pivotal role to the maximum extent. The SED redefined the educational role it played in its citizens' lives by extending its educational influence to the SED's interpretation of the socialist family. In addition to the time spent at school and with the family, the state created mass social organizations from the ground up to have a clean break with its past and infused these organizations with SED ideology so the socialist personality never had an opportunity to stray. One mass organization, outside the relative purview of the state, was the church; making a clean break with its historical past difficult while providing hazardous connections external to the SED's geographical control. The SED accurately identified the most critical elements to facilitate the subversion of society.

A.   THE AMALGAMATION OF THE OLD AND NEW INTELLIGENTSIA

The intelligentsia is unique to Eastern European political structures and the group possesses a specific function within society. That function is not in the same realm as the Western notion of intellectuals as a group, but rather the wider array of a specifically designed group with a political agenda. As Thomas Baylis notes, "The term itself is of

Russian origin; it refers to those individuals with specialized technical, scientific, and managerial skills who directly or indirectly do the brain work of the process of material production."[88] As regards the East German variety, Baylis writes:

> The technical intelligentsia in the German Democratic Republic (DDR) is an example of an infrequent but fascinating social phenomenon: a stratum consciously created by a political regime as an instrument for furthering its goals for remaking society.[89]

The SED decreed that "the new intelligentsia was to be drawn largely from the working and peasant classes and was to emerge from a greatly expanded and reformed educational system."[90] This new class would bridge the old intelligentsia with the new socialist order. This group of people provided the skeleton of infrastructure and guidance that would get the state functioning. Once the state was functioning, a methodology for the replacement of the old intelligentsia with a highly motivated cadre of true believers that were home grown within the East German state would begin to provide the meat to this skeletal system in hopes that society would organically grow. The technical intelligentsia would create a league of intelligentsia who mechanically responded to political interactions. Their influence on every day society was not as pervasive as the artistic intellectuals.[91]

The trick was finding, growing, and retaining the critical mass of people to take up the necessary positions in the party and in production. While Baylis contends that there are no exact figures, the general feeling of human capital flight, "together with the high rate of German war casualties, left East Germany with a critical shortage of trained technical personnel and with an acute gap in the age brackets from which such a deficit might most easily be filled."[92] From the vantage of 1958, Peter Grothe emphasized the perils of this brain drain, noting that "no state can lose its youth and still expect to be

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[88] Thomas A. Baylis, *The Technical Intelligentsia and the East German Elite: Legitimacy and Social Change in Mature Communism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1974), ix.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Ibid., 27.

[91] Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 77–80; Baylis, *Technical Intelligentsia and the East German Elite*, 25–27.

[92] Baylis, *Technical Intelligentsia and the East German Elite*, 24.

viable"[93] as well as that "this exodus has had a crippling effect on the DDR economy, since half of the recent refugees have been under twenty-five years old."[94] Refugees emerged from every class of citizen, but the losses in the ranks of the new intelligentsia were most devastating to the fledgling East Germany.[95]

Ulbricht and his comrades in the party and state leadership hoped that progress in reconstruction and stabilization would encourage the masses to stay in East Germany. However, nearly two decades after the end of the war, the GDR was still losing valuable people—workers, farmers, intellectuals, experts. Mary Fulbrook explains, "it was only the building of the Berlin Wall that finally put a stop to the haemorrhage."[96] Once the wall was built in August 1961, the SED could count on a reasonably stable intelligentsia—though arguably the party-state needed these figures even more acutely to form and guide the captive society.

In this connection, the artistic intellectuals became important tools of the party. They communicated to the masses according to the strictures of Socialist Realism, which was as much a political program as it was an expressive approach. Socialist realism spoke to the actualities of society at the time, displaying the workers in their own environment, while also instilling optimism about where communism would take society. Particularly in the 1950s, Socialist Realism was not merely the preferred aesthetic of the GDR leadership; it was the only acceptable form, the only style of art or literature that would receive official support or sanction.[97]

In East Germany, the linkage between art and the party served most obviously to silence all forms of dissent. It also helped neutralize a segment of society that, left to its own devices, might be or become politically unreliable. Few intellectuals would give up their access to the tools of their art, their audiences, or their exalted position in society

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[93] Grothe, *To Win the Minds of Men*, 5.

[94] Ibid.

[95] Baylis, *Technical Intelligentsia and the East German Elite*, 24–25; Grothe, *To Win the Minds of Men*, 5.

[96] Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 79.

[97] Czeslaw Milosz, *The Captive Mind*, trans. Jane Zielonko (New York: Vintage International, 1990), 223–251.

(all from the party) to engage in open criticism. It was not just that this tame "opposition" adopted the language of the "values, institutions, and individuals with whom they were in conflict."[98] They became active and willing tools of the party-state. In the end, some of the more influential artists—Heiner Müller, Christa Wolf, Sascha Anderson, and Reiner Schedlinski—cooperated with the Stasi, even as they created public personas around their own purported persecution by the authorities.

Ironically, the artistic intelligentsia usually was afforded greater freedom of movement, especially to Western nations, where they were often feted as dissidents. Such trips allowed the GDR to revoke citizenship and distance the SED from dissidents if they did not continue to tow the party line, as in the case of Wolf Biermann's exile in 1976. By the 1980s, however, East Germany's prominent artists and writers—unlike their counterparts in Czechoslovakia and Poland—were thoroughly embedded in the party-state apparatus.[99]

B.   EDUCATION: BUILDING THE SOCIALIST PERSONALITY

Such drastic punitive measures as Biermann's expatriation or the lesser repressions that kept the artists in line were only part of the East German approach. In order to get true believers among the technicians and the artisans, the SED had to create a comprehensive system of educating the population so that everyone functioned for the good of the party.[100] Communists as far back as Marx understood that education was an important vehicle to grow their ideological base. As Grothe puts it, "any communist will say straightway that it is unthinkable that an education system can exist without a primary political mission."[101] The East German leaders thus knew that they had to infuse communist ideology at every level; however, they knew the true value could not be realized for generations, particularly because they had to overcome the legacy of Nazi socialization and a less-than-triumphant switch to socialism. Dorothee Wierling explains

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[98] David Bathrick, *The Powers of Speech: The Politics of Culture in the GDR* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 24.

[99] Ibid., 24, 27–28.

[100] Ibid., 24, 27–56.

[101] Grothe, *To Win the Minds of Men*, 165.

that "it was the whole population, every citizen of the GDR, which appeared in need of education, if only because they had not fought for socialism in a revolution, and it had been imposed on them by military force and repressive politics."[102] The communists, Soviet and German, also understood the malleability of young minds and the role that education could and would play to further their cause. Grothe quotes Gerhart Eisler when he "pounded his fist on the table as he told [Grothe], 'The hope of our Republic lies in the youth. We can not expect the older ones to change their ways, but the youth, they must be convinced of the superiority of Communism.'"[103] Grothe continues to assert that educational indoctrination system within the DDR was "the most strategic propaganda operation."[104]

Much in the same way that industry reopened in a landscape of destruction quickly after the war, education was also quickly reinstituted in the Soviet Zone. Childs gives credit to the opening of schools on the first day of October 1945 as "this must have represented a considerable achievement on the part of the Soviet administration and their German helpers."[105] Grothe, writing from the contemporary perspective, said: "[O]ne has the feeling, as one views East German education, that students are being produced in the same sense that war materiel are produced."[106]

The educational system was extremely important in building the East German state from the ground up ideologically speaking, so the system went through a series of reforms from the time education started after the war through the 1950s. Fulbrook explains that "the 1946 Law for the Democratisation of German Schools was the first step in a process of removing the influence of both religion and of inherited wealth and privilege from schools."[107] This system was reorganized a few times through the 1950s,

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[102] Dorothee Wierling, "The Hitler Youth Generation in the GDR: Insecurities, Ambitions and Dilemmas," in *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, trans. Eve Duffy, ed. Konrad Hugo Jarausch (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999), 318.

[103] Grothe, *To Win the Minds of Men*, 164.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Childs, *The GDR*, 168.

[106] Grothe, *To Win the Minds of Men*, 165.

[107] Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 121.

developing special cases of children with aptitudes in areas that were outside the normal scope of school with the Law on the Unified Socialist Education System of 1965 under Margot Honecker. (Margot Honecker was the wife of the future leader of the GDR, Erich Honecker, and would maintain the office of Minister of Education until the fall of the GDR in 1989.)

The ideological root of Honecker's educational reforms centered on what she called *Erziehung zum Hass*, "education to hate." John Rodden quotes Frau Honecker: "Educating youth to a deep love of their Heimat, the German Democratic Republic, and educating them toward socialism means: to teach them to hate imperialism."[108] In order to display a love and bond with the state, hatred must be directed toward the West. Much of the curriculum under Honecker held this as a core value. The coordination of curricula within the GDR's education system consisted of an increase in NVA film propaganda as well as anti-imperialist thematic topics in the ninth and tenth grades. Since education, from the perspective of the GDR continued outside of the classroom, the Young Pioneers also advanced these same themes. Rodden explains that even the head of the Pioneers, Helga Labs, advocated to educators across the GDR that "such hatred is born out of love for our socialist Fatherland, and gives us the power to do everything possible for its defense and protection."[109] The SED had coopted TV personalities to promulgate this message of hate toward the West and even went so far as to invoke passages from the bible to justify this mindset of hatred. With Frau Honecker at the helm of education, Fulbrook explains that this system "provided a unified structure and philosophy of education running more or less from infancy to senility,"[110] coopting every single person with a blueprint of their educational life in the state's pursuit of the development of the total socialist personality.

The East German education system had significant advantages over the West's, specifically in technical curricula, but lacked a lot of the soft sciences that were deemed politically unstable, or generally unneeded by the SED. These shortcomings are extolled

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[108] John Rodden, "Creating 'Textbook Reds,'" *Society* 42, no. 1 (2004), 77.

[109] Ibid., 78.

[110] Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 121.

by Fulbrook in her critiques of the educational system in the GDR. She asserts that because the soft sciences existed outside the technical nature of the society that the SED aimed to create, "many accounts see the GDR education system almost entirely in terms of 'breaking one's backbone,' or as an 'educational dictatorship.'"[111] Regimented learning can only produce so much for the greater good if orthogonal modes of thinking, as deemed by the state, are stamped out of the youth.[112]

C.   THE SOCIALIST FAMILY

The East German focus was not on forming well-rounded individuals through education but on creating a politicized and obedient society. Thus, education—or, better, didactics—suffused all aspects of the GDR. Mary Fulbrook states, "there was to be no area of society uncontrolled by the state, the organization of which was the penetration even to the most basic, fundamental level of society."[113] The concept was that no person existed as an individual, but rather as a segment of the bigger picture to push forward communism within East Germany. All work, education, free time, and leisure activities were either closely controlled or monitored by the government. Furthermore, "parents had a duty to bring their children up to become loyal, obedient, committed subjects of the communist state."[114]

In a twofold attack on dissent, the communists needed to absorb the children into the appropriate state ideology as early as possible, as well as get the mothers, who would traditionally rear children until school age, into the work force. SED propaganda fostered the notion that production would fall short if women remain an untapped resource method of production, and this also allowed the state a legitimate excuse to insert themselves into the traditional role of a parental unit. From an educational perspective, East German-trained psychologist Joachim Maaz writes, "the goal of state education can

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[111] Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 123.

[112] Rodden, "Creating 'Textbook Reds,'" 76–79; Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 121–123; Dennis, *German Democratic Republic*, 166; Franz Von Nesselrode, *Germany's Other Half: A Journalist's Appraisal of East Germany* (London: Abelard-Schuman, 1963), 120.

[113] Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 19.

[114] Ibid.

be summed up as follows: to inhibit individuality and break the individual's will" to which "this principle was carried out relentlessly at all levels of public education."[115] Parents went along with the strict rules regarding child rearing, such as potty training and displays of affection because the state helped with behavior modification, especially with the absenteeism of the women.[116]

To be different, or stand out among the highly conformist society within East Germany would spell certain doom for the individual causing increased scrutiny on the family. Maaz cites, "most women (83.2 percent of the able-bodied female population) had jobs, an indication of the success of government propaganda in convincing mothers that their role lay in the workplace, not at home with their children."[117] The narrative that accompanied women in the workforce to achieve full production potential was not unfounded. The spike in women's work force participation was partly caused by the loss of male life during the Second World War, as well as the population migration west, so every able-bodied person needed to contribute to the new East German society in order for it to function.

Once the idea that women should be working spread, thereby putting the children within the state's sphere of influence during large time blocks during the workday, the communist indoctrination could begin. Dennis cites the importance of turning over children in the GDR so both parents could pursue work, causing, "in 1985, 72.7 percent of all children aged 0–3 attended a crèche and 89.9 percent aged 3–6, a kindergarten."[118] Fulbrook explains that society's needs to get the workforce mobilized aided in the childcare requirements that were provided by the state. The SED manufactured a certain symbiosis between meeting production needs and providing the social-welfare network to meet parental concerns. No excuse was available to parents for opting out of work, unless a family wanted to highlight themselves as different and therefore non-conformist in the

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[115] Maaz, *Behind the Wall*, 21.

[116] Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 19; Maaz, *Behind the Wall*, 21.

[117] Maaz, *Behind the Wall*, 22.

[118] Dennis, *German Democratic Republic*, 167.

eyes of the government. This furthers Maaz's assertion that the effects of a socialist upbringing can be observed because SED influence was imposed on children from the earliest age conceivable for indoctrination.[119]

Ross raises the question: "Is there any point in talking about East German 'society' as a realm more or less distinct from 'politics'?"[120] Because the lines are blurred to a level that was even avoided by East Germany itself in the analysis of its citizens, this makes the problem of parsing them a problematic endeavor. In many cases within East Germany, society and politics could not be decoupled, and if they were forcibly or naturally decoupled, this would provide a seam to express dissent. School-mandated education was linked with businesses to facilitate a transition for the individuals to enter the workforce once the minimum schooling was completed. This connection also provided a cognitive association between school curricula and the overall understanding of how education fed into the state system of production for the whole of society.

D.   THE GDR'S INVASION INTO SOCIAL SPHERES

The SED sought to place itself at the interstices of state and society through the use of mass organizations in order to maximize the infiltration of the private realm. In order to quell dissidence among the citizens, all mass organizations within the GDR were fashioned and organized to advocate SED ideals, or at least create a reasonable façade through repeated profession of the anti-fascist and anti-Nazi mythology. The German psyche lent itself to these social organizations causing a citizens' greatest fear to be ostracism within a country where you could not vote with his or her feet after 1961, and many, before the establishment of the wall, simply would not pick up and move. Maaz asserts, "in this system only those who conformed could remain unmolested."[121] The

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[119] Maaz, *Behind the Wall*, 22; Dennis, *German Democratic Republic*, 167; Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 148–154.

[120] Ross, *The East German Dictatorship*, 46.

[121] Maaz, *Behind the Wall*, 10.

psychological drive for organization of the people allowed for the efficacy of the mass organizations to flourish within the GDR further allowing the transmission of party values.[122]

The mass organizations that became primary sources of party ideology were the Society for German-Soviet Friendship League (Deutsch-Sowjetische Freundschaft or DSF), the Free German Trade Union Federation (Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund or FDGB), and the FDJ—of which the Young Pioneers were a subsidiary. Höfig elucidates the use of "giant associations that the SED created to bring socialist society to the people, to create the collective, to bring ideology to the public and to connect citizens to the system in manifold ways for stability's sake."[123] Höfig asserts that these state institutions "replaced the independent organization of civil society and served to bind individual citizens to the official order."[124] These mass organizations would break down the spheres of private life and blend it with the political reality, merging them into a single sphere.[125]

1.   German-Soviet Friendship League

The German-Soviet Friendship League (DSF) was an organization whose mission was to expose the German population to Soviet culture; however, the Soviets later used it as a primary vehicle for transmitting propaganda. The reception of this organization and the mass involvement of many citizens of the GDR can be explained through the lens of the post-war political landscape. Many older citizens felt that volunteering to participate in this mass organization somehow absolved them of their past involvement with the Third Reich, and for the younger generation, it was something that they just accepted as part of their everyday existence and its process of socialization within the GDR. The DSF boasted one of the largest memberships of any of the mass organizations, especially

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[122] Ross, *The East German Dictatorship*, 168; Maaz, *Behind the Wall*, 3–10; Nothnagle, *Building the East German Myth*, 1–12.

[123] Höfig, "'Organized Cheerfulness,'" 45.

[124] Ibid.

[125] Ibid., 45–47.

toward the end of the GDR, which is seemingly at odds with the dislike shared between Germans and Soviets.[126] Formal membership, if not enthusiastic participation, was socially expected by the 1980s, at the latest.

2. The All-Union Union

The political base in any communist country is the worker, and the way in which the SED organized its working population would be through a trade union, the All-Union Union (FDGB). This was an extension of the ADGB of the Weimar period, according to Childs, which had significant membership and was viewed as the premier trade union during that time.[127] Fulbrook explains that this body encompassed the proletariat of East Germany, "which in the late 1980s boasted a membership of 9.6 million people—virtually the entire adult population of the GDR."[128] This level of conformity did not exist anywhere else, whether it was the product of compulsion or true faith, the state had penetrated every level of society within the GDR. Grothe accurately observes in 1958 that the intangibles of propaganda and how they needed translation into an achievable goal where "it is the FDGB, a tool of the government rather than a trade union representing the workers, that belabors this point."[129]

The duality of function existed in the FDGB where it acted as a political promulgator of propaganda and as a way to gather people together for political monitoring. The FDGB was a group where the worker's active participation ended when exiting the factory. This was a group who required participation, or at least the perception of participation, outside of the work environment in the form of rallies and mandatory union meetings. The Party's aim was to allow no free time for the West to entice the workers.

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126 Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 61, 85, 131; Höfig, "'Organized Cheerfulness,'" 46–47.

127 Childs, *The GDR*, 8.

128 Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 59.

129 Grothe, *To Win the Minds of Men*, 55.

3.   The Youth Organizations

The extracurricular activities for children also needed to be accounted for.[130] Outside of school, children have immense amounts of time for play and primarily social activities. The state created ways to occupy children's time through participation in state sponsored activities such as the FDJ or the Young Pioneers, so less time could be taken up seeking or enjoying Western influences. Fulbrook claims that between two thirds and four fifths of the FDJ eligible age group participated in the group and further cites that "although membership was not compulsory, the penalties for conspicuous nonconformity were a consideration for those with serious career aspirations."[131]

Dennis points out that "the socialization of children and young people is not envisaged as the prerogative of parents but as a cooperative effort between parents, school and state organizations such as the Thälmann Pioneers and the Free German Youth."[132] Everything that children were involved in centered around the ideas of socialism and how to protect the state ideology and "material rewards in the form of scholarships and jobs [were] available in return for demonstrations of political loyalty, such as FDJ membership, even though much of this activity [was] frequently superficial and ritualistic."[133] Under Honecker's organization of the FDJ in 1946, Fulbrook explains that "the FDJ played a major role in the political indoctrination of young people, in cadre selection and leadership training: it also sought to cater for the leisure interests of youth, and held overall responsibility for the organization for younger children,"[134] Ernst Thälmann's Young Pioneers. An additional feature to providing a platform for disseminating state propaganda, it also provided the ability to keep an eye out for possible dissent throughout a citizen's life.[135]

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[130] Childs, *The GDR*, 8; Grothe, *To Win the Minds of Men*, 55; Höfig, "'Organized Cheerfulness,'" 45; Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 59.

[131] Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 128.

[132] Dennis, *German Democratic Republic*, 64.

[133] Ibid., 66.

[134] Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 60.

[135] Ross, *The East German Dictatorship*, 44–53.

Multiple avenues existed for the state to approach the East German youth. The indoctrination was as innocuous as simple songs and chants for little children to remember, as explained by Grothe where a six year old repeats the slogan: "Five fingers has the hand. The five-year plan brings freedom to the land."[136] Seemingly harmless, yet simple mantras that extolled the virtues of conformity and political loyalty were imported from the Soviet Union, notably "instructive tales of young children denouncing their parents for political disloyalty were the heritage of Soviet folklore taught in the USSR's Young Pioneers and its DDR equivalent, the Ernst Thälmann Pioneers."[137] Children primarily exist within the social sphere of society, and for the GDR to usurp the privilege of raising the children from their parents nearly impossible to de-program in the few moments a day parents had with their children. Parents could only do so much, even if they dared to challenge the conventional propaganda of the state for fear of being turned over as subversive.[138]

Dennis explains that "Honecker's SED managed to keep the lid on the younger generation through a mixture of intensive political socialization, the dense network of FDJ … and other state organization."[139] The state sought to sanction the FDJ, and its ancillary branches of the Young Pioneers et al., as the only officially recognized youth organization within the GDR and fought unsuccessfully to outlaw other non-state institutional forms of socialization, such as the church. Fulbrook asserts that the "FDJ was there not only to socialize and educate the rising generation, but also to provide a training ground and selection stadium for future leadership positions."[140] It was an official incubator for the next cadre of officials within the GDR. Coopting the time of the adults and the children through carefully crafted state institutions was critical to the

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[136] Grothe, *To Win the Minds of Men*, 165.

[137] Schmeidel, *Stasi: Shield and Sword of the Party*, 95.

[138] Dennis and Laporte, *The Stasi: Myth and Reality*, 160; Schmeidel, *Stasi: Shield and Sword of the Party*, 94–96; Grothe, *To Win the Minds of Men*, 164–171.

[139] Dennis and Laporte, *The Stasi: Myth and Reality*, 161.

[140] Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 127.

success for the longevity of the regime. The state needed to address the status of the church, as one of the only holdovers from the old regime that remained, and its relationship with society.[141]

E.   THE CAREFUL BALANCE OF THE CHURCH

Because the church existed as one of the few non-state institutions within the GDR, and possessed relative autonomy with ties to churches beyond the GDR's borders (either with the Vatican or the Federal Republic's protestant churches), it had the potential to provide significant problems while coexisting within framework of the SED's communist ideology. The church presented a unique problem for the SED because of various barriers presented by the church, as well as barriers inherent in the communist party line. Robert Goeckel explains that "it is necessary to understand the structures and beliefs of both church and state that affect their respective self-definitions and their policies toward each other."[142] Even Grothe illustrates opposition between the two as noteworthy in 1958 when he explains, "communism is not only an opponent of Christianity, but it is a religious opponent,"[143] which illustrated that the church provided a recognized barrier to the regime from the earliest periods.[144]

It was a historical threat because, "as in West Germany, the churches were the only organization to survive Germany's defeat without interruption,"[145] according to Childs. The church provided a continuity dilemma, even in the wake of extensive denazification in almost every other sector that occurred, in the SED's attempts to form a clean break with the past. This caused a push pull effect with periods of increasing and decreasing state sanctions and pressures placed on the church as the SED was determining the best tack to minimize subversive behavior. Overt tactics that were

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[141] Dennis and Laporte, *The Stasi: Myth and Reality*, 160–163; Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 127–130.

[142] Robert F. Goeckel, *The Lutheran Church and the East German State: Political Conflict and Change Under Ulbricht and Honecker* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 13.

[143] Grothe, *To Win the Minds of Men*, 213.

[144] Goeckel, *Lutheran Church and the East German State*, 13; Grothe, *To Win the Minds of Men*, 212–214.

[145] Childs, *The GDR*, 46.

employed by the SED to influence other sectors of society did not work with the church.[146] For example, as a way to bridge the gap between the youth organizations into communist adulthood, the state introduced the Jugendweihe, "the state's secular alternative to the Church's confirmation ceremony."[147] The Jugendweihe served as way for those coming of age to profess to the community their commitment to socialist ideology.

The SED could not simply replace the religiously trained leaders of the church; in the same way it could not replace doctors. Nor could the slow pace of time be used to change the church leadership with highly trained believers of SED ideology since the communist party line was inherently atheistic. True believers of communism and socialism would be unable to penetrate the church, an institution that required just as much ideological devotion. At best, they needed to cooperate with each other through mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities, and as Grothe explains prophetically in 1958, "if the communists are to change the consciousness of the East German people, they must reckon with the massive roadblock of Christianity."[148]

As a state sanctioned alternative, the *Jugendweihe* was a secular response to the church's coming of age ceremony, which the church deemed the Jugendweihe "incompatible with Christian teachings,"[149] and denounced it, since it stressed an atheistic world-view by those who participated. The church realized that the harsh stance against the secular ceremony, in an environment where non-conformity was met with increased scrutiny, was not worth pressing the issue, as explained by Fulbrook:

> The masses after all had to live in the real world, and to find their own forms of compromise with the prevailing political conditions; and a continued adamant stance on the part of the church leadership might ultimately have led to the Volkskirche finding itself without a Volk.[150]

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[146] Goeckel, *Lutheran Church and the East German State*, 13–16; Grothe, *To Win the Minds of Men*, 212–214; Childs, *The GDR*, 46–48.

[147] Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 95.

[148] Grothe, *To Win the Minds of Men*, 224.

[149] Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 101.

[150] Ibid.

The church would reach an agreement with the SED in 1978 and come to a relative truce. Goeckel exerts that this era would mark a time when the church viewed itself having latitude, "given increasing political dissent and disaffection, the church served as both an umbrella for the expression of oppositional views and a channel for and domesticator of such views."[151] This subtle change in the already contentious church state relationship provided leeway for one of the few state-allowed institutions a shielded avenue for a GDR citizen to express dissent and personal thoughts outside the sanctioned purview of the SED. This was one of the biggest fears of the SED, as explained by their turbulent relationship.[152]

F.   CONCLUSION

The SED accurately identified critical centers of gravity that would hinder the conformity and homogenization of thought within the state. The creation of mass organizations for society to participate was critical to accomplishing this mission against the backdrop of war destruction and East German society's desire for a return to normalcy. From a practical standpoint, the creation of these institutions served the purpose of binding the citizen closely with the state and streamlining the propaganda emanating from both Moscow and East Berlin. A precarious exception to these state created institutions would be the existence and continuity of the church with its ties extending beyond the borders of the GDR. The SED would have to create an institution loyal to the party, uniform in manner, and possess the capacity to monitor all aspects of GDR society.

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[151] Goeckel, *Lutheran Church and the East German State*, 247.

[152] Grothe, *To Win the Minds of Men*, 224; Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 97–106; Goeckel, *Lutheran Church and the East German State*, 247–250.

IV. SHIELD AND SWORD OF SOCIAL CONTROL

The Ministry of State Security (MfS or Stasi) represented itself as the shield and sword of the SED; in fact, it was the party-state's ideological enforcer, with 100,000 full-time personnel and more than twice as many "unofficial collaborators," as informants were designated, engaged in the observation and repression of society by the 1980s. At one level, the East German Secret Police were no secret; every citizen of the GDR knew about the Stasi and assumed that its agents were everywhere. At another level, few realized until after the regime collapsed just how thoroughly the Stasi permeated all human relations in East Germany in the name of ensuring absolute ideological purity.[153]

Founded in 1950—though with precedents in Germany and the Soviet Union that date back at least to the interwar period, the agency was headed for its first few years by Wilhelm Zaisser, a German communist who had previously held important if indistinct positions in the Soviet Union, including serving as a member of COMINTERN. Despite his excellent Moscow pedigree, Zaisser's tenure at the helm of the Stasi did not survive the popular uprisings of 17 June 1953. In 1957, Erich Mielke, a KPD street brawler in interwar Berlin who had served as the deputy to both Zaisser and his immediate successor in 1953, took over the agency. Mielke kept this office until he was forced out and the Stasi wrapped up in November 1989.

Mielke prided himself on being among the last true Stalinists who, like most of the East German leadership, had no use for faddish reforms, even when they came from Moscow. The Stasi never loosened its hold on East German State and society until both came apart. The former minister failed to grasp what had happened even then, proclaiming to the National Council a few days after his ouster, "I love all people" and insisting that he had done his work with the health and safety of the East German populace foremost in his mind.[154]

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[153] Childs and Popplewell, *Stasi: The East German Intelligence and Security Service*, 83–86.

[154] Jefferson Adams, "The Strange Demise of East German State Security," *International Journal of Intelligence and CounterIntelligence* 18, no. 1 (2005): 21; Childs and Popplewell, *Stasi: The East German Intelligence and Security Service*, 24–25, 33, 50–59.

The East German epoch of internal state security was highly successful. During the Third Reich, the Gestapo was an intimidating arm of the National Socialist party, and the MVD, predecessor of the KGB, was a successful organization for political state security in the Soviet Union, so the natural logical conclusion is that the two entities were more or less smashed together to form a uniquely East German element. That is an oversimplification, and, as Schmeidel points out, "despite the deservedly ferocious reputation of the Geheime Staatspolizei, or Gestapo … the number of professional employees and the population proportion of the agent network enforcing order in Nazi Germany were rather modest."[155] To be sure, some blending between Gestapo and MVD tactics did exist, so the concept of their fusion maintains some relevance:

> When [the Gestapo] did sniff out treachery, the penalty was nearly always torture and death. After the mid-1960s, this was rarely the case with Stasi, unless the miscreant was a rogue MfS officer who fled. At the height of World War II, the Gestapo and SD combined had some 6,000 employees and no more than 70,000 informers in a nation of sixty-six million in the homeland German Reich. Its proportional coverage was less than one-tenth that of the DDR, where the MfS counted 91,000 professional employees and some 174,000 informants for a population barely sixteen million in 1989.[156]

As Dennis notes, from the very beginning, security concerns within the German party and the Soviet military government helped to create an East German state that was inseparable from its internal police functions."[157] The MfS became the SED's psychological instrument of coercion, creating fear among citizens that every word, action, and even thought were up for interpretation by the state. Rather than Max Weber's theory of the state's monopoly of the legitimate use of force, the East German flavor of internal state security was disproportionately psychologically, rather than physically,

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[155] Schmeidel, *Stasi: Shield and Sword of the Party*, 26.

[156] Dennis and Laporte, *The Stasi: Myth and Reality*, 4; Schmeidel, *Stasi: Shield and Sword of the Party*, 26.

[157] Dennis and Laporte, *The Stasi: Myth and Reality*, 21.

enforced. Sabrow asserts, "The GDR could never meet any of the requirements formulated by Max Weber in his ideal types of legitimate rule."[158]

This is not to say that the Stasi did not commit physical acts of coercion. In retrospect, the only way to hold a society who dissolved so quickly and nonviolently could be explained more parsimoniously through the psychological coercion being lifted from its citizens. The level of brutality waned as the informant system grew and gradually evolved into a system with a firm basis in psychological, rather than physical, coercion. Psychological coercion can occur as long as the chains of the psychological condition exist within the individual, and in the case of the GDR, were held together by the collective group. Once these chains were broken, nearly uniformly in the case of the GDR, the citizens were able to recognize the reality within the GDR. Sabrow explains that a previous Politburo member discussed "with some astonishment about the barriers in his head, and was unable to justify why it had never occurred to him before 1989, not even when he was in the West."[159] He even cites Mielke, the head of the MfS, who asked the question, "How could it happen that we simply gave up our GDR, just like that?"[160] It was as if the hypnotic trance of East German socialism was broken and all barriers ceased to exist.[161]

A.   HOW DEEPLY DID THE STASI PENETRATE SOCIETY?

The explanation of this hypnotic trance lies in the deep penetration of the state security apparatus. Penetration can mean many different things. Not only did the Stasi want to gain access to these institutions, it also sought to influence or outright control them from within. Dennis explains, "the Stasi was first and foremost the agent of the hegemonic SED and repeatedly and unhesitatingly endorsed the party's leading role in

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[158] Martin Sabrow, "Dictatorship as Discourse: Cultural Perspectives on SED Legitimacy," in *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, trans. Eve Duffy, ed. Konrad Hugo Jarausch (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999), 196.

[159] Ibid., 195.

[160] Ibid., 195–196.

[161] Dennis and Laporte, *The Stasi: Myth and Reality*, 20–23; Sabrow, "Cultural Perspectives on SED Legitimacy," 195–197; Childs and Popplewell, *Stasi: The East German Intelligence and Security Service*, 66–69.

society, as enshrined in the GDR Constitution."[162] In order to combat subversion by the West, the Stasi was tasked with monitoring all aspects of life to ensure political uniformity and weed out any Western spies living among the population.

The SED wanted true believers and protectors of the communist faith, which required careful vetting to avoid employing former Nazis. The Stasi, particularly after Mielke took over command, wanted to expand into every heart and every mind in the GDR. The SED preferred younger personnel to fill the ranks, those too young to have been politicized by the Nazis. The denazification of the political police yielded meager results initially but expanded the force "from 601 in 1949 to 19,803 by 1962."[163] However, Childs and Popplewell explain that there was some inevitable overlap between the old Nazi regime and those available to serve the Party, for similar reasons as to the employment of the intelligentsia. The manpower simply was not available in eastern Germany's demographic landscape. Those eager to join the Stasi, did it for various reasons, but more often than not, they joined the SED's Stasi for an elevated status in the new country's hierarchy.[164]

The party-state could not employ all citizens within the Stasi, nor could the Stasi be effective if insufficiently staffed, so the system of becoming an informant began to evolve, which facilitated the shift from physical coercion to primarily psychological means. This was the most critical concept to the success of the Stasi in its efforts to penetrate everyday society. If a Stasi officer were unable to be present, then he would need to employ and deploy emissaries on his behalf to keep tabs on society. The idea of a secret informer had negative connotations, and the SED preferred ambiguity to obscure the true nature of its efforts. The term Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter (IM), translates to unofficial colleague, where "the deliberate blandness of the term IM obscures the reach and bite of a system of population surveillance without quantitative parallel in

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[162] Dennis and Laporte, *The Stasi: Myth and Reality*, 41.

[163] Childs and Popplewell, *Stasi: The East German Intelligence and Security Service*, 76.

[164] Dennis and Laporte, *The Stasi: Myth and Reality*, 41–44; Childs and Popplewell, *Stasi: The East German Intelligence and Security Service*, 76–78.

documented history, equaled if at all, by the DDR's stepmother, the Soviet Union,"[165] according to Schmeidel. Shifting from secret informant to IM minimized a contrast to the normal citizen, increased complicity with reduced stigmatization, and would aid in the efforts of societal penetration.[166]

The Stasi's delicate web of informants slowly grew throughout GDR history. As explained by Schmeidel, the 1968 *Richtlinie* "was an early hint of the ideal of *flächendecke Überwachung*, or 'comprehensive surveillance.'"[167] The IM field expanded into subspecialties that could more readily penetrate society based on qualifications that the Stasi field agent did not have, especially in the technical arena. Dennis explains the targets of the Stasi were the segment of the population that "deviated from the norm and made people susceptible to the influence of the enemy,"[168] to which he further expounds: "Among the factors identified by the Stasi as conducive to such actions and attitudes were petty bourgeois egoism and careerism, anti-social or criminal behavior and grumbling."[169] Individual behavior was the target; however, a few groups within the GDR can almost always be stereotypically categorized as more belligerent than others by the very nature of the philosophy that bands these groups together. Dennis explains the goal of MfS operations:

> The MfS dictionary summarized the goal of operational decomposition as 'splitting up, paralyzing, disorganizing and isolating hostile-negative forces in order, through preventive action, to foil, considerably reduce or stop completely hostile-negative actions and their consequences or, in a varying degree, to win them back both politically and ideologically.[170]

B.   STASI IN THE ARTS

Another persistent threat to society lay at the fringe elements of society and who fostered the type of freethinking prevalent in universities, a sector Fulbrook calls the

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[165] Schmeidel, *Stasi: Shield and Sword of the Party*, 26.

[166] Ibid., 25–30.

[167] Ibid., 30.

[168] Dennis and Laporte, *The Stasi: Myth and Reality*, 111.

[169] Ibid.

[170] Ibid., 112.

cultural intelligentsia. She explains that "autonomous artists, writers and thinkers who were not dependent on a regular income from some form of institutional employment, were far more problematic in many respects."[171] The level of economic coercion towards conformity did not exist within these circles. Many reports cite the ration of informants or collaborators with the Stasi was in the neighborhood of 1 for every 60 citizens, which ballooned to 1 for every 30 if all ancillary and previous informants were counted as having collaborated at one time or another. This was a staggering number of participants, willing or not, for a country of this size. She explains that the artists and writers were not always opposed to the state, but rather existed "with opinions ranging from the ultrasupportive to the utterly critical."[172]

In a society where conformity was expected, dissidence would not be tolerated. This prompted the Stasi to more aggressively penetrate these groups. Dennis illustrates the level of successful penetration, when he cites "for example, in 1989, 49 out of the 123 members of the executive of the Writers' Union had been or still were Stasi collaborators, and 12 out of the 19 members of the Presidium were former or current IMs."[173] The hope of temporal change of the political thoughts and complicity of the younger generation was the hope of the SED. Fulbrook's statement regarding the complicity of the masses, and desire to conform over time:

> The capacity to conform, without enquiring too closely, the capacity to live within apparently immutable parameters, is less difficult to explain than emergence of a willingness to think differently, to have the courage of one's convictions and accept the related risks and disadvantages, and to dare to mount an active challenge to the rules of the game.[174]

The SED hoped that waiting out the dissidents would help facilitate the Stasi penetration of these portions of society; however, Fulbrook's cultural intelligentsia historically existed in the parts of society that were critical to the functionality of a regimes and offered a counter-culture to the main stream. The Stasi hoped to ride out the

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[171] Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 208.

[172] Ibid.

[173] Dennis and Laporte, *The Stasi: Myth and Reality*, 117.

[174] Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 85.

storm of social change that would inevitably root out Western influence, in its eyes. The cultural sectors were understood to be the incubators of national identity and the profession of the national myth through the use of socialist realistic techniques. The Stasi towed a fine line between promoting the cultural aspects of the GDR and not letting the message ruffle the ideology of the SED. This fine line is embodied in the use of artisan infiltrators by the Stasi to help craft a pro-GDR message. This feat would be perpetrated by Sascha Anderson, a poet who "by about the middle of the [1980s] had become one of the most influential figures among the writers and the artists in the Prenzlauer Berg area."[175] Dennis writes that his main goal was "the de-politicization of this artistic community."[176] An unintended consequence of this community's use of socialist realism was the evolution of quiet dissent that they fostered and ultimately aided in the leitmotif of the GDR's non-violent collapse. Anderson's intent to reform from within never took hold as the temporal factor was removed when the GDR collapsed in 1989.[177]

C.   STASI IN THE WORKPLACE AND HIGHER EDUCATION

The Stasi monitored political activity at all levels, and the most fundamental level for GDR communism to flourish was through the production centers. The Stasi was crucial to those production centers, especially "if the product was of considerable value in terms of hard currency exports and specialist knowledge… then the saturation with Stasi informers was likely to be particularly high."[178] The minor levels of production produced shallower penetration, unless the production center presented conditions that "were particularly dangerous…then the Stasi's concern was less to address the root causes of preventable accidents and environmental pollution than to seek to ensure that knowledge of their effects did not become public."[179] Information control and being ahead of the message was a vital task to preserve the SED because, as Schmeidel illustrates, "the

[175] Dennis and Laporte, *The Stasi: Myth and Reality*, 117.

[176] Ibid.

[177] Dennis, *German Democratic Republic*, 173–176; Dennis and Laporte, *The Stasi: Myth and Reality*, 116–118.

[178] Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 228.

[179] Ibid.

regime was always conscious that although it had acquiescence, it had little popularity amongst its own people"[180] and that "there was more to fear from the disaffection of its own populace than from the capitalist world."[181] The workforce understood which sectors of production were more important to the state and understood that the level of Stasi penetration into those areas would be higher. The network of informants grew like a cancer, percolating into every stratum within society. The priorities of invading the rest of society were similar to the production centers in that the certain societal sectors where a high potential for volatility existed, the Stasi increased its efforts.[182]

The incentive for the Stasi to monitor the higher educational echelons was also vital. As the GDR was coalescing into a functioning state, according to Schmeidel, "the SED turned its attention quickly to the universities, which in their eyes were of potentially huge value in forming the younger leadership cadre of communist Germany."[183] The problem with high educations was that it required a degree of latitude to operate competently within their profession within the international community, whereas the lower education within the GDR was focused domestically. Fulbrook illustrates the point that "university teachers wanted to be able to confer with colleagues across borders, on the grounds that 'science knows no [geographical] boundaries.'"[184] According to Schmeidel, the leadership felt "the universities were far too focused upon humanistic research for the Party's taste,"[185] and prompted reforms in these areas starting in 1951. The higher education volatility was not a sector of society that would eventually break free from the bonds of Germany's capitalist past over time, as what was expected

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[180] Schmeidel, *Stasi: Shield and Sword of the Party*, 27.

[181] Ibid.

[182] Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 45–51; Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 223–229; Schmeidel, *Stasi: Shield and Sword of the Party*, 27–30.

[183] Schmeidel, *Stasi: Shield and Sword of the Party*, 91.

[184] Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 206.

[185] Schmeidel, *Stasi: Shield and Sword of the Party*, 91.

of the highly technical professions, because of the very tenants of what higher education entailed. People who were educated at the higher levels would be a persistent threat throughout the existence of the GDR.[186]

D.   PENETRATION OF THE CHURCH?

The Stasi was able to successfully pierce the church structure, but eventually it could not stop the undercurrent of people championing moralistic issues. Fulbrook explains that while the Stasi infiltration had nearly uniform results in the level of coopting other sectors of society, "there was great variability from area to area, parish to parish, within any of the regional churches, depending on the views and personalities of particular pastors and their support or otherwise from regional leaders."[187] Dennis explains, "in retrospect, it is clear that the Stasi enjoyed considerable success in influencing church policy and in curtailing critical potential."[188] Fulbrook counters that this was only one of a two-pronged policy toward the church, where the SED sought "both to undermine Christianity as a living force in society while at the same time attempting to infiltrate and increasingly control the leadership of the church."[189] This was a problem in that the human rights, health, and welfare systems were poor in the GDR, and the church was not afraid to provide open critical analysis. The church throughout its history championed all of these issues, so those informants that were able to successfully infiltrate the church were split between two ideological worlds. Dennis illustrates the problems with these overlapping spheres of communism and Christianity into a bizarre rationalization of their reality.

> A kind of dual loyalty, which is not easily classified into dichotomies of collaboration and refusal, resistance and accommodation, and which was underpinned in church circles by the authoritarian structures of

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[186] Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 202–208; Schmeidel, *Stasi: Shield and Sword of the Party*, 91–92.

[187] Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 89.

[188] Dennis and Laporte, *The Stasi: Myth and Reality*, 149.

[189] Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 89.

Protestantism, a utopian belief in a humane socialism as the preferred third way between capitalism and communism, and a pragmatic perception of the GDR's capacity for survival.[190]

The moral issues that the church sought to eradicate and castigate the regime for, created quite a few peace groups that pushed for such causes as increased environmentalism, a nuclear free world, and human rights. Although successful penetration by the Stasi occurred, its effectiveness can be seen as non-existent because as Childs and Popplewell explain, "all these church and peace group activities over the 1980s were to culminate as a vital part of the peaceful revolution in 1989."[191] Ultimately, the church lived up to its end of the bargain providing an adequate umbrella for the free flow of ideas and a conduit with the West. [192]

E.   CONCLUSION

The regime that the SED cultivated over time did its best through the design of a system that exerted total control over its people and territory, albeit for a short period of history. The only way for this system to have been successful for so long is through careful design. The first step that the SED took was what any responsible government would have done in the wake of the Second World war by creating a legitimate working state to alleviate the suffering through the lack of critical infrastructure that was destroyed during the war. This perceived legitimacy allowed the SED room to exploit the Germans in the Soviet Zone and graft communist ideals onto an already existing, newly functioning skeletal structure. Once this structure was functioning on the most basic level, the meat could be filled onto this skeletal structure with a communist overtone and inculcation of the communist ideal. As the party was finding its way in the post war landscape, it overcame the obstacles of how to increase production through the employment of women and take charge of the upbringing of the children whose mothers needed to work. This divide and conquer attitude lasted until the end of the GDR when

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[190] Dennis and Laporte, *The Stasi: Myth and Reality*, 148.

[191] Childs and Popplewell, *Stasi: The East German Intelligence and Security Service*, 108.

[192] Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 88–91; Dennis and Laporte, *The Stasi: Myth and Reality*, 148–149; Childs and Popplewell, *Stasi: The East German Intelligence and Security Service*, 105–110.

the delicately laced web of communism was subverted through the interconnected movements that spontaneously arose and broke the psychological bonds that held the citizens in their place. The Stasi was the shield and sword of the SED until the end and infiltrated, physically and psychologically, every sector of society. Although its infiltration of the church was a successful endeavor, if physical infiltration was the metric, it could not account for the inability to psychologically penetrate the church's moral belief in human rights. The church's friction with the SED lay within the humanitarian realm and it did not disagree with communism as a form of government, as is traditionally thought. The Stasi's psychological hold on society would come to an end when the need of force arose in the waning days of the GDR and Stasi failed act.

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V. SCHOOL OF THE NATION WITH COMPASS AND HAMMER VOLKSARMEE AS THE BASIS OF AN EAST GERMAN NATIONAL IDENTITY

The creation of the legend of a uniquely East German socialist nation of workers and peasants posed a difficult task for the SED to embark on, not the least because this effort arose out of the ruins of the myths and legends of the Third Reich and the Nazi people's community. After the Second World War, the GDR was an island nation, cut off from its ethnic brothers and sisters of the new Federal Republic and beyond, and thrust by fate and geopolitics to the forefront of the Cold War. By 1955, this friction placed the GDR as the battleground of tension between the Warsaw Pact and NATO along the Soviet Zone's border with the West.

The SED understood the strength of German nationalism and attempted to cultivate the concept of a distinctively East German nation once the threat of reunification was minimized with its West German kin in the middle and late 1950s and really once the wall was built in 1961. An effective method among European nations for the cultivation of a national identity was through the state's military apparatus of the socialist type. This school of the nation in the form of the army is observed throughout nineteenth- and twentieth-century France, Britain, and Germany.

Although the SED recognized the importance of a national mythology as seen through Marxist Leninist eyes, the GDR's inability to cultivate the national myth through the use of the NVA was a major failure when seen by the light of events in 1989–1990. In the end, the overextension of the SED's aims for nation building of the socialist type and on the model of the Red Army through military training and education, nonetheless, in the final chapter of the life of the GDR, allowed for a significant peace movement to propagate throughout the GDR. The peace movement within the GDR in the 1970s and the 1980s was the culmination of a multitude of factors and stands as a significant pillar in the domestic triggers for the dissolution of the East German state and a forceful rejection of the pervasive militarism of the socialist model in the Warsaw Pact that was especially onerous in eastern Germany.

A. THE MILITARY AS AN INSTRUMENT OF CULTURAL DISSEMINATION

Europe set a precedent by administering national identity through the use of the nation-state's military apparatus. The modern army and the new nation state were twins, and this duality only became more intense in the twentieth century and the age of total war from 1914 until 1945 and beyond. In order to show that fostering a national identity through military means is not unique to the hyper-nationalism fostered solely within Imperial Germany or the Third Reich, the case in France and Britain will be dissected to illustrate that it also occurred beyond German borders in this question of the modern nation state and the school of the army as a means to forge the citizen. The establishment of the nation-state in Europe since the eighteenth century, with the idea of a political, cultural and psychological connection between citizens, occurred with varying degrees of success throughout the European continent.

1. France

A successful European example of the state's use of the military to socialize its citizens is embodied in France's national identity building from the revolution until the end of the First World War. Eugene Weber explains how "schooling taught hitherto indifferent millions the language of the dominant culture, and its values as well, among them patriotism."[193] He positions the military as the graduate level of culture dissemination especially in the Third Republic (1871–1940) when he says, "military service drove these lessons home."[194] To achieve such a high level of shared identity, the French needed to overcome many problems when assimilating and socializing France's peasants. In the earliest days, the peasants viewed the military as an occupying force, rather than an extension of the people, showing a civil military divide.

Much of this mentality lay in the Frenchman's psychological separation between the government and the people where "military service is looked on as a tax exacted by

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[193] Eugen Joseph Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976), 493–494.

[194] Ibid., 494.

the state, a sort of theft."[195] Labor was extracted from the production centers and put to work for the state. The motives were not readily identifiable as a struggle that the everyday citizen should be concerned with. As the French army was reorganized to reward hard work, literacy, and competency, "the army turned out to be an agency for emigration, acculturation, and in the final analysis, civilization, an agency as potent in its way as the schools,"[196] according to Weber.

Much of this unifying force is attributed to the socialization of the peasantry in France within the military. Peasants were able to socialize with the middle and upper class through shared language, culture, identity, and experiences. These would help break down the system, in the epoch of Tocqueville's *Ancien Regime*, between the landed elites defined by the estates into the class system that provided some level of social mobility when compared to the estate system. This allowed a bond to form between subjects of France where they now viewed themselves as Frenchmen, deriving from the same national origin, sharing the same lineage, and extolling the virtues of the French nation.[197]

2.   Britain

Britain was also able to mobilize its citizens as Britons using the military as a shared identity in the epoch from the eighteenth century until the twentieth century; however, the winds of change regarding the break down from estates to class were foreshadowed in the struggle between the landed elite and Britain's merchants in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries. The tradesmen in Britain were not happy with their lack of participation in state affairs and sought to reform the system where their involvement was necessary and warranted. Colley points out that "it is the relationship between land and trade that is the important issue."[198] Trade was able to instill a form of patriotism within the merchants because it brought significant profit to them and provided

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[195] Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen*, 295.

[196] Ibid., 302.

[197] Ibid., 295, 302, 493–495.

[198] Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707–1837* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 100.

the merchants a growing voice in their interactions with the state. After all, it was trade through which the state was also gaining its power and wealth.

As the fear of French power in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was growing, the question of mass mobilization was raised. The British had to identify the underlying problems presented in "how were large numbers of men living on the edge of poverty to be brought to risk life and limb for a nation in which active citizenship was denied them?"[199] As the middle class was exerting its influence within the state through trade, the state had to figure out how to instill in the lower class a sense of citizenship. Initially, the ability to volunteer in the British military required substantial financial backing. Colley suggests that the demographics surrounding the volunteer force as primarily middle class in the Napoleonic period, "volunteering…was primarily, though not exclusively, a prosperous man's game."[200]

The tide would soon turn and necessity would dictate a different approach. Colley illustrates that "the British government had been compelled to call for the support of all Britons—not just Englishmen, or Anglicans, or the propertied, or men of conservative views, but Britons in general."[201] She continues to explain that if Britain mobilized all of her subjects in the face of the French threat in the Napoleonic wars, and instilled them with patriotism, a risk existed as to the political influence this new class of citizen would want to exert in Britain's future. The socialization of all Britain's social classes, in order "to beat the French, the British had been required to imitate the French, and the challenge this presented to its old order was potentially corrosive."[202] The British created a contrastable duo and could immediately point to her continental foe as a threat to her nation. Through patriotism instilled within her subjects, where the military represented a way to display the highest form of loyalty to the nation, Britain would erode the system of estates, ruled by the landed elite, into a system of class.[203]

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[199] Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation,* 285–286.

[200] Ibid., 288–289.

[201] Ibid., 317.

[202] Ibid., 318.

[203] Ibid., 100, 285–289, 317–318.

3.   German Nationalism

The breakdown of estates into a system of class in the modern epoch in Western Europe was essential in the French and British experience. Germany was not immune to this wave of nationalism and self-determination sweeping Europe. The mechanics of nationalism in Germany was an understood phenomenon, however, the revolutionary potential was not recognized. Peter Fritzsche, in his analysis of National Socialism from 1914 until 1933, explains that although the differences between Germany's cultural sectors existed throughout its history, "in the first years of the twentieth century people in Germany became more and more alike, sharing an incipient consumer culture and poring over the same images in the national press."[204] He continues to explain how "World War I transformed German nationalism by giving it emotional depth and tying it to social reform and political entitlement."[205]

The German sentiment during the War period was a sense of national pride rather than the previous feelings of going to war for the state or the empire. Germans were going to war and supporting their German brothers and sisters for Germany, not Hohenzollern. The Kaiser's empire became increasingly unstable and the elites became progressively disconnected with society. The German middle class began to exert political acumen. As the military forces began to see themselves as part of society, rather than aligned with the Emperor, the ability to squash the uprisings diminished, ever more isolating Wilhelm. Increased disconnectedness aided in the demise of the German Empire through the political rise of the middle class, but the nation's erosion of the Junkers' influence would not be complete until the Third Reich.[206]

The Nazis harnessed the desires of the population during the desperate situation of the interwar period, rekindling German nationalism of mass and highly vicious kind. Fritzsche explains that the election of Hindenburg in 1925 was the result of the elevation of integral nationalism within Germany's interwar period. The Nazis fueled nationalism

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[204] Peter Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 27.

[205] Ibid., 28.

[206] Gordon Alexander Craig, *The Politics of the Prussian Army, 1640–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 346; Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis*, 27–28.

through a platform of "national solidarity, economic productivity, and imperial aspirations"[207] and that these platforms would lead to German prosperity. Frizsche posits that "better than any other party, the Nazis were able to insert the desire for social reform into a national frame."[208] Although the transition was not unanimous, and the party had many critics, the magnetism of a united German nation was powerful in the organization of mass politics.

The Nazis accurately read the desires of the nation and weaponized them. An important aspect of fostering a national identity is through the identification of someone who is not part of that nation, an enemy. According to Fritzsche, "even as the Nazis upheld an integral, almost redemptive nationalism, they created new categories of outsiders, enemies, and victims,"[209] all key ingredients when defining a nation.[210]

B.   PRUSSIAN MILITARY LEGACY AND NATIONALISM

The German military brought many of its traditions and its importance in civil-military relations from the Prussian model forged from the 18th century through the 20th century. Throughout German history, the separation of the soldier from mass politics and democracy as well as nationalism was increasingly difficult as the soldier was increasingly elevated to embody and symbolize the German Reich as a nation state. The historical significance of Gneisenau and Scharnhorst cannot be overstated as figures who led the way from the army of the estates to the army of a German nation led by Prussia. Their legacy would be integral to the military's mindset to reorganize Germany after the Hindenburg's declaration in 1919 of a "stab in the back" that followed the surrender and the dissolution of the monarchy in November 1918.

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[207] Fritzsche, *Germans into Nazis*, 202.

[208] Ibid., 203.

[209] Ibid., 235.

[210] Ibid., 197–214.

Hitler played on the military's dislocation with society in the interwar years with promises to restore it to its rightful place as the cornerstone of German state and nation as well as society. Gordon Craig illustrates the mindset of the German army through a military journal published in 1934:

> In the new state of Adolf Hitler, the Wehrmacht is no foreign body as it was after the November revolt of 1918. Today it is a part of the organic community and shares in the common distribution of the nation's work; and it follows Adolf Hitler as the Fuehrer of the people with full confidence and with devotion to its great national task.[211]

Hitler elevated the soldier as a mainstay of his integral nationalism within German culture, reaching a zenith of civil military fusion. The nationalism felt by German citizens was strong throughout the Second World War and provided momentum for Hitler's ambitions.

At the same time, Hitler gained further control of the army in 1934, in 1938, in 1942 and finally in 1944, and eventually society, through his purges leading up to the war, creating a cult of Fuehrer personality. The General Staff that Hitler had reorganized would not dare to cross his thought process for fear of retribution, thereby making the military complicit through its inaction.

Hitler's officer corps, according to Megargee, became increasingly polarized between the junior officers, who were true believers in Nazism, and the senior officers who wanted to adhere to their Prussian ideals of the state and apolitics, but who were trapped and often themselves little more than criminals in certain cases. The increase in Nazi believers in the ranks more closely amalgamated the officer corps with the state, which caused a divergence from its nation. This would increase the chasm between the German citizens and the military that would have significant effects in post war German military rearmament, for both the East and West.[212]

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[211] Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*, xix.

[212] Geoffrey P. Megargee, *Inside Hitler's High Command* (Lawrence, KA: University Press of Kansas, 2000), 13, 31, 36; Craig, *Politics of the Prussian Army*, xviii–xx, 56–57, 477–478.

C.   GDR'S NATIONAL GENESIS

The SED had to create a unique identity between itself and its West German counterparts, in lieu of a pan-German identity, because of the artificiality of the new bloc borders between the Eastern and Western sectors astride the riven world system of states. The SED and Stalin hoped that this sense of national identity, closely aligned with Soviet beliefs, would spread throughout Germany if it were to become a unified state. In lieu of a united Germany, the SED decided to cultivate a secular religion based on a Marxist-Leninist struggle that was unique to eastern Germany and to the story of class struggle as seen in the fate of workers and peasants in a Leninist manner. The SED understood the importance of education as a vehicle through which this identity could be fostered. France and Britain suffered through a language divide and a rush for urbanization, barriers that the GDR did not have to overcome.

The GDR was born out of a highly advanced society who possessed a comprehension of the German language; however, the ideological framework was retooled to propagate the new East German myth. One glaring physical problem for the GDR was the reality that many East Germans' family members lived in a completely different Germany, the Federal Republic, whose familial ties could not be ignored by the GDR, especially as the West German state solidified and prospered in the 1950s and 1960s. Germans had been exposed to nationalistic ideas unifying a German nation by highlighting their struggle until the fall of the Third Reich, and now an artificial border divided the nation into two states.

This psychological unity that occurred prior to German division, proved to be a powerful force for both Germanys to combat. The GDR's leadership grappled with the ability for its population to vote with its feet through inclusive rhetoric until 1961 when the Berlin Wall was built, restricting movement of its citizens. At this point the SED's stance against the West took a much more hard lined approach and allowed for stricter implementation of the ideological foundation of East German communism. The East German military was directly affected by this change.[213]

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[213] Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 2–4, 33–42, 115–117, 120–123, 140; Childs, *The GDR*, 61–62, 64–65; Dennis, *German Democratic Republic*, 29–32, 184, 194.

D. THE GDR'S ATTEMPTED MILITARY FUSION WITH SOCIETY

From an economic and security standpoint, the GDR did not need its own indigenous military force because the Soviets were supplying the requisite amount of manpower to facilitate security. The Soviets had immediately created a Stalinist paramilitary police force (KVP) with the occupation, which drew from refugees, as well as ex-military eager to serve the Soviet occupier. David Childs explains that creating an East German military force would fulfill multiple objectives. With Stalin's original objective of a neutral Germany, "the integration of former KVP members into all-German forces would ensure the Soviet Union a certain influence."[214] Childs also asserts that with the large number of Wehrmacht soldiers demobilized, this policy would employ a cross section of the population and keep them in the GDR, rather than provide them a reason to flee the GDR to join the FRG's fledging Western oriented military. Lastly, he explains that "armed forces are one of the attributes of sovereignty"[215] and that the SED needed this institution to secure domestic and international legitimacy. The reality was that the Soviets would maintain forces in the GDR throughout its history, but the newly formed military would have a German façade making Soviet expansion seemingly less threatening to Western anti-Soviet policy.[216]

A divided Germany presented an identity crisis for the armed forces of both Germanies. Both countries championed a narrative that posited only one side as the legitimate heir to the positive aspects of German military history, and the other German military was a bizarre bastard child born out of evil ideology. SED leadership propagated the NVA as the legitimate evolutionary step in German civil-military progression, presenting the Bundeswehr as an extension of class oppression, consisting of imperialist warriors of the West.

The NVA viewed itself as the ultimate amalgam of soldier, citizen, and state; however, the insulated view the NVA had of itself was a top down view shared by the

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[214] Childs, *The GDR*, 273.

[215] Ibid.

[216] Ibid., 271–293.

Party. The SED felt the fusion of citizen and soldier was at its zenith, but the general population did not share the same enthusiasm for the East German military man, as the soldier and the SED would continually be viewed as one in the same, yet different from the people. This phenomenon was not unique to the GDR, as the FRG was also faced with the task of selling the rearmament of Germans to its constituents, who increasingly displayed anti-military sentiments bordering on pacifism.[217]

From the beginning of the GDR, the SED sought to fuse through indoctrination all elements of society with party politics and Marxist-Leninist beliefs. Using the Leninist and Trotskyite model of total control, military methods of education were easy for the party to implement because the population was small and the dissemination of uniform curricula was easier in a Stalinist totalitarian state to which was added a combination of Prussian and Saxon energies of a notable kind. In addition to these two advantages, German society psychologically yearned for organization at almost every level in the wake of wartime and in the needs of reconstruction.

The party had done so much to get the state back into working order in the rebuilding of the war; the institution of an aggressive education curriculum was not such a large step in this phase. Roger Woods explains, through the use of transcripts in 1984 on the peace movement in the GDR, "the population is to be disciplined by attempting to extend military forms of organisation to every aspect of life (education of children, vocational training, civil defense exercises for working people)."[218] The population viewed this as progress in the recreation of the state.

Fusion of the military was also in line with the thinking of Margot Honecker, the GDR's Minister of Education. Jeanette Madarász explains that Frau Honecker "ordered that support for the politics of the SED should become the primary aim of every single

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[217] Donald Abenheim, *Soldier and Politics Transformed: German-American Reflections on Civil-Military Relations in a New Strategic Environment* (Berlin: Carola Hartmann Miles, 2007), 22–26; Jens O. Koltermann, "Citizen in Uniform: Democratic Germany and the Changing Bundeswehr," *Parameters* 42, no. 2 (Summer 2012): 114.

[218] Roger Woods, *Opposition in the GDR under Honecker, 1971–85: An Introduction and Documentation*, trans. Christopher Upward (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), 205.

school lesson and educational work."[219] The military's fusion with society provided a unique opportunity for the population's ability to participate in extracurricular activities. Such institutions as the Gesellschaft für Sport und Technik (GST), a successor to the Hitler Youth and the National Socialist Motor Corps, Childs explains that the youth possessed few outlets for entertainment and "the GST seemed to offer all kinds of exciting things to do like parachute jumping, gliding, motor cycling, rifle and pistol shooting, learning to use radio equipment, and so forth."[220] The GST, Sport and Technology Association, was based on the Soviet model of pre-military education for the nation's youth as well as its Nazi antecedents.

In addition to the technical aspects of the militarization of society was the physical militarization of society through state sponsored sports clubs that also followed in the path of Nazi institutions of physical culture on a mass scale. The GST and DTSB, German Gymnastics and Sports' Federation, were feeder programs for the NVA and aided in the militarization of society by providing the few mass organizations, sponsored by the SED, for youth to participate in. The GST offered skills that the population could use for military service and the DTSB put athletes into uniform. These athletes were part of the military, and they were of a professional nature where sport was their state sponsored job, as compared to the West's amateur sports programs. The athletes provided propaganda for the SED to exploit in extolling the virtues of communism to the world, and it also helped facilitate a sense of national pride when the nation saw East Germans achieve Olympic or international success. This euphoria had a short shelf life in the everyday drudgery that the GDR citizens experienced.[221]

E.   NVA'S CIVIL-MILITARY DIVIDE

By the 1980s, however, the SED's fusion of the military and society divided the population rather than uniting it. Placing the Party at the center of life in the GDR

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[219] Jeannette Madarász, *Conflict and Compromise in East Germany, 1971 to 1989: A Precarious Stability* (New York: Palgrave, 2003), 66.

[220] Childs, *The GDR*, 190.

[221] Dennis, *German Democratic Republic*, 71–73; Childs, *The GDR*, 183–191; Woods, *Opposition in the GDR Under Honecker*, 204–208; Madarász, *Conflict and Compromise in East Germany,* 66–68.

became dangerous and the militarization of society evoked historical memories of the Third Reich's *Volkssturm*.[222] The waning days of the Second World War saw the mobilization of all people within Germany, at the behest of the Nazi Party as the last gasp of resistance and slaughter in the final months of the war. Aligning all of the GDR's citizens with the Party was the SED's ultimate goal; however, the SED missed the psychological toll that the *Volkssturm* evoked in society. The SED's heavy-handed measures failed to create an organic sense of national pride because it was generated from above rather than below. Only a few could receive some of the benefits through organizations that were tied to the NVA, such as the GST's athletic initiatives, but by and large, the GDR's youth felt the rest of military service was a way for the state to steal time.

Many viewed the GDR's military service as a form of extracting labor from the community and something that young people had to get through. Fulbrook illustrates these sentiments of extracted labor, the same that were observed in France, when she explains, "the vast majority of young East German males did in the end perform their military service…many simply conformed and then got on with 'normal' civilian life."[223] She does concede that few exercised their option for a career within the Army and others joined their workplace paramilitary organizations, but this did little to foster a sense of national pride for serving the East German nation.[224]

In addition to conscription and the temporary service required of the majority of the population, the career military men were increasingly isolated from their subordinates, and therefore society, because of increased SED indoctrination and monitoring. Nearly all of the military's training originated from Moscow, either in practice or ideology. The GDR's military was a replica of the Soviet military in heart and soul, but with a German face, consisting of a dual allegiance of the military to a military

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[222] David K. Yelton, *Hitler's Volkssturm: The Nazi Militia and the Fall of Germany, 1944–1945* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 151–164.

[223] Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 127.

[224] Yelton, *Hitler's Volkssturm*, 151–164; Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 125–127; Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 135–136.

chain of command as well as a political chain of command.[225] Although the military officers required a high degree of technical qualification, this professional ideal was "in addition to sustaining total party discipline and ideological conformity."[226] Where the conscript was more closely aligned with societal norms, displayed by the population's lack of enthusiasm for military service, the higher-ranking military officials were clutched to the bosom of the SED and insulated them from sharing a common identity with the average East German citizen through an elaborate system of institutions as well as the garrisons.

According to Ken Kilimnik, "formal membership in the SED was nearly universal for officers and common for NCOs. An officer who was not a candidate to join the party had to attend ideology classes nearly every night."[227] By the final years of the regime, the average population's growing distaste for the state's invasiveness into everyday lives was something that the SED party members did not share in practice as they had become insulated in their state within a state. They became divided between the disillusioned masses who failed to see the fruits of communism coming to bear and those in the relatively large officer corps who were true believers, even with the notable evidence of the GDR's decline in the 1980s. SED army political administration officers were assigned to almost every unit. The Stasi also assigned personnel to the military unit (Verwaltung 2000), which the local military commander had no control over.

There existed no unity of command, neither in the Western sense, nor in the sense of military tradition in Prussia-Germany before 1945, nor in the Bundeswehr. That nature of military life and required membership within the party, military members were under increased state scrutiny. For the conscripts, the exposure to state scrutiny was temporary, but for the careerist it was enduring, causing the common belief that the upper military strata were either true believers of socialism or masochists.[228]

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[225] Abenheim, *Soldier and Politics Transformed*, 22–26.

[226] Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 45.

[227] Kenneth S. Kilimnik, "Germany's Army after Reunification: The Merging of the Nationale Volksarmee into the Bundeswehr, 1990–1994," *Mil.L.Rev.* 145 (1994): 121.

[228] Fulbrook, *The People's State*, 188–189; Kilimnik, "Germany's Army after Reunification," 113–148; Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 45–46.

F. FRG AND GDR MILITARY NATIONAL CONSCIOUSNESS, DIFFERENT OR SIMILAR?

The FRG and GDR approached the propagation of a national consciousness through their military apparatus from different angles, but the end result in generating a national consciousness were not similar, though certain less informed observers might detect a superficial likeness. The FRG and the GDR established their militaries in the 1950s with a similar national narrative prior to division. Each country entered a period of reform, to which the opposing Germany objected to its value and purpose, and created its own version of the citizen soldier. The FRG held the values of human, citizen, and then soldier as the hierarchy through which its military must be viewed. The soldier was to be a thinking and feeling individual, rather than an robot. The new FRG military would primarily fulfill a functional role rather than exist an aesthetic extension of the state, as had been Germany and Prussia's legacy. In the GDR, the SED felt that military service was on an ideological high ground as the most advanced evolutionary step where the peasant and worker doubled as the citizen and soldier.[229]

As both German governments were rearming in the spirit of their new ideological mandate, popular resistance was strong on both sides of the inner German border because of the lost war and pacifism. The FRG began compulsory national service in 1956 after the entry into NATO, also an unpopular decision, but one that eventually took hold. East Germany could not institute mandatory service until 1962, after the wall was built, fearing population flight. The demographic that resisted conscription and military service the most was the youth in both countries. The memories of the *Volkssturm* and the militarization of society were not well received as each country rebuilt their military. The East German methodology was to militarize all aspects of society to meet the needs of party ideology. Dennis explains the GDR's approach to instilling a national identity:

> The militarization of life in the GDR manifests itself in propaganda against the class enemy, pre-military education in schools, the partial

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[229] Abenheim, *Soldier and Politics Transformed*, 22–26.

mobilization of women, the frequent use of military symbols and traditions and the high level of participation in military and paramilitary organizations.[230]

The West German case was less total, less militaristic, and embraced the ideal of the citizen in uniform in its NATO and FRG version, which was also a more successful ideal than that of the army of the socialist type in the 1960s and 1970s GDR. The citizen in uniform and the integration of the soldier into pluralism on the basis of the German Basic Law became known in the 1950s as *Innere Führung*, which was highly anti-communist, prone to controversy as a continuation of bad things from the past, but, which nonetheless, worked out far better than its East German counter ideal of soldierly merit. Innere Führung extolled the values of a democratic society making clear the civilian government's control of the military in the case of the FRG. The NVA pledged its allegiance to socialism as an ideology, leaving the military to be an instrument of the Party, and not the people.

Gose's dissertation leads to the conclusion that the psychology of a divided Germany was difficult for both countries to overcome. The question that both German governments would have to confront if a military conflict between Eastern and Western ideologies erupted was how could they convince Germans to shoot Germans? This is a good question, but they would have shot each other, especially in the depths of the Cold War, as Germans had slaughtered each other in the pre-national past with great glee.[231]

The conditions between the two militaries were quite different as regards society, constitutions, and the alliance system. The Western-style military system, although dominated by conscription in the FRG, still generated a similar longing for Western standards in the East. This contrast between the GDR's and FRG's militaries fueled resentment within the NVA as an institution because NVA's standard of existence was so much lower than the West. Kilimnik outlines the NVA's conditions:

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[230] Dennis, *German Democratic Republic*, 186.

[231] Gose, "Role of the Military in Building Political Community," 223, 236, 249, 253–255; Dennis, *German Democratic Republic*, 183–187; Kilimnik, "Germany's Army After Reunification," 113–148; Michael G. Lux, "'Innere Fuehrung'—A Superior Concept of Leadership" (Master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School), 48.

Well equipped for attack, the NVA was indifferent to the soldiers' living conditions. The NVA stored tanks in heated buildings but housed soldiers in unheated barracks. The NVA permitted showers only once or twice a week and then always in large groups. Soldiers' kitchens and lavoratories were caked with grime and grease; only command officers had access to separate dining rooms (with tablecloths) and private toilets.[232]

This illustrates both the divide between the upper strata of military officers and the conditions under which normal conscripts lived. This state of affairs is a microcosm of the divide between the SED party members and the normal citizens; however, the difference was the divide within the army was visible to every day citizens, whereas the SED's was not. In addition to poor conditions, if an FRG soldier wished to express dissent, he or she is allowed to petition his ombudsman to mediate on his behalf for any grievance.

Dissent in the NVA was handled directly by the immediate chain of command, which could be a dangerous proposition considering the GDR's aversion to any form of dissent. Kilimnik makes the assertion that "indoctrination without the freedom to dissent tends to produce the opposite view, however passive, among many"[233] by citing a decline in the belief of the SED's indoctrination of hatred toward the West. Much in the same way that the general population's dissent was stifled, the military was no better and allowed the disdain for the SED to acutely fester in its conscripts.[234]

G.   CHURCH AND MILITARIZATION

The introduction of defense education in September of 1978 would have reverberating effects throughout the GDR that would bring to a boiling point the population's frustration and thrust a large peace movement within East Germany onto a global stage. Although defense education was not new to the GDR, the feature of making it mandatory was what caused friction. This negated any ability to dissent to military education through lack of participation, other than the minimum required to avoid

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[232] Kilimnik, "Germany's Army after Reunification," 118.

[233] Ibid., 123.

[234] Childs, *The GDR*, 271–293; Kilimnik, "Germany's Army After Reunification," 113–148.

exposure to state scrutiny, or to opt out of combat duty and participate in building battalions, if the state accepted their application to this non-combat form of military participation. Bruce Allen asserts:

> The single most important stimulus for the emergence of the autonomous peace movement in the DDR as the most significant manifestation of social resistance there since June 1953 and the most durable to date, was the introduction of Defence Studies in the schools by the DDR's Education Minister Margot Honecker in 1978.[235]

This development sparked widespread condemnation from the Church, who opposed conscription as non-Christian and who campaigned on behalf of the peoples' right to choose non-military service. The SED may have been attempting to circumvent practical problems that faced the state. Childs makes the assumption that this was because, in comparison to the other Warsaw Pact nations, that the GDR "has a shortage of labour and has, therefore, to husband its manpower more than most other states,"[236] so by introducing military education earlier, the GDR could shorten the time a conscript spent away from a production job later.

Another possible and politically motivated reason could stem from Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* and period of détente with the GDR. Additionally, the state was experiencing a rise in youth related crime, according to Childs; so increased discipline would result in a better behaved society. All of these justifications for making military education mandatory have their counterarguments as to why this would not work, which is why the eruption of dissent over this issue was so strong.[237]

The church's condemnation of the policy for increased military education had little effect on the state's decision to implement the policy; however, the alternative peace education program that the church promoted cracked the door for the GDR's peace movement. In addition to the domestic concerns within the GDR, a potentially "New Cold War" was developing with the deployment of nuclear missiles. The Soviets had also invaded Afghanistan in 1979 and the GDR had increased civil defense drills, which

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[235] Allen, *Germany East*, 97.

[236] Childs, *The GDR*, 190.

[237] Allen, *Germany East*, 93–124; Childs, *The GDR*, 188–191.

promoted a war like posture. Allen explains that in opposition to both East's and West's increased military posture, "the West European peace movement began its meteoric rise, making a strong impression on many East Germans, especially the young."[238] The GDR's youth knew they were not alone in their fears and could psychologically align themselves with the peace movement. The Church's lines of communication with parishes outside of the GDR allowed for a dissenting opinion to establish itself within the GDR since no citizen had a legitimate conduit to Western media. They would soon join the Church's growing cries for peace within East Germany itself.[239]

H. CONCLUSION

The use of the military as a powerful vehicle to foster national identity in Europe was a formula in which the GDR's leadership saw utility. The French, the British, and even historical German identity had been forged through this instrument. In addition to providing a German face to the Soviet Zone's political leadership, the NVA was implemented to provide the façade of sovereignty and legitimacy; however, Soviet military was always the true source of military strength for the GDR. Unfortunately, the German nation was not as fractured as the SED had originally thought and although the creation of a national identity was a top priority for SED leadership, the policy failed in uniting a distinct East German population. In addition to the obstacle of a shared national identity with its sister state, the historical legacy of a highly militarized Nazi Germany weighed heavily on the population, leading to significant resistance to further militarization. The harder the SED pushed for integration of the military into everyday life, the greater the civil military divide became. Conscription and militarization of society kept the general population divorced from their career military counterparts, who were seen as nothing more than an extension of the party. As the threat of détente with the West loomed, the negative rhetoric towards Western ideals increased. The Defense Education reform in 1978 triggered Church intervention and the private dissent within

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[238] Allen, *Germany East*, 98.

[239] Childs, *The GDR*, 188–191; Goeckel, *Lutheran Church and the East German State*, 255–273; Allen, *Germany East*, 93–124.

GDR citizens to emerge publicly throughout the 1980s in parallel with a pan-European movement of peace. The momentum behind this movement would help topple the regime in November of 1989.

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VI.   CONCLUSION

The historical understanding of the devastation visited on the German population during the Second World War as a formative event in shaping the post war political landscape, exploited by both Eastern and Western forces, explains the psychological construct of its citizens. The Soviet Union used the German faces of Ulbricht, Ackermann, and Sobottka, along with their rigid communist—indeed, Stalinist—ideology, to advance Soviet interests in the SBZ and to legitimize communism in East Germany amid the anti-Soviet views of the German nation in 1945. These Germans were devout communists who survived Stalin's purges, bringing a pious line of Marxism-Leninism that defined the GDR and its relationship with the Soviet Union throughout its existence. The Socialist Unity Party created a party state, leveraging its Soviet connection, and consolidated the power of all anti-fascist parties within the SBZ. Then, the SED executed its mandate to align society with its values.

Although the western Allies' approach in West Germany started and ended very differently, the effect—of instilling German society with a new set of values and political practices—is comparably thoroughgoing. It also resonates today with successive U.S. nation-building campaigns. The backing of Conrad Adenauer as the indigenous face representing the interests of his people in the Federal Republic of Germany was a successful venture for the United States; Washington tried to repeat this feat in South Korea with Syngman Rhee; South Vietnam with Ngo Dinh Diem; Iraq with Nouri Al-Maliki; and Afghanistan with Hamid Karzai. Although the United States took measures to ensure that a reliable homegrown leader was selected, arguably the United States rarely has had success in installing a leader that represents the true interests of his nation and most could not lead his country into a secure future like Adenauer. The United States has attempted to repeat the successes of postwar nation building in West Germany and Japan, using a model that may be overly formulaic—and that fails to account for the context of the time and places at issue.

The past and its discontents cannot be discounted and should be understood at a deeper level than knowing just the historical facts of a country. The Soviets and

Americans were successful in their regions of defeated Germany precisely because they understood and worked with the historical and political background from which Germany was emerging. Historical differences became evident throughout the Cold War as the United States stepped further and further from the governance of the FRG, shifting its relationship toward that of a partner, whereas the Soviet Union kept the GDR, and its leadership, close within its sphere of influence until the very end. If the United States wants to move forward in its endeavor to build nations—stable, democratic partner nations—rather than the current trend of building states, then due diligence should be undertaken to understand the battlefield of nation building.

In the East German case, on the one hand, there was plenty of coercion to aid the Stalinist leaders in their quest to transform the people of the SBZ. The Stasi was a key component in this ongoing process within the GDR, and, not surprisingly, a significant part of the narrative that historically defines East Germany today. The elements combined from the KGB and the Gestapo were unique to this region, which helps explain the effectiveness of the agency as an instrument of ideological (or putatively ideological) enforcement. To be sure, secret police organizations did not enjoy great success in all Eastern Bloc countries, particularly after the post-Stalin course correction, leaving the GDR as the crown jewel of Soviet implementation. The Stasi was an effective tool based on the historical framework from which it was wrought, and it provided continual feedback to its party functionaries. Also, the Stasi was, by dint of its role and function, not insulated from the portents of societal change like the SED was and warned of the impending political shifts.

Of course, this kind of social and political surveillance and control befits and bespeaks an illiberal regime—which means the Stasi model most likely is not the kind of approach that American nation-builders would or should embrace. Minor invasions of privacy within the United States present a problematic situation as its democratic government comes to grips with how to balance providing security to its citizens from non-state actors and how to continually uphold the virtues of individual liberty, one of the most fundamental values accorded to the American people.

None of this is to say that the armed organs of state have no role in the formation of new or reformed nations. Militaries facilitate and propagate a national identity, as has been seen in Europe in the modern era; the SED recognized the utility of the "school of the nation" in the NVA and used it to the party's ends, as well. However, the party instituted an increased militarization of education amid a growing civil-military divide that ultimately united the church and underground peace movements against the SED with its implementation of the military education law of 1978.

In contrast, the military as a locus of national identity in the Federal Republic of Germany is entering a new era of how much it will impact society's national consciousness with the suspension of its draft in 2011. An all-volunteer military force is the model that the United States has followed since 1973, and the impact of fostering a national identity and avoid a growing civil military divide is a question that must be continually answered. Like the Federal Republic, and its institution of Innere Führung, the United States must keep its civil-military relationship balanced, where the soldier can seamlessly come from society and be reintegrated back into society, while representing American interests and values abroad. Just as the U.S. and Federal German armed forces carefully educate their citizens in uniform in the sometimes difficult balances that democratic civil-military relations demand, nations under construction demand militaries that are versed in the necessary habits of mind and practice.

The East German case also demonstrates a fair bit of carrot—or positive reinforcement—to go with the stick of social coercion. For example, the SED's understanding of the importance of the intelligentsia, education, and mass organizations was the key to holding onto power throughout the GDR's existence. The restoration of these influential structures, in concert with the core functions of society, were essential in elevating the legitimacy of the party as their master and communism as their path to peace. The overall goal of the party was to manufacture the ideal socialist personality using every avenue possible, even elevating the status of the family to state functionary. While the GDR was a tightly controlled and ultimately illiberal society, the United States can take the totality of the approach as a potential model to move forward. The specific centers of gravity that the SED identified within East Germany as the keys to success are

not consistent in every nation, nor should they expect to be. However, the understanding of a nation's core functional components, defined through accurate historical analysis, is essential in order to reach the people.

An understanding of the past is necessary for successful nation building, but, as the East German case demonstrates, it is not the only factor that matters. The natural reaction for a modern government is to evolve and change in the environment it is presented. The East Bloc's leadership did not evolve with the respective populations there the way Western democracies did. Whether it was through term limits or the process of voting in a new head of state because the old no longer represented national interests, democracies have changed—and not always smoothly as in the case of France's Fourth Republic or America's cultural revolution in the 1960s. In contrast, the leadership in the communist bloc was fairly static throughout its existence—the parties clinging to their old guard who had been personally present at the moment of communization and who thus represented a direct link to the founding ideas and requirements. These regimes were inflexible to change—by design, as Mikhail Gorbachev, himself the first Soviet leader of the entirely post-revolutionary generation, discovered with some surprise.

The United States has not fully registered or appreciated the end of the Cold War in 1989, distracted as it was with the impending meltdown in Kuwait and the subsequent military action of Operation Desert Storm in 1991. Had the lessons of the GDR's genesis, coercive power of cohesion, and dissolution been accurately analyzed, some of the lessons that have since come to light may have been useful for the United States' subsequent nation building efforts. In the end, Fulbrook asserts that the GDR leadership's, and in many ways the communist bloc's, "wholesale disregard for certain values, this willing destruction of lives, emotions, careers, this preparedness to deform both human personalities and the physical environment in pursuit of the alleged higher goal of history, are utterly unacceptable."[240] For the United States to avoid this stigma, it must correctly assess the historical framework for any system it is imposing, whether it is

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[240] Fulbrook, *Anatomy of a Dictatorship*, 287.

democracy in a far off land, providing security to its citizens through clandestine security apparati, or avoiding a civil-military dislocation. For this, the lessons from the GDR can still ring true.

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