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INTEGRATION AND SELF-ASSERTION:
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EAST GERMANY AND THE SOVIET UNION
(AND EASTERN EUROPE)

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I. INTRODUCTION

"At present relations between the GDR and the USSR have reached so mature a level of development that there is practically no critical sector of our work and of daily life that does not reflect our friendship with the Soviet Union."

- Einheit (East Berlin), No. 9-10,
1974.¹

"This friendship is not only the decisive foundation of our life but also in equal measure our vital necessity."

- Erich Honecker, November 1971.²

"The GDR's status as an equal among equals within the socialist community also has its specific features."

- International Affairs (Moscow),
June 1972.³

"With respect to the future of Bonn's Deutschlandpolitik, it would perhaps be useful for once to investigate systematically the extent, motivation, and effect of Moscow's influence [on the GDR]..."

- Deutschland-Archiv (Cologne),
February 1974.⁴

"To investigate systematically" Soviet influence on the GDR is no easy task. To track down possible East German influences upon the Soviet decision-making process is even more difficult. To be sure, each side has produced a considerable literature about its relations with the other and public pronouncements, especially by the East Germans, are numerous. Not surprisingly, however, this vast official output contains little more than occasional

hints about exactly how the Soviet Union's predominant influence may actually be exerted, through which specific channels, at what particular times. And it reveals nothing whatsoever about conceivable East German inputs into the Soviet foreign policy-making process. Accounts by ex-insiders who have come to the West contribute some tidbits, but not very many. Such accounts are few and far between and now increasingly out of date. Among ruling Communist parties, East Germany's Socialist Unity Party (SED) is second to none in asserting its allegiance to Soviet-centered "socialist internationalism." Accordingly, it is also among the most zealous in guarding against untoward revelations of disalignments from Soviet positions. On the latter score, Soviet sources are scarcely more obliging. Whether classified materials in the West augment this meager fare must remain a matter of conjecture. This study is based exclusively on unclassified sources.

Despite the inaccessibility, at present and for the foreseeable future, of the very details from which one would learn the most, the materials that are in the public domain can shed significant light on the relationship between the Soviet Union and East Germany. They furnish ample basic data for an analysis of the general characteristics of the relationship and this, in turn, can serve

to illuminate at least some otherwise murky recesses as well as to suggest plausible inferences about the future. To provide such an overall analysis is the purpose of the pages that follow.

This is not the place to enter into a lengthy discussion of the proper periodization of the GDR's quarter century history. That subject is one of the few better left to the SED's own party historians, whose professional debates are rarely without political significance. Suffice it here, however, merely to mention two major turning points: the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961, and the "normalization" of the GDR's formal international status (with the partial although crucial exception of the East German - West German relationship) that occurred in 1972-73. From the point of view of East German foreign policy, one may well depict three distinct periods, viz: before 1961; the decade 1961-71, a period of domestic political consolidation and considerable economic growth; and from 1972 to the present.

It is a major contention of this study that the present period must be regarded as qualitatively different from either of the two that preceded it. Despite the GDR's diplomatic breakthrough onto the international area and despite (or, perhaps, because of) the proliferation of East German - West German contacts, the accent

now belongs on "integration" rather than on "self-assertion." Furthermore, the palpable East German disalignments from Soviet strategy that in part initially motivated this study are now a thing of the past. This is not to say that differences in roles, perceptions, and even interests do not persist. They do and could again become important in the future. As such they will be examined in the fourth chapter of this study, following immediately after a preliminary discussion (Chapter Two) of basic issues in and various approaches to the East German - Soviet relationship and a survey of the background and development of the relationship (Chapter Three). Still, the primary focus must be on the present stage of the relationship, which will be analyzed in Chapter Five. Only by understanding the extent of East Germany's integration with the Soviet Union and the "Socialist Community," a process in which its own ruling elite has played an active role, can one appreciate the constraints imposed on the GDR's maneuverability in foreign policy. Only on such a basis can one realistically gauge future prospects, not in the sense of hazarding specific predictions but rather in terms of assessing basic alternatives.

II. ISSUES AND APPROACHES

Conventional wisdom now holds that the Cold War in Germany is over. Some observers even purport to be able to pinpoint the date of its termination quite precisely: June 21, 1973 -- "one day after an exchange of notes between Bonn and East Berlin acknowledging that both capitals of Europe's largest partitioned state ... ratified an accord recognizing each other's existence."¹ In fact, whatever one may think about the future of international politics bearing on Germany, that accord doubtless constitutes a significant landmark. A milestone in ex-Chancellor Brandt's Ostpolitik, it also serves as a reminder that a primary concern of German policy toward the East has been and still remains Deutschlandpolitik, i.e., the myriad of problems arising from the post-World War II division of the truncated former Reich into two separate states and distinctive socio-economic systems, the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in the West and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) in the East. By the same token, the 1973 accord between the two Germanies should focus attention on the future of the intra-German relationship as the next stage "beyond Ostpolitik." What room for maneuver may presently be opening up in relations between the Federal Republic and the GDR? What are the available choices and the inherent

constraints affecting the likely conduct of each with respect to the other? How will the options actually exercised by each German state influence or else be influenced by the relationship of the two super-powers in Europe? What new avenues may open up for the Soviet Union toward West Germany or else for Western Europe and the United States toward Eastern Europe, including the GDR? To what extent will intra-German developments impinge upon relations between each of the two German states and its other European neighbors, both East and West?

Merely to pose such a host of topical questions is at once to suggest how complex and multi-faceted the German question has now become. This novel complexity would seem to be much more keenly appreciated by Eastern bloc protagonists of the point of view that interprets 1973 as marking "the end of the German problem" than by many of their Western counterparts. Nonetheless, the grounds for ultimate uncertainty are -- or, at least ought to be -- universal. For, as Pierre Hassner has pointedly expressed it, "in the long run, who can possibly pretend to know ... whether the meaning of the Ostpolitik lies in the acceptance of German division or in the adoption of the one possible way to surmount it...?"² That being the case, there is an even greater premium on the sharpest possible focus on the salient aspects of the present-day German problem in the short run.

The German Problem Transformed

In the first instance, the immediate stakes have changed as the character of the German problem (or, if one prefers, the question of the future of Germany) itself has become more complex. Under the international political system of the classic Cold War years, marked by a rigid bipolarity of power along sharply drawn geographic lines, particularly in Europe whose division was further cemented by unmitigated ideological hostility between East and West, the stakes were large but simple. They involved a single, basic issue: German national reunification. This is no longer the case, nor has it been for some time.³ Rather, with the attenuation of earlier Cold War structures and the emergence of mixed motivation on the part of both East and West, the German problem has been transformed into a whole range of issues related to the character, conditions, pace, and timing of some form (itself an issue) of reassociation between the FRG and the GDR.

Although the general atmospherics of détente in Europe and the host of specific treaties and agreements spawned by Bonn's recent Ostpolitik have transformed the German problem, the post-World War II "German Question" has not yet been resolved. Rather, it has been reactivated along entirely novel lines. Much as before, Germany today re-

mains the key to the future of Europe. While there may now be other such keys, Germany is still uniquely critical, in the sense that a shift in its political orientation (i.e., in that of the FRG or the GDR, or, conceivably, both) would herald a fundamental transformation of the East-West balance that has obtained in Europe for the last quarter of a century or more. While the immediate stakes in Germany have changed, the ultimate ones concerning its future abide.

Nonetheless, the German problem no longer serves to solidify opposing international systems, as was once the case when a unified Western alliance confronted a monolithic Eastern bloc in Europe. This, too, ceased to be true some time ago, from the early sixties with respect to the West and by the end of the sixties for the East. As a result, today's transformed German problem has to be viewed from at least three distinct vantage points, corresponding to the three separate although intersecting axes along which its diplomacy and politics are currently being acted out. The first and most important of these is the bilateral U.S. - Soviet relationship; the second, the multilateral West European - East European; and a third, the in fact quite "special" West German - East German relationship. It goes almost without saying that each of these axes may intersect with the others at a variety

of different points under different circumstances, resulting in a potentially vast range of changing combinations. Furthermore, additional permutations may arise from the relationship between actors at different levels, as in the most notable, although far from exclusive case of the Soviet - FRG relationship since 1970. Finally, there remains the crucial, if at present somewhat elusive interaction between international and intra-German politics, on the one hand, and the domestic politics of both the FRG and the GDR, on the other.⁴ In the past this interaction has been intensive and its potential for the future scarcely seems exhausted.⁵ Small wonder that the German problem today resists facile conceptualization or that a preoccupation with any one of its many angles or particular aspects to the exclusion of the others runs the risk of proving seriously misleading.

With that caveat fully in mind, it is nonetheless appropriate to note the dynamics and dilemmas of the German problem that have been manifest since the 1970 Soviet - West German Treaty. In effect, the USSR and the FRG emerged, at least for the short term, as the two major protagonists of intra-German reassociation or, to formulate it somewhat more guardedly and less precisely, the reactivation of the question of the future of Germany along fresh, previously untested lines. Each was able

to progress in this direction only in the face of considerable opposition -- for Brezhnev not only from the East German leadership but apparently also from important segments of the Soviet political leadership itself, for Brandt from the CDU/CSU domestic political opposition as well as, at least initially, from certain elements in the U.S. governmental bureaucracy. Given the constraints that have operated on both sides, it is scarcely surprising that movement on the German question has so far remained relatively limited. Far more to the point, however, are each side's expectations of the other for the future. Thus, while neither side can be deemed yet to have made any really vital concessions to the other,⁶ each has opened up for the other vistas of quite substantial future gains.

As Moscow must see it, Bonn's conciliatory Ostpolitik offers not only the promise of access to Western technology and West German credits but also the prospect of achieving larger, long standing Soviet strategic goals, including an eventual diplomatic and political reorientation on the part of the FRG. This is the view of a West Germany transformed from the lynchpin of the Western alliance system into what one Soviet commentator depicted as "a kind of experimental laboratory in which forms and methods of all-European cooperation could be devised and tested for the future Europe..."⁷ To Bonn, Moscow for its part

has appeared to offer, albeit conditionally, the opportunity to exercise indirect influence on the GDR, so as to facilitate intra-German rapprochement and perhaps even to induce change in specific features of the East German political system itself. Although the latter order of expectation has been considerably dampened of late as the divergence between Soviet and West German perspectives has become sharper, the basic point remains that both the Soviet Union and the FRG have come to act in accordance with what has become their shared general maxim of "accepting the status quo in order to alter it." That alone may impart to the Soviet - West German relationship a certain momentum as well as a distinctive logic of its own; at bare minimum, it has already introduced fresh fluidities into the German situation.

Interpreting the East German - Soviet Relationship

It is against the backdrop of such fluidities -- potential as well as actual -- that the relationship between East German and the Soviet Union must be examined. Long dismissed as merely an "abject satellite," the GDR has more recently come to be widely regarded in the West as something of a "junior partner" of the Soviet Union. The first designation aptly characterizes the relationship that was imposed under Stalin and, indeed, continued

to obtain after his demise until at least the end of the fifties or the beginning of the sixties. The second is certainly expressive of the aspirations nurtured by Ulbricht during the sixties; in fact, it may fall considerably short of doing them full justice. If not with respect to Soviet policy in Europe as a whole, then unmistakably on Soviet and East European policy toward the FRG, the late East German leader came to seek nothing less than the final word. Yet, it turned out that Ulbricht did not possess any absolute right of veto over Moscow's German policy and, as a result, his successors have been obliged to enter into formal ties with the FRG on terms other than those upon which the GDR had previously insisted. At the same time, however, they also stepped out their campaign of strict ideological and political delimitation (Abgrenzung) from West Germany to such a degree as to appear to jeopardize, in effect, the very credibility of Moscow's overtures to Bonn. Moreover, as the GDR succeeded in overcoming its unenviable status as a pariah in the international system and, through general diplomatic recognition and U. N. membership, gained belated acceptance as a sovereign separate German state, its ruling elite came to champion even tighter integration with the East European Communist states in general and

with the Soviet Union in particular. Yet, almost simultaneously, the very same East German elite began to explore the GDR's new found "opening to the West"; cautiously, to be sure, but in a manner that suggested the distinct possibility that this avenue might one day be much more fully utilized for East Germany's own special purposes. What, then, is one to make of such apparently contradictory signs? With what label to characterize the East German - Soviet relationship today?

As has already been indicated, the characterization "junior partner" is one that has recently been much in vogue in the West, thanks in part to the currency given to it by Peter C. Ludz, a leading West German specialist on the GDR.⁸ However, the designation only serves to beg a host of questions; e.g., how comprehensive a "partnership" and just how "junior" is the GDR now and for the future, from the East German point of view and, even more critically, from that of the Soviet Union? In view of the reassertion of Soviet hegemony over the whole East European bloc that has occurred under Brezhnev, another veteran West German analyst of East German affairs has argued that the accent must now be shifted so as to stress the renewed "dependence" of the GDR vis-à-vis the Soviet Union.⁹ And even a well informed West German commentator who is considerably more optimistic than most about the

future prospects for rapprochement between the GDR and the FRG has observed that East Germany still has "to adjust itself almost mechanically to the superordinated interests of the Soviet Union."¹⁰ In his judgment, rather than presuming any "ability to stand on its own" (Eigenständigkeit), one is entitled, at most, to speak of the emergence of "a will of its own" (Eigenwilligkeit) on the part of the GDR.¹¹

These divergent assessments suggest the difficulties inherent in the search for a simple and yet precise label with which to denote the present phase and, for that matter, the dangers of relying upon facile tags to characterize earlier periods. Actually, it is much more appropriate to begin by accepting the larger complexities that attend the Soviet - East German relationship and, accordingly, to treat it in terms of the politics of interdependence.¹² Inasmuch as the latter term has nowadays become fashionable to the point of overuse and abuse, it too requires clarification. The interdependence at issue ought not to be narrowed to the relationship between the Soviet Union and the GDR alone. Indeed, the basic power asymmetry between the two is so vast as to render the very term "interdependence" itself rightly suspect as a characterization of the bilateral relationship. At stake, rather, is the structural interdependence of the

several axes mentioned above. As concerns Soviet - East German relations, one may note four discrete levels that interact with each other. They comprise (1) the domestic political system(s), (2) the bilateral relationship, (3) the multilateral ideological-political bloc of which the bilateral relationship is a part, and (4) the international system as a whole, with special reference to relationships with particular adversaries.¹³ To put things somewhat less abstractly, one must always bear in mind a complex network of linkages both within the Soviet-led East European bloc and as between East and West. It goes almost without saying that these linkages are not static but dynamic. Correspondingly, the GDR's importance to them, far from being permanently fixed or else constantly growing in importance, may vary greatly depending upon specific configurations. Viewed in this perspective, the particular circumstances that attended the transformation of the simple, virtually total dependence of the GDR on the USSR into relatively more complex patterns of interaction merit scrutiny. So do the several issue-areas as well as the various institutions, procedures, and processes that have served to advance or else to retard East German - Soviet cohesion. Finally, attention should be paid to the adaptability of the cohesive networks already established and, indeed, to

the question of the viability of the present East German - Soviet relationship under altered circumstances that may be envisaged for the future.

One possible approach to this vast range of considerations might be through a series of case studies of the East German - Soviet relationship along the lines recommended by a recent RAND report on the study of Soviet foreign policy.¹⁴ Despite necessarily incomplete documentation, the case study approach has, in fact, been utilized to reasonably good effect by a painstaking West German analyst, Gerhard Wettig.¹⁵ The cases he has selected are drawn from the years 1965 - 1972, a period of readjustment and change in European international politics in which the GDR enjoyed a more active role than either before or since. His cases focus entirely on the interplay between the second and the fourth levels, i.e., the bilateral Soviet - East German relationship and the international system as a whole, with primary emphasis on Soviet and East German attitudes toward and relations with the FRG. Although obviously pertinent to the time-span covered, this particular focus would prove unduly restrictive if extended to subsequent developments. Above all, its findings do not really lend themselves to extrapolation, as Wettig himself duly acknowledges.¹⁶ This is, of course, a shortcoming inherent in the case study method

as such. It would not be fully remedied even if one could add case studies encompassing the domestic political systems and the multilateral bloc in conjunction with the bilateral Soviet - East German relationship. Unfortunately, the paucity of available material precludes sufficiently comprehensive case studies of the latter order in any event.

All of these difficulties dictate an alternative approach. In analyzing the vital political processes as well as the formal structures of the Soviet - East German relationship, certain social science concepts can provide important guides. These concepts include the notion of patron-client bonds, originally a concern of cultural anthropology but more recently taken over by political science, primarily to analyze small group behavior in pre-industrial societies, but not necessarily restricted to such use. Irrespective of particular settings, all patron-client relationships are rooted in inequalities of status, wealth, and above all, power. But they differ from pure command relationships by entailing elements of exchange or reciprocity that are absent where force alone serves to secure immediate, total compliance. Patron-client bonds are typically regarded as non-contractual, i.e., informal in nature. But there is no logical reason to suppose that they may not also

be embedded in and even enhanced by contractual ties. All of these features are broadly characteristic of the Soviet - East German relationship today and differentiate it from the primitive imperial domination that Moscow initially exerted during Stalin's reign, if not beyond. Moreover, the patron-client concept need not involve the treatment of both sides as merely unitary rational actors. On the contrary, it readily lends itself to disaggregative analysis, wherever the data or circumstantial inference indicate the existence of significant personal or group ties between the two sides.

Within the larger framework, the Soviet Union has always constituted a quite distinctive patron, with more than its share of super-power egotism and correspondingly less willingness to tolerate deviance on the part of its clients. In the absence of paralyzing factional cleavages within the Kremlin itself, Moscow is eminently capable of enforcing East German compliance by virtue of the Soviet Union's overwhelming predominance over the GDR. But it need not do so unless Soviet and East German interests are in serious disalignment. Here the analysis needs to factor in two related concepts that serve to enhance and refine the attention that political science has traditionally paid to the notion of interests. They are the concerns of sociology with role and of psychology with perception

("cognitive maps"), both of which have now also come into the legitimate preserve of political science. In other words, to borrow from recent Soviet discussions of cohesion within the Socialist camp, one must be alert to "subjective" as well as "objective" factors.¹⁷

All of these concepts inform the discussion that follows, although none of them will be rigidly applied or even rigorously elaborated. For that, no apology need be tendered beyond the caveat of the authors of the aforementioned RAND report. "No model derived from available theory," they conclude, "can be expected to provide comprehensive and consistent explanation and reliable and accurate predictions with respect to the kind of foreign policy and crisis decisions of interest to the Soviet policy analyst."¹⁸ To that, one should perhaps only add Daniel Bell's admonition to Sovietologists to practice "two necessary humilities: an awareness of the limitations of our knowledge, and of the openness of history."¹⁹

III. THE BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE RELATIONSHIP

Just how "open" has the history of the relationship between East Germany and the Soviet Union actually been? That very question, or a variant of it, has given rise to a certain amount of political recrimination in West Germany concerning the ostensible or real failings of Western diplomacy to achieve Germany's national reunification while that goal still seemed attainable. To that extent the question is not merely of academic interest but of continued political significance. While a definitive answer remains elusive, the question itself does beg an examination of both the evolution of Soviet policy and the changing role of the GDR.

The Evolution of Soviet Policy

In January, 1948, more than a full year before the establishment of the Federal Republic in the Western zones of occupation and the formal transformation of the Soviet zone into the German Democratic Republic, Stalin reportedly predicted that "the West will make Western Germany their own and we shall turn Eastern Germany into our own state."¹ Had the Soviet dictator cared to elaborate upon that terse prediction, he might well have chosen to repeat the remark that he had made to confidants even before the end of World War II, when he declared with accustomed pedantry

that "whoever occupies a territory also imposes on it his own social system. Everyone imposes his own social system as far as his army can reach. It cannot be otherwise."²

These pronouncements, so expressive of the deeper expansionist impulse of Soviet Communist ideology in the immediate post-World War II period as well as of Stalin's own high personal regard for the use of political power and the perquisites of territorial possession, contained all the necessary elements of a self-fulfilling prophecy. This much deserves careful consideration by anyone who might otherwise be tempted to subscribe to a view of the GDR as "a state that ought not to be"--that is, a state whose creation was neither consciously sought by the Soviet Union nor effectively countered by Western policy.³

And yet statements such as those attributed to Stalin do not really shed sufficient light on the Soviet role in post-World War II German affairs, either in Stalin's lifetime or subsequently. Rather, such fragmentary evidence, however authoritative in origin, often serves to obscure important aspects of Soviet behavior. In fact, to the extent to which any particular Soviet pronouncements may appear to herald a permanent shift of Soviet policy from largely offensive to purely defensive goals, they can be doubly misleading. This is the case because a

crucial characteristic of the Soviet Union's German policy throughout the entire post-World War II period has been the alternating emphasis accorded to expansionist aspirations, on the one hand, and consolidationist reflexes, on the other. In fact, Moscow has often engaged in the simultaneous pursuit of two basic grand strategies, a forward strategy of attempting to project Soviet influence to the West, and a defensive strategy of solidifying Soviet control in the East. Viewed in the perspective of almost three decades, it has been the simultaneous quest to achieve these different objectives, no less than the employment of a variety of tactics ranging from the threat of force to the promise of diplomacy, that render the overall record of Soviet policy in Germany so ambiguous.

Certainly, both offensive and defensive considerations were present in the immediate aftermath of Nazi Germany's collapse, long before the open imposition of the Communist dictatorship in the Soviet zone of occupation. Stalin, for his part, began by playing for different and potentially much higher stakes--stakes well beyond the immediate "reach" of his armies. In addition to his determination to exact the maximum in reparations from Germany and his concern lest the defeated enemy again threaten Soviet security, Stalin was also intent on in-

fluencing the future political development of the entire country.

The latter objective was apparent in the distinctive way the Soviet occupation authorities went about implementing the Potsdam accords which were supposed to provide a framework for a common German policy among the victorious Allies. In line with what they doubtless considered to be elemental requirements of Marxist-Leninist doctrine, the Soviet Military Administration struck immediately at the ostensible socio-economic roots of "German militarism and fascism" through an extensive land reform, expropriation of the holdings of leading Nazis and war criminals, nationalization of heavy industry, and the like. Although these initial measures may have seemed moderate, they constituted essential first steps in the direction of full-fledged Sovietization. Moreover, in addition to pushing these reforms, the Soviet authorities early demonstrated their determination to secure a permanent political foothold inside postwar Germany. This they did by directly intervening in German domestic politics in order to force the 1946 merger between the SPD and the KPD into the Soviet zone's SED, which from its inception was under unmistakable Communist domination.

Given Stalin's cast of mind, the desire to influence Germany's postwar political development could only have

meant the social and political transformation of the entire country under Soviet aegis.⁴ Even if initial Soviet measures in postwar Germany were defensive in inspiration, they were also clearly expansionist in implication. Just how Stalin actually proposed to accomplish his several, ultimately incompatible objectives in the face of the active opposition of the Western powers was yet another matter. At the outset, Soviet policy in Germany seemed to be following that Napoleonic adage which Lenin had invoked at a crucial moment in his own drive for power in Russia: on s'engage et puis on voit.

As things turned out, Soviet policy in Germany provoked the West, spearheaded by the United States, to foster both the economic revival and a political reconstruction of the Western portions of the country. Such measures as the extension of the Marshall Plan to Germany, the reform of German currency, and the convocation of a Parliamentary Council to draft a West German constitution (or Basic Law, as it was to be designated) produced a second Soviet calculus. This entailed dynamic moves designed both to frustrate Western plans for German recovery and, in particular, to block the establishment of the Federal Republic, and also to consolidate Communist control over the Soviet zone. Once again, expansionist aspirations and consolidationist tendencies went

hand in hand. The better to secure the Soviet rear for such aggressive actions against the West as the Berlin Blockade, the Russians felt compelled to tighten the screws of political control in their own zone. By mid-1948 the coordination of East German political life by the Communists had been completed, a shadow zonal government was in the process of creation, and the SED itself was obliged to drop all of its earlier pretenses of being something other than a "party of the new type," i.e., a Marxist-Leninist party, closely tailored in ideology, organization, and politics to the Soviet Communist Party model.⁵

The period of apparent Soviet diplomatic flexibility with regard to Germany from the early to mid-fifties may be viewed as yet a third installment of the persistent ambiguity of Soviet policy. Confronted by the prospect of West German rearmament and the Federal Republic's political as well as military integration with the West, as envisaged in the designs for the European Defense Community, Stalin proposed negotiations for the declared purpose of reunifying Germany as a political neutral in possession of its own armed forces. The offer of a negotiated settlement in Germany, first broached by the Soviet note to the Western powers on March 10, 1952, remained open until 1955, when it was effectively shelved,

following the Federal Republic's accession to NATO. To the present day, many West Germans regard the interlude between 1952 and 1955 to have been a period of "missed opportunities" to reunify Germany.⁶ However this may have been, suffice it here only to note the amalgam of defensive and offensive considerations that appear to have motivated Soviet diplomacy during this period.

On the one hand, a defensive fear of West German rearmament and integration with the West doubtless gave rise to the quest for novel approaches with which to block these menacing developments. On the other, in the context of the prevailing East-West competition for German allegiance, the Soviet diplomatic proposals that were actually advanced could not fail to constitute a major bid to regain the political initiative inside Germany as a whole. Moscow had every reason to anticipate political dividends whether Soviet proposals were accepted or not. In the first eventuality, the Soviet Union would, at bare minimum, have succeeded in delaying West German rearmament and the Federal Republic's political integration with the West, without necessarily countenancing any drastic reduction of Soviet political influence in East Germany. An ensuing foreign policy disorientation on the part of the FRG, where antirearmament sentiment was quite strong in any case, might well have appeared to promise additional opportunities of again attempting to project Soviet in-

fluence westward. In the second case, the Western rejection of neutralization on Soviet terms (or, for that matter, on any other terms), which actually occurred, Moscow was handed a ready-made excuse for deepening Germany's division and thus also the opportunity of fashioning a more secure base in East Germany from which subsequently to attempt to encourage neutralism in West Germany.

The latter development, however, also foreshadowed additional Soviet aggressive moves against the West. To be sure, a major Soviet objective from the mid-fifties was to prevent West German acquisition of nuclear weapons. This was a matter of considerable urgency inasmuch as the FRG's avowed national aspirations toward the East at that time were readily construed in Moscow as a serious challenge to the status quo in Europe. Toward the end of keeping West Germany non-nuclear, the Soviet Union actively championed various schemes for military disengagement and nuclear-free zones in Central Europe. For a time, in the years immediately following the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between Moscow and Bonn in 1955, the Soviet Union also sought to leave the door slightly ajar with respect to German unification. The Soviet Union had, of course, come to accord priority to strengthening the East German regime, as exemplified by the 1955 Soviet-East

German Treaty, conferring formal sovereignty on the GDR and East Germany's admission to membership in the Warsaw Treaty Organization in 1956. These moves necessarily also shifted the Soviet position on reunification. Before 1955, Moscow had held out the possibility of an international settlement based on four-power responsibility for Germany as a whole; after 1955, it insisted on the necessity of direct negotiations between the "two separate German states." Yet, by endorsing if not actually inventing various East German schemes for "confederation," the Soviet Union went on record as still favoring eventual German unity.⁷ Thus, Soviet policy was alternating gentle blandishments toward West Germany with strenuous efforts to isolate the FRG from its Western partners as the primary obstacle to East-West détente in Europe, and, more often than not, combining the two approaches, when Khrushchev decided to embark on a "policy of breakthrough"⁸ focused on Berlin.

Far from being merely a defensive move designed to bolster the East German regime, the Soviet challenge to the West in Berlin between 1958 and 1962 also involved a major offensive threat against the West as a whole and especially against West Germany. Had Khrushchev succeeded in undermining the Western position in Berlin or in forcing an under-the-gun recognition of the GDR, which could also

have had fateful consequences for the Western position in Berlin, that would almost certainly have shaken West German confidence in the Western alliance and almost certainly contributed to a resurgence of neutralism in the FRG. As things actually turned out, the erection of the Berlin Wall in August, 1961, itself gave rise to an immediate wave of bitter frustration in West Germany and, even more importantly, served as the catalyst for a longer-term rethinking of the German problem that culminated in Brandt's Ostpolitik.

Following the resolution of the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, Berlin was quickly defused as an issue and Khrushchev's final years in office witnessed a turn away from a frontal assault to a more subtle approach.⁹ The earlier, oft-repeated Soviet threat to conclude a separate peace treaty with the GDR was quietly dropped. Instead, in June 1964 the Soviet Union signed a Treaty of Friendship, Mutual Assistance and Cooperation with East Germany. This treaty underscored the Soviet commitment to the GDR as a separate German state and, for the first time, explicitly guaranteed its territorial integrity. On both counts the 1964 Treaty has come to be highly prized by the East German leadership. But contrasted with what East Berlin might well have expected from a separate peace treaty, it proved rather insub-

stantial political fare¹⁰ Moreover, even though Soviet denunciations of West Germany as an obstacle to détente did not abate, Moscow's approaches to individual Western countries on a bilateral basis came to include the FRG, to which Khrushchev was planning a personal visit when he was ousted from power. All told, with the advantage of hindsight, one can see in Khrushchev's last years the tentative outlines of the Soviet policy that actually emerged under Brezhnev many years later.¹¹

There were, of course, to be notable differences as well. In the first instance, whatever the other motivations for the shift in Soviet policy toward the FRG that occurred in 1969-70, it was facilitated by a conciliatory West German Ostpolitik scarcely imaginable in the era of Khrushchev (and Adenauer). The initial version of West Germany's new policy toward the East, unveiled by Bonn's Grand Coalition government in 1966-67, brought a sharp Soviet rebuff, if for no other reason than the emphasis that it placed and the attraction it actually exerted upon the Soviet client states in Eastern Europe. Judged in these terms, it appeared not only as a subtle and even more insidious version of the policy of "isolating the GDR," which had been the avowed aim of the modest West German initiatives toward Eastern Europe undertaken as early as 1963, but also a potential threat to Soviet

dominance throughout the area. The Ostpolitik pursued by Brandt from 1969 was much more acceptable, if only because of Bonn's readiness to deal first and foremost with the Soviet Union and in a manner that could be interpreted as implicitly accepting Soviet hegemony over Eastern Europe. Moreover, the rigid defensive posture and blatantly anti-West German stance which had served to consolidate the Soviet position in Eastern Europe in the mid-sixties was no longer nearly so necessary once political discipline had been enforced by the demonstration effect of employing armed force to bring Czechoslovakia back into line in 1968.

The second notable difference was of a rather different order. For, to a far greater extent than any of his predecessors, Brezhnev had to cope with the GDR as a force in its own right. For a self-assertive but still fundamentally insecure East German leadership, the belated Soviet demarche toward Bonn was not only instinctively distasteful but also suggested novel ambiguities in Soviet policy toward Germany that may have appeared to call into question the very role for the GDR that Soviet policy itself had previously helped to fashion.

The Role of the GDR

For a number of years immediately after its estab-

lishment in October, 1949, the GDR remained merely a pawn in Soviet diplomacy toward Germany as a whole. Subsequently, East Germany became something more, a major strategic stake in its own right as well as a substantial economic asset, a basically reliable political subordinate and a valuable ideological ally for Moscow.

At the very outset, the formal establishment of a separate East German state had no particular effect upon Soviet policy. Much as before Stalin continued to toy with appeals to German nationalism, whose postwar persistence and strength he grossly overestimated. Given this preoccupation, Moscow also proved reluctant to confer upon East Germany so much as even the formal trappings of full-fledged membership in the Soviet satellite system.

Indicative of Stalin's frame of mind was the personal telegram he dispatched to Wilhelm Pieck, the veteran German Communist functionary and first (and only) President of the GDR, on the occasion of the establishment of the East German state. While heralding the event as "a turning point in the history of Europe," Stalin also conjured up the prospect of an alliance between the Soviet Union and the whole of Germany and intimated that, together, the two countries could dom-

inate the continent. Nowhere in Stalin's laconic felicitations was there the slightest mention of ideological matters.¹² Indeed, in contrast to other countries in Soviet-dominated East Central Europe at the time, East Germany was relegated to a separate category of its own, "backward" with respect to the studied retardation of its internal socio-economic transformation and distinctive in the ideological terminology applied to it. The initial socio-economic changes presided over by the Soviet Military Administration and the consolidation of political life under the SED had been passed off as necessary steps in Germany's "anti-fascist democratic" reconstruction. During 1948-49 SED spokesmen tended to employ the terms "anti-fascist democratic order" and "people's democracy" interchangeably, thereby equating developments in East Germany with general trends and basic patterns elsewhere in the Soviet satellite sphere. However, a year later they were compelled to observe a terminological distinction and to assert that East Germany's political and social order remained only "anti-fascist democratic" in character.¹³ Even with the commencement of a concerted campaign to "build socialism" in the GDR, announced at the Second SED Party Conference in July 1952, i.e., after Stalin's diplomatic demarche of the previous March had already run

into the sand, the designation "dictatorship of the proletariat" was scrupulously avoided in favor of the euphemism "workers-and-peasants power."¹⁴ The following year, after Stalin's death, the "construction of socialism" in East Germany was abruptly halted to make way for the "new course." On that occasion, the official organ of the newly created Soviet High Commission in Germany saw fit to stress the "great international significance" of the decision to relax political pressure and to modify economic policy in the GDR and expressed its conviction that "decisive progress in the struggle for a peaceful reunification of Germany" would occur "in the near future."¹⁵

In view of these and other signs that the GDR was expendable if broader Soviet foreign policy interests so dictated, the question naturally arises as to when this ceased to be the case. The answer given by most observers points to 1955, the year in which the Federal Republic joined NATO, Moscow established diplomatic relations with Bonn, and concluded a State Treaty with the GDR conferring upon it formal sovereignty. Actually, although the Soviet Union continued recurrently to broach the possibility of German reunification for some years after 1955, the basic Soviet predisposition against unification and in favor of division probably took shape

even earlier, in the wake of the June, 1953, uprising in East Germany.

Before that unexpected event, the disastrous consequences of the Stalinist program of "socialist construction" in the GDR that prompted Stalin's successors to order the SED to change its domestic course may also have suggested to them the expendability of the East German regime in the interest of forestalling West German rearmament through a negotiated settlement of the German question. At least this may have been the case for some of the new leaders in the Kremlin. There was circumstantial evidence in mid-1953 to support this hypothesis.¹⁶ Ten years later, Khrushchev was to revive speculation about what may have been intended by charging that Beria, in association with Malenkov, had in fact advocated "the provocative proposal that the German Democratic Republic be liquidated as a socialist state."¹⁷

Whatever the precise divisions of opinion about Germany within the Kremlin at the time, it seems undeniable that on the eve of the June, 1953, uprising in East Germany, the interests of Soviet policy and those of the Ulbricht leadership of the SED were in serious disalignment. Ulbricht's Stalinist program had been thoroughly discredited in the eyes of his Soviet patrons and, worse yet, he had persisted in pursuing it apparently in the face of Soviet advice to the contrary.¹⁸ Quite clearly,

Ulbricht's own political downfall was in the offing.¹⁹ Whether this was the doing of Beria alone or, as seems more likely, Beria and Malenkov, quite possibly with the tacit approval of the other Soviet leaders, including Khrushchev,²⁰ the overwhelming weight of all available evidence points to the twin conclusions that in the early summer of 1953 major political changes were under way in East Germany and that these changes were to be followed by some fresh Soviet initiative on the German question as a whole.

By virtue of its glaring exposure of the bankruptcy of Communist rule in East Germany, the 1953 popular uprising served to realign Soviet interests with those of the Ulbricht forces in the SED. The logic behind this sudden realignment of interests also militated against any negotiated settlement of the German problem. The June uprising itself seriously damaged the Soviet Union's bargaining position. In its immediate aftermath Moscow could hardly have expected the Western powers under the tutelage of Dulles and Adenauer to compromise on the maximum Western objective of a Germany reunited through free elections and entitled to join any alliance system of its choosing, i.e., the Western camp. Moreover, to have abandoned the East German government at that point would

have amounted to much more than an acknowledgement of the Ulbricht regime's unpopularity; it might well have jeopardized the entire postwar Soviet position in East Central Europe. These larger stakes could not have been lost upon the post-Stalin Soviet leadership, in view of the simultaneous riots in Czechoslovakia and Moscow's own utterly realistic assessment of the heavy costs of Stalinism elsewhere in the satellite empire. A month after the suppression of the June, 1953 uprising, Ulbricht was able to dispose of the "Zaisser-Herrnstadt group" which, at Moscow's behest, had been preparing to take over the leadership of the SED. From that domestic coup, it was only a short and strictly logical step for the Soviet leadership to shift its basic priorities with respect to the German problem so as to concentrate on strengthening the GDR.

This shift was made manifest by Moscow's decision, announced in August, 1953, to render economic assistance to East Germany, to return to GDR hands the remaining Soviet-owned enterprises that had been prized out of the post-war German economy, and to cancel further reparations payments from East Germany. It was further exemplified by the guarded Soviet diplomatic stance at the January 1954 Big Four Foreign Ministers meeting in Berlin, where Molotov insisted upon East German participation in any

arrangements for all-German elections. Finally, it was given particularly telling expression in the speech Khrushchev delivered in East Berlin on his return from the 1955 Geneva Summit meeting and in the course of private discussions between the Soviet leaders and their East German counterparts at the same juncture.²¹

The role of anchoring the Soviet position in Europe that had thus devolved upon the GDR assumed increased importance thanks to Ulbricht's personal mastery of domestic intellectual ferment and student unrest during 1956. To be sure, Khrushchev's initial campaign against Stalin at first seemed to threaten Ulbricht's own position of leadership in the SED. But, while quickly falling into line behind Khrushchev, and, in fact, early contributing a public denunciation of Stalin on his own, Ulbricht also wasted little time in moving decisively to block the disruptive inroads of de-Stalinization within East Germany itself. By virtue of his services in averting another revolutionary outbreak in East Germany at precisely the time when the Soviet leadership had to deal with the Polish October and the Hungarian Revolution, Ulbricht's stock must have risen considerably in Moscow.

This, in turn, enabled Ulbricht to proceed against his personal opponents with the SED leadership. After

some delay, the purge of the Schirdewan-Wollweber-Oelssner group was announced in February, 1958. The affair deserves mention because it was indicative of both East German domestic politics and East German-Soviet relations in the fifties. In the first instance, despite the charges of the existence of a single anti-Ulbricht "faction," it seems clear that at least two separate groups were involved and that they never really coalesced. Furthermore, the activities of the various factionalists were conducted entirely in camera. As a result, the regime's intellectual critics of 1956 were denied access to leaders of the Party opposition and found themselves, in effect, politically disarmed from the very start. Like Zaisser and Herrnstadt before them, Schirdewan, Wollweber, and Oelssner did not seek rank and file SED support, much less did they strive to enlist popular disaffection outside the Party, in their drive to replace Ulbricht. Rather they jockeyed for backing from the Soviet leadership in Moscow. Schirdewan, in particular, apparently counted on the favor of Khrushchev, basing his calculations on Ulbricht's seeming vulnerability as a long time Stalinist. In this, as an Ulbricht spokesman was later to take satisfaction in pointing out, Schirdewan had clearly miscalculated.²² The resolution of the East German leadership struggle had to await the outcome of the larger factional struggle in Moscow. But

Khrushchev's triumph over the Soviet "anti-party faction" brought no solace to Ulbricht's opponents in the SED. Whatever the East German leader's personal preference in the matter, he did not figure in the 1957 Kremlin infighting and he lost no time in aligning himself squarely behind the victor who, in turn, had good reasons of his own for continuing to support Ulbricht.

This entire episode illustrated Ulbricht's much remarked capacity for anticipating changes in Moscow and associating himself with them. That talent had temporarily deserted him in the Spring of 1953 but it subsequently served him in good stead until close to the very end of his active political career when, sensing a serious threat to East German interests, he balked at Brezhnev's demarche toward Bonn. During the late fifties and, indeed, well into the sixties, however, Ulbricht hued closely to Soviet policies and practices, both domestic and international, although what had earlier been slavish imitation gradually gave way to studied adaptation. Irrespective of the particular modalities, the basic aim was consistent: to strengthen Moscow's commitment to the GDR by maximizing its stakes in East Germany.

If East Germany's role as a Soviet bridgehead against the West had existed from the very outset and the GDR's

function as an anchor for Soviet hegemony over Eastern Europe had become manifest during the fifties, particularly with respect to Poland during and after the 1956 crisis (as again more than a decade later with respect to Czechoslovakia), Ulbricht must be credited with fostering East Germany's development as an economic asset to the Soviet Union. To be sure, this was only possible on account of the Soviet decision to terminate Moscow's initial policies of industrial dismantlement and other exploitative reparations exactions in favor of a substantial Soviet investment in the GDR economy in the form of repeated loans and credits to East Germany, especially between 1953 and 1962.²³ But Ulbricht, for his part, proved a compliant recipient to the extent of undertaking many revisions in East Germany economic plans to accommodate changing Soviet priorities if not also readily submitting to Soviet commercial exploitation of the GDR.²⁴ And, despite all its many other economic tribulations at the time, East Germany by 1960 had become the Soviet Union's leading foreign trade partner.

In addition, with at least tacit Soviet approval, the Ulbricht leadership pursued domestic policies aimed at enhancing the GDR's ideological credentials and thus upgrading its political status in the socialist camp. Ulbricht himself had made rather short shrift of the "new

course" of 1953-55 and by 1958 the SED was officially back on the road to the "construction of socialism." In view of the open frontier to the West and perhaps out of deference to Khrushchev's anti-Stalinism, the pace of the resumed socio-economic transformation was to be more circumspect. Still, the measures introduced under the renewed dispensation of "socialist construction" (in particular the swift and brutal collectivization of East German agriculture during 1960) served, along with the tensions over Berlin precipitated by Khrushchev, so to increase the number of East Germans fleeing to the West as to lead directly to the erection of the Berlin Wall.

The Berlin Wall, of course, proved to be of multiple significance. More than perhaps anything that had gone before, it clearly signalled a basic Soviet commitment to the division of Germany and thus it also served as a catalyst for the readjustment of West German perspectives and ultimately FRG policy. Moreover, the Wall greatly facilitated the SED regime's domestic political consolidation. Finally, by arresting the highly damaging exodus of skilled labor, it provided the necessary, although not yet the sufficient, conditions for the GDR's subsequent economic growth. In all these respects, the Wall in conjunction with the sustained challenge to Soviet Union's

political authority in the Communist world posed by China and the consequent "pluralist decay" of international Communism during the sixties, both before Khrushchev's downfall and for several years after it, afforded the East German leadership novel leeway and an unprecedented sense of leverage in dealing with Moscow. The leeway and the leverage as well as the limitations on both can best be examined in terms of the divergence of East German and Soviet interests that became apparent during Ulbricht's last decade in office and may well persist to the present day.

IV. INTERESTS, ROLES, AND PERCEPTIONS

Policy toward the West, in particular toward the FRG, and Berlin constitute the primary issue-areas in which East German and Soviet interests have been both closely intertwined and yet on occasion also become disentangled to the extent of revealing significantly different priorities. Much the same has been true with respect to East German expectations of, if not quite attitudes toward, ideological-political cohesion within the Eastern bloc which the GDR has publicly championed with no less consistency than the Soviet Union and, indeed, often more stridently. On all these matters, East German - Soviet alignment has been closest during periods of Soviet frontal assault against the West, e.g., during Khrushchev's moves aimed at transforming West Berlin into a "free city" and in the course of Moscow's viriolic propaganda campaign against West Germany during 1967-68. By contrast, divergences have become evident whenever the Soviet Union has backed away from an earlier direct challenge to the West, as after 1962 with respect to Berlin, or substituted more flexible appeals for tactics of intimidation, as has been the case with the FRG since 1969-70.

Behind all such divergences lie important differences in roles and perceptions of opportunities and dangers

(or, more simply, of general perspectives) that shape quite distinctive definitions of vital interests. As a nuclear super-power with global commitments and responsibilities, a major diplomatic force on the continent of Europe, the leader of a conglomerate East European alliance, and the center of ideological authority for a world-wide political movement, the Soviet Union is required to play a variety of roles simultaneously. As a result, its obligations as patron and protector of the GDR need not always predominate in the Kremlin's calculations of its own best interests. For the Soviet Union, policy toward West Germany and especially in regard to Berlin are only partially a function of the concerns that Moscow may share with East Berlin. Much more importantly, they also impinge upon broader Soviet interests in Europe as a whole, and quite crucially as has concerned Berlin, upon the Soviet role as a global super-power in relations with the United States.

For the GDR, by contrast, relations with the FRG and the status of Berlin constitute issue-areas that affect its vital interests in a much narrower and more immediate and compelling sense. Throughout most of its existence, the GDR's very *raison d'etre* has been predicated not only on Germany's division but also upon a

permanent state of direct confrontation between the two post-World War II German states. Moreover, the East German ruling elite has evinced unerring sensitivity to the GDR's inherent vulnerabilities in this confrontation. So far it has made little difference whether the confrontation has taken the shape of the unmitigated hostility that obtained before the inauguration of Brandt's Ostpolitik or the somewhat ameliorated form that has developed since.

On the one hand, this East German sensitivity has dictated an overriding need for and dependence upon Soviet support. In this respect, Honecker was not necessarily indulging in mere rhetorical hyperbole when he told a Soviet audience that "friendship [with the USSR] is not only the decisive foundation of our life but also in equal measure our vital necessity."¹ On the other hand, the basic anxieties that underlie the expression of such sentiments have also prompted the East German leadership to press its own conceptions of the GDR's vital interests upon the Kremlin. During the initial phase of the Soviet Union's readjustment of policy toward the FRG in response to Brandt's Ostpolitik, East German spokesmen were not loathe to call Moscow's attention to their views of the hazards involved. Among

other things, they did this by pointedly invoking earlier domestic crises in the GDR and elsewhere in Eastern Europe.² Once the current FRG-GDR accords went into effect, East Germany was obliged to open its borders to a far greater extent than other, more secure Socialist states and to do so in order to accommodate visitors from West Germany and West Berlin. The East German leadership, including Honecker himself, have publicly detailed, for the benefit of the Soviet side, the full extent of such visits. In so doing, they have also unmistakably implied that the GDR has been compelled to run risks that it would have preferred to avoid.³ No doubt the same argument has been employed to justify the subsequent adoption, with at least tacit Soviet approval, of a variety of measures to control and even restrict "human contacts" between East Germans and West Germans and West Berliners.

The question naturally arises as to a possible change in East German perceptions as the GDR leadership grows more accustomed to its "limited adversary" relationship with the FRG, overcomes its ingrained anxieties and develops greater self-confidence with respect to domestic political stability. The question is a tantalizing one and will receive closer attention subsequently. Suffice it here only to observe that whatever changes may ensue in the

perceptual component of the definition of vital GDR interests vis-à-vis the FRG, the question of Berlin seems destined to persist as a very special case.

West Berlin has long constituted a particularly pointed challenge to the GDR's security and even to its claims to full sovereignty. Throughout the sixties, East German pronouncements repeatedly stressed the GDR's basic objective of changing West Berlin's political status. When they refrained from referring to West Berlin as "legally" belonging to the GDR, East German pronouncements either harked back to Khrushchev's crisis provoking call for the establishment of a "free city," detached from connections with the West, or else invoked the somewhat ambiguous and in all likelihood compromise formulation, "autonomous political entity," enshrined in the 1964 Soviet - GDR Treaty.

The 1971 Four Power Agreement on Berlin appeared to cut much of the ground out from under these East German pretensions and aspirations. It certainly undercut earlier East German claims that West Berlin belonged legally to the GDR. It also negated certain "sovereign rights" over civilian access to West Berlin, previously conferred upon the GDR by the Soviet Union. Finally, its reassertion of four power rights and responsibilities "in Germany" (i.e., concerning "Germany as a whole") challenged East

German sovereignty in broader and even more basic terms. In particular, it lent substance to Bonn's insistence upon a "special relationship" between the FRG and the GDR. And, for legalistically minded Germans, both East and West, it also underscored the circumscription of GDR sovereignty by the Soviet Union. On all these counts, East Germany has had understandable grounds for dissatisfaction. Small wonder that, despite the 1971 Four Power Agreement, GDR spokesmen continue to press for a change in West Berlin's political status. One need only note Honecker's recent insistence that the Four Power Agreement envisages the dismantlement of the West German presence in Berlin and his distinctive gloss (based on the Russian language text of the Four Power Agreement) on the distinction between "connections" (Verbindungen) which may be permitted between the FRG and West Berlin and "ties" (Bindungen) which should not be.⁴ In the very same context one can also point to the apparent East German hand behind the difficulties that arose in late 1973 in negotiating a Berlin clause in the West German treaty with Czechoslovakia.⁵ No doubt the Soviet Union and the GDR subscribe to much the same long term objectives with respect to West Berlin. They need not, however, share the same sense of urgency, much less agree upon the proper

tactics.

Dissension and Disalignment

Evidence of differences of emphasis, if not actual dissension, on these matters dates back to 1961. Following the erection of the Berlin Wall, the East German regime kept up its agitation for a separate peace treaty. Indeed, Ulbricht himself openly raised the issue at the Twenty-First Soviet Party Congress, only to have Khrushchev utilize the same forum to rescind yet another of his many "deadlines" to the West.⁶

Although Ulbricht was obliged to fall into line when Khrushchev finally called off his show down over Berlin in 1962, the character of underlying East German concerns continued to be evident. It was clearly manifest in the alarm sounded by Ulbricht in response to Bonn's modest initiatives toward Eastern Europe in 1963 and in the alacrity with which the GDR sought to counter them. At this very juncture the East Germans also published the scathing Chinese charges that the USSR was bent on "selling out" the GDR - ostensibly to refute the Chinese accusations. All told, the East German attitude toward the worsening Sino-Soviet dispute during this period displayed an unaccustomed measure of reserve which mirrored an obvious concern for GDR interests vis-à-vis the FRG.⁷ While

Ulbricht's objections to Khrushchev's planned visit to West Germany in 1964 remained carefully guarded, East Berlin's lack of enthusiasm for the venture was unmistakable. When Khrushchev fell from power, Ulbricht refrained from applauding the ouster or waxing enthusiastic about Moscow's new leadership. By remaining masterfully ambiguous, he in effect utilized the political transition in the Kremlin to serve notice on Moscow that henceforth the SED could be expected to be heard from much more forcefully where its own interests were involved.⁸

These interests were quite obviously at stake when Bonn's Grand Coalition government inaugurated a more flexible and much more active Ostpolitik at the end of 1966. For several years before that departure, ranking SED spokesmen had openly manifested the GDR's extreme sensitivity to West German policy toward Eastern Europe by stridently warning East Germany's fraternal allies against Bonn's quest for better trade relations. West German objectives were denounced as discriminatory against the GDR, which in fact was Bonn's intention, and vilified for harboring ostensibly disruptive political designs against the Socialist bloc as a whole. Confronted in late 1966 with the prospect of a concerted West German drive aimed at rapprochement with Eastern Europe (including this time the GDR, but on terms which fell short of East

German demands), Ulbricht did not really wait for the Kremlin to make up its own mind about how to handle Bonn's new overtures. East German spokesmen lost no time in rejecting them as utterly unacceptable and the GDR swung into diplomatic action to counter West Germany's fresh approaches to the East. As it happened, East German efforts to construct an impregnable phalanx against the FRG through a series of bilateral treaties between the GDR and other East European states on the basis of the "Ulbricht Doctrine" (no diplomatic relations with the FRG without prior full West German recognition of the GDR "under international law") enjoyed the support of a Kremlin that was itself primarily concerned to arrest fissiparous tendencies within Eastern Europe. Bonn's initial success in establishing diplomatic relations with fractious Romania gave special point to the Kremlin's own concerns. To be sure, intermittently throughout 1967 and indeed into 1968, Soviet diplomacy continued quietly to explore possibilities for improved relations with the FRG. But Moscow's overriding concern at this juncture was the maintenance of cohesion and discipline within the East European bloc. That, in turn, served to align Soviet and East German interests. The alignment of interests grew particularly close during 1968, both in the period of the "Prague Spring" and in the immediate

aftermath of the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Almost from the very onset of the Dubcek regime, Czechoslovak developments served to reawaken all of Ulbricht's deep-seated anxieties concerning domestic infection and international isolation of the GDR. Early and repeated East German charges purporting to detail the preparation of a "counterrevolution" in Prague masterminded by "West German imperialism" documented this only too clearly. Given such an interpretation of Czechoslovakia's reformist course, it was inevitable that relations between East Berlin and Prague should have deteriorated rapidly. Given the fears that lay behind it, it makes sense to conclude that Ulbricht himself began early on to press for the most stringent measures against the Dubcek regime and that his insistence upon forceful action must be accounted a significant contributory factor in the Kremlin's fateful decision to intervene in Czechoslovakia.⁹

Immediately after the August invasion, it appeared as if Ulbricht genuinely believed that the SED had secured for itself a decisive role in Socialist bloc affairs in Europe and thus also in East-West relations. Certainly, the East German leader's pronouncements concerning both international relations and domestic affairs reached a new level of confident self-assertiveness. Thus, while

calling for tightened international coordination and discipline under Soviet leadership, Ulbricht repeatedly stressed Soviet-East German economic and scientific ties and their military cooperation as shining examples of socialist internationalism in action. In addition, he took it upon himself to proclaim the necessity of constructing socialism "on the basis of one's own resources" as a doctrinal imperative. By no means did this signify endorsement of national autonomy, a concept that Ulbricht dismissed as "ridiculous drivel." Rather it constituted a call to end economic dependence upon the West and to pursue closer integration among the communist states along the lines followed in relations between the GDR and the Soviet Union. Finally, with particular reference to Czechoslovakia but also as a more general rebuttal of Marxist revisionist elsewhere, Ulbricht held up the GDR (not the USSR!) as a model of economic efficiency and political stability.¹⁰

It may well have been that an intimate awareness of the Kremlin's Czechoslovak tribulations, together with a sense of vindication over the application of his own harsh prescription for dealing with the situation, actually persuaded Ulbricht that henceforth the GDR would enjoy a major role in Socialist bloc affairs in Europe and the decisive voice in Soviet and bloc policy toward

West Germany. If that was in fact the case, Ulbricht was to be proved mistaken on both counts. In particular, Moscow made it clear, as early as March 1969, that it was not prepared to countenance a veto over its own approaches to the West by a rigidly inflexible East Germany. At the March, 1969, Budapest meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, the Soviet Union revived its previously shelved proposal for an all-European security conference and considerably softened its anti-West German polemics, thereby confirming signs of a changed attitude toward the FRG that had been manifest from late 1968. Indeed, in March 1969 Moscow made something of a display of its desire to improve relations with Bonn by demonstratively briefing the West German government on the Ussuri River clashes with China while simultaneously playing down the crisis over West Berlin that the SED sought to provoke in connection with the convocation of the West German presidential election assembly there. By the end of the month, signs of tension between Ulbricht and the Soviet leadership were incontrovertible. At the Moscow meeting held to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the Third International, Ulbricht spoke out in defense of the Comintern's 1928 indictment of social democracy as the "main enemy" while the Soviet

ideologist, Mikhail Suslov, in company with Boris Ponomarev, CPSU secretary in charge of relations with foreign communist parties, criticized it as sectarian in character and harmful in consequence.¹¹

At stake, of course, was not merely the proper interpretation of Comintern history but also the crucial topical issue of the correct approach to the FRG, whose Social Democratic leader, Willy Brandt, had served as Foreign Minister from late 1966 and was to accede to the Federal Chancellorship with the formation of an SPD-FDP Government in October, 1969. Persisting in his détente-oriented Ostpolitik but focusing it now in the first instance on the Soviet Union and also broadening it to acknowledge the existence of "two German states in one nation" (thereby effectively conceding de facto recognition to the GDR), the Brandt government received a favorable initial response from the Soviet leadership, as well as from Poland's Gomulka, who had broached the prospect of bilateral Polish-West German negotiations as early as the spring of 1969. None of the other East European states, except the GDR, found the principle of bilateral negotiations with the FRG distasteful. All were prepared to accept the Soviet lead in such negotiations. Only Ulbricht, even after he had bowed to the inevitable, was determined to make the maximum possible

input into the diplomatic process, so as to guard East German vital interests if not, in so doing, actually to sabotage the 1970 Soviet-West German Treaty in particular and East-West détente in general.

This determination on the part of Ulbricht set the stage for the manifestation of important disalignments between Soviet policy and East German positions which persisted from 1969 until Ulbricht's unexpected retirement from the post of SED First Secretary in May, 1971. Throughout this period Ulbricht sought to maximize the leverage that he presumed to be his on account of his personal status as a veteran Communist leader who had always respected the international primacy of the Soviet Union and faithfully served the interests of the Kremlin. He also sought to enlist support from Soviet hardliners in Moscow and, indeed, elsewhere, perhaps most notably in the Ukraine, where Shelest served as Republic Party First Secretary.¹² The issues that particularly exercised Ulbricht involved the character of the relationship with the FRG that might be required of the GDR and the nature of an East-West agreement concerning Berlin.

With respect to the first of these, the SED leadership under Ulbricht set out to revise its previous doctrine on the German nation; a revision, incidentally, that has been continued and indeed extended under Honecker.

In any event, the first steps along these lines were taken in direct reaction to Chancellor Brandt's enunciation of the formula of "two states in one nation," Insisting that the formation of the SPD-FDP Government in Bonn had altered nothing in the "power structure" of West German "state monopoly capitalism" and warning that, if anything, the Brandt Government constituted a more dangerous adversary on account of "illusions" to the contrary, Ulbricht sought to counter Brandt's initial proposals for a fresh start in inner-German relations by dispatching an open letter, in December 1969, to FRG President Heinemann with the draft of a treaty between the GDR and the FRG. The draft treaty proposed the establishment of full diplomatic relations on the basis of international law and conspicuously omitted any reference whatsoever to the German nation. Following Brandt's 1970 State of the Union message, in which the West German Chancellor called upon both German states to do their utmost to preserve the unity of the nation, Ulbricht held a much publicized press conference in which he denounced Brandt's conception of national unity as "mystical." The East German leader used that occasion to designate the GDR as "a socialist German national state" that no longer shared any national community with the FRG which, in turn, he dismissed as "a capitalist

NATO state...with limited national sovereignty."¹³

These formulations, extensively elaborated by East German commentators in the ensuing months, were unmistakably designed to rule out East German-West German negotiations on anything other than the maximum conditions demanded by Ulbricht.

Ulbricht's position, however, proved to be at serious odds with the temper of initial West German-Soviet deliberations. With the commencement of the Bahr-Gromyko talks and doubtless in response to Soviet urging, the East German leadership backed away from its initial public expressions of disdain for any official East German-West German meetings without prior acceptance by the FRG of GDR preconditions. As a result, East Berlin gave a belated if unenthusiastic reply to the West German initiative contained in a letter dispatched in January, 1970, from Brandt to Willy Stoph, Chairman of the GDR Council of Ministers, calling for the earliest possible negotiations on a renunciation of force agreement between the two German states.

The two meetings that actually took place in 1970, at Erfurt in the GDR in March and at Kassel in the FRG in May, manifested Ulbricht's reluctance to engage in constructive negotiations. The circumstances of the meeting at Erfurt may also have served to fortify Ulbricht's

conviction concerning the dangers of inter-German contacts as well as to provide him with further arguments against them for the benefit of the Soviet leadership.

Erfurt had been chosen in place of East Berlin as the site for the first GDR-FRG "summit" after Brandt had announced his intention of stopping over in West Berlin en route to East Berlin and this was denounced by the East Germans as a "provocation." As things turned out, Erfurt proved no less embarrassing on account of a spontaneous outburst of popular enthusiasm for Chancellor Brandt. No deliberately planned West German "provocation" could have more forcefully brought home to the East German leadership the domestic stakes attendant upon inter-German negotiations. Small wonder that some Western observers speculated that the demonstration in behalf of Brandt might even have been deliberately arranged by Ulbricht in order to impress Moscow with the dangers it was courting.¹⁴

The meetings at Erfurt and Kassel served basically to underscore the deep and seemingly unbridgeable gulf between the positions of the two German states. At Erfurt, Stoph reiterated the familiar GDR demand for normal relations on the basis of international law, i.e., for unconditional diplomatic recognition from the FRG, and he also put forward a general claim for West German

reparations payments for the economic losses suffered by the GDR due to the westward flight of skilled labor before the erection of the Berlin Wall. Brandt, for his part, promised the GDR non-discriminatory relations based upon respect for existing inner-German borders, but he also insisted upon the continued unity of the German nation which required a "special relationship" between the FRG and the GDR. In addition, he used the occasion to emphasize the rights and responsibilities of the four powers with respect to Germany as a whole and to Berlin. At Kassel, Brandt unveiled a twenty-point program which he proposed might serve as the basis for further negotiations to culminate in a state treaty between the FRG and the GDR. Sticking by the GDR's demand for prior West German recognition under international law, Stoph rejected Brandt's proposal and announced the termination of further discussions until a suitable "pause for reflection" (Denkpause) had elapsed.

Although the East Germans depicted the "pause for reflection" as a chance for the FRG to reconsider its position so as to align it with that of the GDR, the real motivation lay elsewhere. Progress in inter-German relations clearly depended on the outcome of West German-Soviet negotiations. Until the latter proved conclusive, Ulbricht had no incentive to continue the GDR - FRG

dialogue beyond the stalemate that he had engineered. However, with the conclusion of the August 1970 West German-Soviet Treaty and the linkage proposed by Bonn between progress on East-West negotiations on Berlin and parliamentary ratification of the FRG-Soviet Treaty, the stage was set for a resumption of inter-German discussions, this time to deal with precisely those "second and third level questions" that Stoph had dismissed at Kassel as "making little sense" because they bypassed "the core of the matter."¹⁵

To be sure, the East German leadership did not automatically fall into line behind Soviet diplomacy toward the FRG. For many weeks after the signing of the Soviet-West German Treaty, East Berlin pointedly maintained official silence concerning resumption of inter-German talks. Presumably this period was given over to behind-the-scenes maneuvers to enlist support within the Kremlin for maximum East German preconditions, including full diplomatic recognition of the GDR by the FRG. As had been the case earlier that year, during Gromyko's visit to East Berlin in February, Ulbricht's talks in Moscow in April, and at the Moscow meeting of the Warsaw Treaty Organization in August, East German objections had to be heard and top level Soviet pressure applied to gain a modicum of GDR compliance. Only at the end of October,

1970, following another visit by Gromyko, did East Berlin communicate to Bonn its willingness to resume "an exchange of opinion."

Unmistakably pressured by Moscow to undertake this demarche, East Berlin nonetheless still continued to manifest its earlier self-interested intransigence. In effect, Ulbricht opted for a policy of "preventive negotiations," i.e., for a strategy of employing inter-German talks to sabotage four power negotiations on Berlin and, possibly, even the Soviet-West German Treaty itself.¹⁶ In any event, the four-power negotiations on Berlin provided an opportunity for Ulbricht to assert anew the GDR's "legitimate interests and sovereign rights." In December, 1970, East German authorities resorted to the familiar tactic of harrasing traffic from West Germany to West Berlin in order to underscore Ulbricht's renewed demands that West Berlin be treated as "an independent political entity."¹⁷ Doubtless in response to renewed Soviet urging, Ulbricht moderated the tone of his public pronouncements concerning the four-power negotiations in the ensuing months. But the private exploratory talks that had gotten under way between Bahr (FRG) and Kohl (GDR) made little headway, nor could they have done so, as long as the East German leadership persisted in its last ditch attempt to undercut Soviet diplomacy.

The precise relationship between these obstructionist efforts and Ulbricht's unexpected retirement as First Secretary of the SED must remain a matter of speculation. That there was a relationship appears beyond serious doubt. Rather than a force to be reckoned with by Brezhnev and his associates, Ulbricht had become a challenge to be disposed of. Ulbricht's remarks to the Twenty-Fourth CPSU Party Congress, in March, 1971, invoking his personal acquaintance with Lenin, citing Lenin to the effect that "the Soviet comrades also had things to learn," and conspicuously failing to join in the fraternal chorus of indictment of China,¹⁸ had all the makings of a studied, if ill-considered, provocation. Furthermore, Ulbricht's announced intention of utilizing the Eighth SED Party Congress, scheduled for June, 1971, to unveil a comprehensive program for "the developed social system of Socialism" smacked of the unforgiveable presumption of elevating the GDR to the position of the model of an advanced Socialist society. Such doctrinal pretensions must have seemed to Brezhnev as deliberately designed to enhance Ulbricht's challenge to Soviet policy. In any case, the die was cast as early as April, 1971. Elements in the SED leadership, long thought to have been Ulbricht intimates, including Honecker, joined in the arrangements for an orderly succession which, all signs

indicate, was presided over on the spot by the Soviet Ambassador, Abrassimov.¹⁹

...and Readjustment?

It has been characteristic of the Honecker regime that it has relinquished Ulbricht's claims for the GDR as a model Socialist society in favor of a reassertion of Soviet primacy in all fields, including foreign policy toward the West. At the same time, much the same counterpoint between East Berlin and Moscow which had become so egregiously obvious during the final years of Ulbricht's tenure in office appears to persist to the present day, albeit under vastly changed circumstances and along potentially novel lines.

In retrospect, however, it is striking that the major breakthrough in East-West negotiations on Berlin, in the form of Soviet agreement to four-power sovereignty over the access routes to West Berlin, came only after Ulbricht had been replaced by Honecker in May, 1971. This Soviet concession to the Western powers effectively withdrew the grant of East German competence over these access routes which had seemingly been conferred by the 1955 Soviet-GDR Treaty. More immediately, it deprived the GDR of its previous leverage over Berlin, at least for the short run. By the same token, it left Ulbricht's successors in East Berlin with no realistic alternative except to forego,

at least for the time being, any attempt at scoring a major breakthrough on "fundamental issues," such as full West German diplomatic recognition, in favor of more circumscribed negotiations on "technical matters."²⁰

The Postal and Telecommunications Agreement of September 30, 1971, constituted the first of what was to become a series of inter-German accords, hammered out under the post-Ulbricht dispensation. This agreement covered a variety of technical matters governing communications between the two German states and West Berlin, matters that had been under recurrent discussion for several years. While the final accord did not directly relate to the Four-Power Agreement on Berlin which had been concluded on September 3, 1971, it was nonetheless of considerable significance with respect to the Berlin Agreement. In addition to providing for increased and improved communications between East Germany and West Germany and West Berlin, it also seemed to signify the GDR's agreement that the FRG might act in behalf of West Berlin. The Postal and Telecommunications Agreement thus also clearly implied East German readiness to proceed to the completion of inter-German arrangements that the four powers had directed the two German states to work out so as to implement the Four-Power Agreement on Berlin. After the anticipated tough bargaining, two accords,

regulating transit traffic between the FRG and West Berlin and access by West Berliners to the GDR and East Berlin, were successfully concluded in December, 1971.

The inter-German agreements relating to Berlin, in turn, led directly to the next round of talks between the two German states which began on January 20, 1972. These talks produced an overall transit agreement, in the form of a Traffic Treaty between the GDR and the FRG, concluded in May, 1972. The Treaty was noteworthy in several important respects. The instrument itself, containing thirty-three articles, regulated complex technical and legal details covering road, sea, and canal traffic between East Germany and West Germany, areas of repeated dispute between the two German states. Moreover, the East Germans added a supplementary declaration stating their intention of easing inter-German traffic, increasing its scope, and intensifying cultural and sports contacts. Quite apart from the specific contents of the agreement, the Traffic Treaty signified a new departure in inter-German relations in that it constituted the first interstate treaty between the GDR and the FRG. It thus served as a major step toward the Basic Treaty between East Germany and West Germany which was initialled on November 8, 1972, signed on December 21, 1972, and ratified in June, 1973.

The 1972 Basic Treaty may be viewed from any one of several different vantage points. Consisting of a Preamble, ten short articles, extensive supplementary annexes, and several exchanges of letters between the signatories, the Treaty may be regarded as little more than a compromise modus vivendi between the GDR and the FRG.²¹ It anticipated the entry of both German states into the United Nations and set out general guidelines for future relations between the GDR and the FRG. Seen in this light, the value of the treaty lay less in its specific stipulations than in their subsequent implementation about which the West Germans and the East Germans have repeatedly been at odds. Nonetheless, the very negotiation of the Basic Treaty itself constituted a remarkable achievement and one that would have been scarcely even conceivable only a few years before.

Brandt's partisan critics within West Germany pounced on the timing of the publication of the Treaty, only eleven days before the Federal Republic's 1972 parliamentary elections, and complained that it had been concluded with excessive haste. They further charged that it paid scant respect to the unity of the German nation, and, indeed, served to cement Germany's national division. In fact, the painstaking process of hammering out the specific stipulations of the Treaty had consumed well

over a thousand hours of negotiations.²² The final major stumbling block involved precisely the question of the "nation" and it was only circumvented through the ingenious device of inserting a reference in the Preamble to "different conceptions of the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic on fundamental questions, including the national question." The formulation was significantly at variance with the publicly expressed insistence of the GDR negotiator, Kohl, almost to the very end, that there was no such thing as "the national question." From the East German point of view, the Preamble represented a back-down, probably motivated by the SED's desire to abet Brandt's reelection, which Moscow strongly favored.

Even more striking, however, was the concession involved in the GDR's willingness to settle for something considerably less than full diplomatic relations, as had been stipulated in Ulbricht's draft treaty of December, 1969, and reiterated as a sine qua non subsequently. The Treaty called for the exchange of "permanent representative missions" rather than Ambassadors between Bonn and East Berlin. This could be (and has been) construed by West German spokesmen as acceptance of the FRG position that the two German states could never be foreign countries for one another. While declaring the borders

between the GDR and the FRG to be inviolable and pledging unconditional respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, both in internal affairs and in international relations, points long sought by the East Germans, the Treaty also pledged the signatories to develop "good neighborly relations," an objective consistently championed by the Brandt Government. Moreover, the Basic Treaty, no less than the inter-German accords that had preceded it, reasserted the rights and responsibilities of the four powers with respect to Germany as a whole as well as to Berlin, a position to which the Soviets had come to attach considerable importance, although one that presumably still continues to rankle the East Germans. Finally, and of the utmost significance for West German public reaction, the Treaty held out the promise of practical improvements in contacts between Germans on both sides of the border. The Treaty's supplementary instruments provided for the addition of four new border crossing points and stipulated that people in fifty-six districts adjacent to the frontier between the FRG and the GDR be allowed to cross from West to East Germany for a total of thirty days.

The hopes for normalization of relations between the GDR and the FRG as the result of the accords negotiated between them in conjunction with Brezhnev's strategy

of détente gained poignant expression in Chancellor Brandt's Inaugural Declaration of his second Government to the Bundestag in January, 1973. On that occasion, Brandt noted that "millions of our fellow countrymen have in the past weeks experienced that the Berlin Agreement, The Treaty on Traffic Questions, and the Basic Treaty are the result of a policy which in a tangible way serves the people. That families and friends of old days are coming together again does a great deal for the sense of belonging together felt by the Germans, who even under the living conditions of two opposed social systems want to remain one people."²³ Yet, only a year later, in the same forum, Brandt felt obliged to warn that "the leadership of the GDR must know that it cannot exacerbate the situation still further, without this having consequences that would extend beyond the relationship between the two [German] states."²⁴ Apart from its significance as an example of Bonn's post-Ostpolitik mode of attempting to exert influence on GDR policy through Moscow, what lay behind Brandt's complaint and did it signify any real divergence between East German and Soviet positions?

The answer to the former question involves an understanding of the strictly conditional GDR conception of detente with West Germany and its intimate linkage to the

policy of domestic Abgrenzung, a term initially employed by Ulbricht but further developed and quite systematically applied under Honecker. For East Berlin, the nub of the problem has been that personal contacts that reenforce a common national identity have always been regarded as potentially subversive of the SED's hold over the East German population. This has been true even though, with the partial exception of special social categories, such as retired persons, or else under exceptional circumstances, i.e., in the case of special family hardships, travel has been one way, from West to East. Hardly had it begun in earnest, when East German security authorities commenced to clamp down. They moved to proscribe personal contacts with West Germans entirely for "bearers of official secrets," a category that may comprise over a million East Germans.²⁵ They also embarked on a campaign to enlist further "voluntary pledges" either to abstain from contacts with West Germans visiting the GDR or else to refrain from traveling to the West, even in cases where such travel was otherwise officially sanctioned.²⁶ Finally, in a move that was particularly resented in West Germany, the Honecker regime doubled the amount of currency that Western visitors were required to exchange.²⁷

Such measures may not constitute a violation of the letter of the inter-German accords; they do, however, run

against their spirit, at least as generally interpreted by West Germans. It appears almost as if, having reluctantly agreed to lower the physical barriers separating the two Germanies, East Berlin (or at bare minimum, an influential segment of the SED/^{leadership}under Honecker) determined to reimpose the very same barriers to personal contacts, only this time internally. The fresh restrictions that were devised added a new, quite practical dimension to the regime's efforts at ideological Abgrenzung and, in fact, they were for a considerable period closely orchestrated with a sustained, intensive campaign against the ostensible menace of "Social Democracy," "revisionism," and "theories of the convergence of social systems." Even when the latter polemics abated, as in the aftermath of the Guillaume affair and Brandt's replacement by Schmidt, a less well known quantity but by the same token a Social Democratic leader less popular with the East German population and therefore a less menacing one in the eyes of the SED elite, Abgrenzung has continued. Indeed, it went to new symbolic lengths with the revision of the East German Constitution announced in connection with the GDR's twenty-fifth anniversary in the fall of 1974.²⁸ Under Honecker, more than ever had been the case under Ulbricht, the doctrine of a separate East German nation has been both officially en-

shrined and heavily propagated.

But do such doctrinal eccentricities and, even more crucially, various practical measures to water down GDR concessions to the FRG, engineered in the first place by virtue of Soviet pressure, really constitute an East German deviation from Soviet policy? The question eludes a definitive answer but the probabilities are almost all negative. In the first instance, the Soviet conception of East-West détente under Brezhnev has also laid heavy emphasis on the continued need for ideological struggle and practical vigilance. Furthermore, as concerns the GDR's domestic stability, the Soviet leadership cannot be less concerned than its East German counterpart, even though the issue has constituted much more of an obsession for the latter. Finally, distinctively "tough" East German positions may occasionally serve, whether so intended or not, to increase Soviet leverage on West Germany. At least that has been true up to a point, one beyond which attentive Soviet control over the GDR in the post-Ulbricht era need not permit the East Germans to trespass.

The latter observation holds particularly true with respect to Berlin, although the nuances between East Berlin and Moscow on the future of West Berlin remain important. The construction that Honecker has repeatedly

chosen to put on the 1971 Four-Power Agreement, namely, that it envisaged a dismantling of the West German presence, has never been fully shared to anything like the same extent by Soviet commentators.²⁹ No doubt Moscow would welcome the termination of all Western presence, including that of the FRG, in West Berlin, but the matter is of no particular urgency and may be fraught with various undesirable consequences for the Soviet Union. The latter surely include the possible loss of an important Soviet control lever over the GDR.

Much more tantalizing are the prospects for renewed East German self-assertion vis-à-vis the Soviet Union on a rather novel basis, that provided by the GDR's "opening to the West" in general and its official ties to the FRG in particular. Actually, a close study of official East German attitudes toward West Germany indicate far greater ambivalence than attention to shrill anti-West German propaganda outbursts would suggest.³⁰ This has been true with respect to all the major doctrinal issues dividing the GDR from the FRG, including even the question of the "nation" on which the official East German line has recently taken a somewhat more moderate and much more realistic turn, so as to shift the emphasis away from claims of the existence of a separate East German nation to discussions about the beginning of a long process of building

a distinctive East German nationality.³¹ While it would be premature to conclude that the German question has now become "more open than ever," there are certain unmistakable signs that the Honecker leadership may have begun to toy with novel options.

In fact, the basic option at issue, the utilization of the developing "special relationship" between the GDR and the FRG to maintain or even enhance the GDR's position in Eastern Europe and vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, need not be regarded as entirely novel. One thinks immediately of the special provisions governing the trade relationship between the two German states that were incorporated in the 1957 Treaty of Rome, establishing the EEC. Under its stipulations, inner-German trade, originally known as "Inter-Zonal Trade," has conferred upon the GDR all the trade and tariff advantages of de facto association with the Common Market. Moreover, the GDR has also come to enjoy additional trading benefits, including sizable interest free credits, regularly granted by the West German Bundesbank, on its trade clearing account. These and subsidiary benefits have been estimated to constitute an effective subsidy from West Germany to East Germany of one hundred fifty million dollars a year.³² Small wonder that despite the stress he has put on Abgrenzung in other fields, Honecker has never evinced

the slightest interest in sundering these economic connections. On the contrary, he has gone out of his way to emphasize the significance that the GDR attaches to trade relations with West Germany.³³ This is scarcely surprising inasmuch as the relationship has been so advantageous to the GDR, not least of all with respect to the economic importance it has attained within Comecon and vis-à-vis the Soviet Union.

Apart from the area of trade relations, one may also recall earlier, more/^{specifically} political forays. Perhaps the most interesting of these, Ulbricht's proposal in 1966 for an exchange of speakers between the SED and the SPD, is also the least fully understood, especially with respect to the crucial question of the degree of coordination between Moscow and East Berlin. It is not inconceivable, however, that in a moment of self-assertion during a period of relative passivity in Soviet policy, Ulbricht took the initiative toward West Germany upon himself, only to see it come to grief once Moscow began to play an active role in the preparatory arrangements.³⁴ If that was, in fact, the case, his motto might well have been something akin to Honecker's call to show the "courage to run risks," uttered with respect to the conclusion of 1972 FRG-GDR State Treaty, presumably in rejoinder to internal criticism from more timorous members of the SED

elite.³⁵

So far the "risks" the GDR has been compelled to run in the interests of Soviet policy toward the FRG have proved controllable, thanks in part to various measures of Abgrenzung. For the longer term, there is the alluring prospect that East Germany's domestic political stability may eventually be uncoupled from considerations of the state of relations between the GDR and the FRG. Short of that eventuality, the series of accords between the two German states has already given rise to a series of ongoing negotiations covering no less than thirteen separate fields. While most of these are narrowly technical, involving matters such as postal communication, border demarcation, legal aid, environmental protection and like, and the various deliberations themselves have gone largely unpublicized, all indications point to the development of genuinely amicable personal relations between the East and West German bureaucrats.

That development, in itself, is of scant political importance. Far more to the point is the contribution that such official contacts between the two German states may make toward overcoming the East German political elite's ingrained defensiveness and sense of inferiority with respect to West Germany. As that occurs, or rather,

to the extent to which it may, official GDR-FRG contacts could develop a dynamic of their own and acquire an increasingly significant political dimension bearing directly on East German-Soviet relations. It would indeed be ironic if this were to be the upshoot of the success of Soviet pressure upon a reluctant East German elite to accommodate itself to the requirements of East-West détente in Germany. It would be no less an irony if the latent dynamics of inter-German relations were to be thwarted on account of GDR's tight integration with the Socialist bloc and in particular with the Soviet Union, which the Honecker leadership has ^{also} pursued in order to guard the GDR against the dangers of détente.

V. THE PATRON-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP IN THE ERA OF
INTEGRATION AND DÉTENTE

Noting the major changes that have occurred over the past several years in East Germany's international position, Peter C. Ludz has observed that "the growing differentiation in its [international] political situation affords the GDR both more and less room for manoeuvre in its foreign policy."¹ That tantalizing observation begs immediate refinement to take fuller account of a growing paradox. For, to the extent to which détente may have come to afford East Germany increased possibilities for maneuver, its ability to utilize particular opportunities has been considerably circumscribed by the very success simultaneously achieved in the process of integrating the GDR into the Soviet-led Socialist community. In the era of détente the bonds of the Soviet-East German patron-client relationship have proliferated rather than decreased and grown stronger rather than weaker. The latter development has enhanced, at least for the short run, the Soviet Union's prerogatives as patron and correspondingly diminished the GDR's status as client.

To this state of affairs, the East German elite itself has made a major contribution. Initially motivated

by its own grave anxieties concerning the domestic consequences of détente with West Germany, it actively contributed to the tighter integration with the Soviet Union that now serves to restrain the GDR's maneuverability. Concomitant East German aspirations to attain a second-order patronage within the Socialist community seem unlikely to loosen Soviet restraints upon GDR policy toward the West. In any event, one contributor to a recent commemorative volume on East German foreign policy aptly summarized East Berlin's basic intentions. "The GDR saw the solution to its own foreign policy problems," he wrote, "in the strengthening of the community of Socialist states and simultaneously strove to make its own contribution to its common policy."² All nuances momentarily aside, Honecker's basic conception of the dialectics of détente and integration fully accorded with that of Brezhnev, at least at the outset.

Basic Conceptions

Soviet foreign policy under the stewardship of Brezhnev may come to be remembered more for the advances scored in securing control over Eastern Europe rather than for progress achieved in détente with the West. Unlike Khrushchev, Brezhnev has opted for "cohesion" over "viability" in Eastern Europe.³ Accordingly, Moscow has championed ever stricter conformity of East European foreign

and domestic policies to those of the Soviet Union over any national differentiation that might enhance the domestic legitimacy of Communist rule but attenuate Soviet hegemony over the area. While the relationship between Soviet bloc cohesion and East-West detente may not have been fully thought through at the very beginning of Brezhnev's overtures toward the West for a relaxation of tensions in Europe, the linkage has subsequently been made quite explicit. From the Soviet point of view, the very process of detente requires the tightest possible bloc discipline. Precisely in a "time of detente," as an authoritative Polish voice expressed it, "the unity of the Socialist countries, and primarily diverse forms of cooperation with the Soviet Union, must be strengthened in deeds, not words."⁴

No great visionary, Brezhnev has unveiled no grand design aimed at the instantaneous realization of the "unity of the socialist camp," comparable, say, to Khrushchev's abortive 1961-2 scheme to impose supranational economic planning from the top down. Rather, his approach has been more pragmatic and piecemeal. While nurturing the appearance of fostering a genuinely conciliar system, and thus necessarily allowing some scope for the expression of particular national interests, the overriding emphasis has been on Soviet-orchestrated

consensus. That objective, in turn, has prompted a wide variety of measures aimed at comprehensive integration in all fields.

The area of military coordination provides one pointed illustration of comprehensive integration under the guise of conciliarism. The reforms of the Warsaw Treaty Organization, introduced in 1969, offered the Soviet Union's East European clients greater rights of consultation but they also further institutionalized Soviet command and control. Much the same has been true with respect to the more narrowly political field. The proliferation of bilateral and multilateral meetings, capped by convocations of the top party leaderships, such as the annual Crimea summer summits from 1971 to 1973, doubtless offer increased opportunity for the "exchange of opinions." But these consultations have also unmistakably served to enforce Soviet discipline in political and ideological matters. Finally, mention must be made of the special importance attached to the economic sphere. Here, the approach has been conspicuously incremental and involved sectoral integration "from the bottom up." While progress has been uneven, significant strides have been made in the direction of interlocking the East European economies with one another and, more especially, with the Soviet economy. As one Western commentator has

observed, "presumably the ambition is that eventually the interlocking will be so complete as to make supra-national planning the logical culmination of this process."⁵ Should that come to pass, it might well signal the actual attainment of what Soviet spokesmen in the Brezhnev era have come to invoke as the "fusion of national and international interests" as the ultimate consummation of the "development of the objective tendency toward socialist internationalization."⁶

Short of such long term perspectives, the multifaceted program of comprehensive integration unfolded under Brezhnev is clearly designed to counter all potentially disruptive influences that the pursuit of détente might exert on Eastern Europe. The basic Soviet conception linking cohesion to coexistence, i.e., integration to détente, has dictated special attention to East Germany. The reason is entirely obvious. By virtue of its geopolitical position, the GDR is uniquely critical to the prospects for success of both détente and integration.

It might appear, at first glance, that East Germany's unique role should serve to enhance GDR inputs into Soviet policy-making and increase East Berlin's leverage on Moscow. If that has not been the case so far, the explanation need not prove particularly elusive. Two sets of basic considerations are at play to inhibit East German self-

assertion vis-à-vis the Soviet Union.

The first of these revolve around the vast asymmetry between the Soviet Union and the GDR in sheer power terms. Without belaboring the obvious, the preponderance enjoyed by the Soviet Union over East Germany in terms of geographic expanse, size of population, economic wealth, and military strength, remains simply enormous. Even more to the point is an acute consciousness of all the basic power disparities on the part of the East German elite as well as, one may be sure, on that of various Soviet functionaries at all levels with whom the East Germans now have to deal in growing numbers in a variety of institutional settings devised by Soviet policy makers for the active exercise of Soviet hegemony.

This, in turn, leads to the second set of considerations, involving intangible, but nonetheless quite real, psychological factors. For a quarter of a century, the SED leadership has been conditioned by hypersensitivity to the assumption that however important East Germany may become for the Soviet Union, the Soviet Union will remain absolutely vital to the very survival of the GDR. That assumption, of course, was based upon yet another: namely, that Germany's national division between East and West permanently deprived the SED of the possibility of ever winning the allegiance of the East German population on

a narrowly national basis and constantly challenged the legitimacy and threatened the domestic stability of Communist rule. Given these attitudes toward the "national question," major segments of the SED leadership and many East German sub-elites have quite genuinely adhered to Soviet-centered "proletarian (or socialist) internationalism" as a kind of Ersatz patriotism.

The phenomenon of East German elite self-identification in the international rather than the national arena may be akin to what occurred in West Germany at the popular as well as at the elite level during the first decade after the Second World War, when enthusiasm for Europe was particularly widespread, presumably because participation in building supranational European structures offered Germans rehabilitation from the status of political outcasts. Subsequently many West German elites developed transnational loyalties which they exhibit to the present day. A comparable process of the transfer of primary allegiance may have gone even further in the case of East Germany. Not only was it preceded by a long, if debilitating experience of Moscow-oriented internationalism on the part of German Communism but it has also been furthered by the availability of opportunities for East German talent within a number of bilateral Soviet-East German and multilateral East European bureaucracies. While it

would be far-fetched to speak of the GDR as on the road to becoming a transnational "society,"⁸ the degree to which its various elites have become enmeshed in transnational networks ought not to be neglected. All of these factors serve to limit the extent of the GDR's self-assertion, even if they certainly are a long way from ruling it out entirely.

The very same factors also help explain the initial eagerness with which Honecker championed integration with the Soviet Union as a counterpoint to détente with the Federal Republic. Honecker's basic conception was scarcely more elaborate than the supposition that the surest way to protect the GDR against domestic inroads from the FRG was to strengthen its ties with the Soviet Union. This involved practical measures to further bilateral integration in all spheres, framed against doctrinal pronouncements endorsing Soviet policy in all areas. At the very outset, Honecker conspicuously backed away from Ulbricht's prior ideological presumption in having put forward normative claims for the GDR's experience in the "construction of socialism" in favor of an explicit reassertion of the absolute primacy of the Soviet model.⁹ Then, in conjunction with the theory (and practice!) of Abgrenzung, SED spokesmen laid heavy emphasis on "socialist internationalism" as a necessary imperative

for all Communist parties, a norm of socialist international law, and, with the 1974 amendments to the GDR Constitution, of domestic constitutional law as well. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the high point in the entire doctrinal campaign celebrating Soviet primacy came precisely as GDR-FRG relations were being normalized in late 1972, when Honecker eulogized Soviet experience in developing a multi-national polity and came close to advocating the virtual incorporation of the GDR into the USSR as a constituent Soviet Socialist Republic.¹⁰ The grandiloquence may have been deemed only appropriate for the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the constitution of the Soviet state as a multinational union, but the extent to which it was simultaneously propagated by SED spokesmen was nothing short of astounding.¹¹

Yet, it would be mistaken to suppose that all of this has amounted to Honecker's outright renunciation of any privilege of advocacy on behalf of the GDR's special interests in Kremlin councils. On the contrary, by renouncing Ulbricht's unsuccessful strategy of the direct challenge in favor of a course of readiness to implement the Soviet Union's general policies and eagerness to profess the utmost in loyalty to Moscow's basic objectives, the SED leadership may conceivably have fashioned a more effective setting for the expression of GDR interests.

At least that might have been the case, or else would have been true to an even greater degree, had not Honecker, much like Ulbricht before him but even more readily, in response to the perceived requirements of Brezhnev's own schemes for comprehensive integration, not cooperated in practical steps to strengthen the bonds of clientage in "an association which the GDR by itself will not be in a position to sever, at least for the foreseeable future."¹²

The Ties That Bind:

Political

For all the difficulties Ulbricht caused Brezhnev and despite the obvious differences of roles and therefore also of perception that still distinguish East Berlin under Honecker from Moscow, it is well to bear in mind the general congruity of fundamental political objectives that serves to align the GDR closely to the Soviet Union. Agreement on basic goals, both domestic and international, has long provided the matrix for the development of specific bilateral ties.

The central element in the congruity of fundamental political objectives is, of course, the shared East German-Soviet commitment to Germany's national division. It lies at the very heart of the GDR's raison d'etre and has been

a major Soviet policy objective ever since the mid-nineteen fifties. The disagreements that have thus far erupted between the GDR and the Soviet Union have been entirely marginal, even though they have involved not only matters of tactics but also, as in the case of Ulbricht's strenuous objections to Moscow's *démarche* toward Bonn, a question of strategy as well. To be sure, differences of emphasis persist even today. One need only note the contrast in the pronouncements of Honecker and Brezhnev on the occasion of the Soviet leader's visit to East Berlin for the celebration of the GDR's twenty-fifth anniversary in October, 1974. While endorsing "sensible relations between the GDR and the FRG," Honecker saw fit to stress yet again that "imperialism [had] not changed its aggressive nature,"¹³ Brezhnev, for his part, all but lectured his East German audience about "the practical worth" of relations with the FRG, the "importance" to "the socialist countries' overall course" of the "normalization and development of relations between the two German states," and concluded by pointing to the "clear conscience" enjoyed by "the Soviet Communists" with respect to their record "in defending the interests of the fraternal GDR."¹⁴ Yet, significant though such differences of emphasis certainly are, Brezhnev and Honecker have something more fundamental in common. Both have staked

their historical reputations, if not their political careers, on détente.¹⁵ Each has also developed, although for somewhat different reasons, a vested interest in Soviet-East German political integration.

The development of bilateral ties with the Soviet Union was long fostered by Ulbricht for the double purpose of maximizing the Soviet political commitment to the GDR and providing East Germany with the greatest possible leverage over Soviet policy toward the West. The very same objectives also animate Honecker, even though his personal stature vis-à-vis the Kremlin all but precludes the fanciful heights of influence over the Soviet Union's grand policy to which Ulbricht once aspired. What has characterized the years since Honecker took office as SED First Secretary, however, has been the proliferation and greater institutionalization of Soviet-GDR ties. The process began well before the leadership transition in East Berlin of May, 1971, but it has subsequently gone to such lengths as to render entirely credible East German claims of "integration," if not with the Socialist community as a whole, then certainly with the USSR, as contrasted, for example, with Polish statements about that country's "alliance" with the USSR.¹⁶

In surveying the strictly political ties between the

GDR and the Soviet Union, it is useful, if somewhat schematic, to consider separately relations at the ideological, party, and state levels. Of all these areas, ties have always been closest in the ideological sphere. With the sole exception of Ulbricht's doctrinal departures in behalf of the GDR's ostensible model of socialism under advanced industrial conditions, East German Communist ideology has always faithfully mirrored orthodox Soviet interpretations, sometimes to the point of seeming to carry them to uncalled-for lengths. In any event, ideological coordination between the GDR and the Soviet Union has posed no special problems at all since Ulbricht's political demise, if only because it is to East Germany's best interest for the SED to be in complete ideological harmony with the CPSU. In this way, it has even proved possible for the Honecker leadership to acquire some of the practical attributes of the "model" status to which Ulbricht laid explicit doctrinal claim. Thus, for example, the two bloc wide meetings of Central Committee Secretaries responsible for ideological matters that took place in Moscow in December, 1973 and in Prague in March, 1975 were preceded by and modelled upon the bilateral CPSU-SED ideological meetings of October, 1970 and May, 1972. At such multilateral ideological gatherings, the SED can be counted upon to champion CPSU posi-

tions. Thanks to this reliability, East Berlin was selected as the site for the forthcoming all-European conference of Communist parties, scheduled for the summer of 1975, and the SED has already taken the lead for the CPSU by putting forward a draft conference document embodying basic Soviet positions.¹⁷ Given this role, it is scarcely surprising that Soviet spokesmen are now willing explicitly to grant some small portion of the claims once advanced by Ulbricht. How else to interpret Demichev's recent statement that "the experiences of the German Democratic Republic are of great international significance ...proving that socialism guarantees the quick and comprehensive development of every country, even an economically advanced one"?¹⁸

Ideological ties form a major component of party to party relations but they do not exhaust them. In fact, if a recent East German account is to be believed, "the close, comprehensive cooperation between the SED and the CPSU constitutes the vital core of relations between the GDR and the USSR. [The two parties together] direct and coordinate the entire multifaceted and interlocking system of relations between both states and assure its functioning as a unified whole on the basis of the principles of Marxism-Leninism."¹⁹ Such lavish descriptions whet the appetite for specific details. Unfortunately, they are

unavailable. What can be documented, however, is the proliferation of bilateral meetings and "exchanges of experience" at all levels of party organization, from the very top leadership, through Central Committee and Secretariat specialists, down to regional, district, and even individual enterprise organizations.²⁰ Presumably, contacts at all these levels are well on the way to being institutionalized on a regular basis. The latter development will be facilitated by the close similarity in organizational structure between the SED and the CPSU and by their shared Leninist organizational psychology. It is also being enhanced by a variety of collaborative ideological undertakings, of which the project for a new edition of the complete works of Marx and Engels, to appear simultaneously in both Russian and German, is perhaps the most ambitious.²¹

All such party ties, considered in the context of the Honecker's unconditional reassertion of the Soviet "leading role," posit the presumption of heightened Soviet coordination and control. At the very apex, these functions seem to fall upon the Soviet Ambassador. The recent re-assignment to East Berlin of Pëtr Abrassimov, a Soviet Central Committee member and the veteran specialist on German affairs, who apparently had an active hand in engineering Ulbricht's downfall, calls to mind the pre-

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rogatives that seem to be enjoyed by a Soviet Ambassador of high party rank. The particular appointment itself may also serve to suggest Moscow's determination to monitor strictly the many official contacts that have now developed between the GDR and the FRG.

The actual exercise of such monitoring and control functions doubtless also occurs at the interstate level, through such contacts as those embodied in the regular "working discussions" between representatives of the GDR and Soviet Foreign Ministries,²² as well as in the much employed multilateral context of meetings of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Treaty Organization.

Of all the many inter-governmental bodies, probably none is more important than the Joint Governmental Commission for Economic and Scientific-Technological Cooperation, established in 1966. It has presided over an imposing array of Soviet-East German agreements governing exchanges between individual enterprises, industrial branches, and scientific and technological cooperation more generally, including joint research projects.²³ In this particular area, the relationship between the two sides is presumably much more equal than in the strictly political realm, although, as will be seen shortly, the economic predominance of the Soviet Union over the GDR has increased in recent years.

Finally, brief ^{ence} refer/ should be made to ties in certain sensitive areas, security affairs in particular. While details are obviously lacking, it can be quite safely assumed that the GDR's State Security Service (SSD) is closely interlocked with the KGB, perhaps even more so than in the case of comparable establishments elsewhere in Eastern Europe. The matter would not even deserve mention at all, save for journalistic speculation in connection with the Guillaume affair that the uncovering of the East German spy's infiltration into Chancellor Brandt's entourage might damage Soviet-GDR relations on the supposition that Guillaume's activities had been unknown to Soviet authorities. Can anyone seriously contemplate "comprehensive, multifaceted integration" à la russe that overlooked intelligence functions and the secret police?

Military

The twenty Soviet divisions still stationed on East German soil have always been regarded in the West as the ultimate factor ensuring Soviet political dominance over the GDR and, indeed, securing the SED's control over its own population. From the Soviet point of view, these armed forces serve several different functions. They fulfill both defensive and possible offensive requirements vis-à-vis the West. They also contribute to alliance

political discipline throughout the Northern Tier and facilitate the forward projection of Soviet political influence to the West.²⁴ Significantly enough, the presence of so imposing a Soviet military force has not been the source of any known friction with the GDR. Now, as in the past, its leadership continues to place great stock in the mammoth Soviet military presence as a guarantee of the Soviet political commitment to the GDR and as a deterrent against East German domestic unrest. For its part, East Germany's own defense establishment has engaged in frequent and much propagandized military exercises designed to underscore the GDR's "defense readiness" for the transparent purpose of demonstrating to the Soviet Union that the GDR is well worth defending because it intends to make every effort to defend itself.²⁵

The relationship between East Germany's armed forces, the National People's Army (NVA) and the Group of Soviet Forces in Germany (GSFG) is revealing in several respects. In the first instance, the GSFG vastly outnumbers the NVA. With its twenty divisions, ten of these tank divisions, more than a thousand aircraft, and nuclear weaponry, the GSFG constitutes the largest, best equipped and most combat-ready deployment of Soviet theater forces outside the USSR.²⁶ By contrast, the NVA disposes of only six divisions, many of them understrength, somewhat over three

hundred combat aircraft, and modest naval forces. East Germany's para-military forces, comprising Border Guards and security troops, account for close to a third of the total number of East Germans on active military or para-military service.²⁷ Unlike the GSFG, the NVA lacks the capacity for offensive operations and its equipment, though modern, is entirely dependent on Soviet supplies. Furthermore, the 1957 Soviet-East German agreement, which still governs the stationing of Soviet troops in the GDR, entitles the High Command of the GSFG to deal with any threat to its security at will, subject only to "appropriate consultations" with the East German authorities. This constitutes a far more permissive stipulation than any contained in comparable agreements between the Soviet Union and other East European states where Soviet forces are stationed, with the possible but notorious exception of Czechoslovakia.

All of the GDR's military forces serve under the control of the Supreme Command of the Warsaw Treaty Organization. Within the WTO's subordinate military bureaucracies, NVA officers have come to play a conspicuous role ever since the Soviet Union began to utilize the Warsaw Pact's formal structures to coordinate foreign policy and enforce political discipline. Indeed, the GDR's long time Minister of Defense and NVA Commander, Gen. Heinz Hoffmann, has

enjoyed the singular distinction of commanding no less than three of the major joint pact military maneuvers, Operations "Quartet" in 1963, "Brotherhood of Arms" in 1970, and "Autumn Storm" in 1971.²⁸

Such distinctions may well be indicative of the NVA's part in what Hoffmann himself recently characterized as "the standardization of policy and ideology" in conjunction with "the standardization of armaments and equipment."²⁹ In any event, the ties that bind the NVA to the GSFG have become numerous and very tight. If the GDR Defense Minister is to be taken at his (unpublished!) word, plans are now afoot to extend the practical coordination between East German and Soviet military forces "down to the unit level."³⁰

Economic

Although officially committed to COMECON integration and more receptive in recent years than before to its implementation on a multilateral basis, East Germany has always especially emphasized bilateral economic ties between the GDR and the Soviet Union. In the economic realm as in all others, the primary considerations have been political, to maximize the Soviet Union's vested interest in the GDR and to enhance East Germany's standing within the East European bloc and vis-à-vis the Soviet Union.

In many respects, the network of bilateral economic ties binding the GDR to the Soviet Union have proved mutually advantageous. For all its strides in economic development and technological advances, East Germany has always labored under the handicap of a wholly inadequate resource and raw materials base of its own. The pre-World War II industrial development of the region that now comprises the GDR depended heavily upon inputs from other parts of Germany. Today, the Soviet Union serves as East Germany's major supplier, covering 90% of its needs in crude oil and cotton, 80-90% in iron ore, 70% in zinc, 60% in aluminum, 50-60% in lead, 45% in copper and timber, 30-40% in rolled steel, 33% in pig iron, and 30% in newsprint.³¹ The USSR also provides the GDR with a stable long-term market for many of its products that are not yet competitive on the world market. For its part, the GDR has, of course, emerged as a major and valued trading partner for the USSR. East Germany supplies the Soviet Union with machinery, machine tools, precision instruments, high quality electronics, a wide variety of chemical and petrochemical products as well as with both industrial and non-industrial consumer goods. Indeed, entire branches of GDR industry (ship-building is one example) produce largely for the Soviet market.

Under Ulbricht, during the sixties, the GDR's special

economic relationship with the Soviet Union was heavily propagated as constituting a genuine bilateral "economic community" (Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft). East German spokesmen expressed correspondingly less interest in COMECON-wide economic integration. To be sure, they did not object to plans for specialization, as was the case with the Romanians. But they were notably unenthusiastic about any and all measures that appeared to jeopardize the GDR's bilateral economic ties to the Soviet Union.³² Quite remarkably, the GDR for a long time even managed to maintain its own technical standards, inherited from the pre-World War II period, in the face of general standardization with COMECON. It also succeeded in retaining the rights to its own industrial licenses, patents, and other scientific-technical documentation or else came to enjoy the privilege of selling these materials exclusively to the Soviet Union and for a reasonable price.³³ But these achievements must be viewed against the larger context of incessant Soviet pressures on the structure of bilateral trade and therefore upon the GDR's domestic economy. Given the political stakes, these larger pressures were irresistible for Ulbricht and this has certainly been no less true for Honecker.

Given the attention accorded Brezhnev in the seventies to bloc-wide economic integration, the East Germans have

had little choice but to participate more actively in various COMECON structures and projects, many of which are advantageous to the GDR in any case. Nonetheless, the accent, if now somewhat muted, remains where it has long been, on bilateral economic ties to the Soviet Union. Indeed, the GDR is well ahead of other COMECON states in the process of interlocking (or, to use the much more evocative German term, Verflechtung) of the East German economy with that of the Soviet Union. Long term joint national economic planning, reciprocal investment projects, the establishment of self-financing bilateral economic associations, such as "Assofoto" in the photochemical industry, are all hallmarks of this process. Research and development in fields employing advanced technology, e.g., nuclear energy, data processing and the like, have been particularly affected. Thus, for example, for 1972, eighty percent of the research and development projects authorized by the GDR state plan for science and technology were to be carried out in direct conjunction with Soviet projects.³⁴

How much political mileage may accrue to East Germany on account of the lengths to which its leadership has been willing to go to interlock the GDR economy with that of the Soviet Union is open to question. Indeed, East Germany's special economic relationship with the Soviet Union may

itself have become somewhat problematic. At least this will be the case to the extent to which the Soviet Union gains access to other, much more promising sources of industrial goods, advanced technology, and capital in the West, including, of course, West Germany. Worse yet, from the point of view of East German interests, recent, largely unanticipated developments, the world-wide inflation and the energy shortage in particular, have had the effect of weakening the GDR's international economic position, including its unique trade ties with the FRG. These developments have rendered the GDR even more dependent economically upon the Soviet Union and thus also provided Moscow with yet additional means of coordinating and controlling East German policy.

The GDR in the Socialist Community

As long as East Germany displayed economic prowess and behaved as the loyalist of the loyal among Soviet-client states, its leaders may be forgiven for having nurtured aspirations of the GDR's becoming secondus inter pares in the Socialist community. That aspiration, if not something more, was implicit in Ulbricht's doctrinal claims for the East German system as a "model." It was also embodied in the late East German leader's efforts at coordinating East European foreign policies toward the FRG in line with his own. Under Honecker, the aspiration

of presiding over a second-order patronage within the Socialist community has been muted. Yet, it clearly persists in more subtle ways and, if anything, may have gained force precisely by virtue of the SED's renewed stress on the primacy of the Soviet Union, together with the practical measures taken to integrate the GDR with the USSR, which themselves comprise something of a model of Brezhnev's aspirations with respect to Soviet relations with the rest of Eastern Europe. In addition, there remains the realm of relations with the FRG, in which under the novel circumstances of détente, East Germany could just conceivably become the pace setter for its immediate neighbors to the east. Intriguingly enough, West German policy appears to have helped create the preconditions for precisely such a role for the GDR.

However this may be, it is well to reflect on a recent, quite astute observation by Vernon Aspaturian. "With the danger of overt conflict between East and West diminished," he has suggested, "increased interaction among the East European states may be expected, even to the extent of forming informal sub-bloc groupings on various issues. As long as the Soviet connection is not challenged, the process may continue even to the point of transforming the Soviet-East European relationship as a surrogate for sundering it."³⁵ The "sub-bloc grouping"

at particular issue for purposes of our analysis comprises the GDR, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. Within it, "interaction" has increased quite notably since 1972, although scarcely along lines that would entitle one to forecast a "transformation" of relationships with the Soviet Union.

Despite earlier East German efforts to fashion the Northern Tier into an "iron triangle" of political hostility against West Germany, regional integration proved elusive. In fact the goal itself was not even pursued with any degree of seriousness until the beginning of the seventies and then primarily within the geographically more extensive frameworks of the Warsaw Treaty Organization and COMECON. As a result, to invoke the existence of a special trilateral relationship involving the GDR, Poland, and Czechoslovakia today would be quite far-fetched. At stake rather are sets of bilateral relationships, between the GDR and Poland, the GDR and Czechoslovakia, and, to a lesser extent and of less interest here in any case, between Poland and Czechoslovakia.

Within the Northern Tier, GDR-Polish relations are politically more important but also considerably more problematic than GDR-Czechoslovak relations. Under the joint aegis of Honecker and Gierak, the East German-Polish relationship has become particularly close and

cordial, at least on the surface. There have been full-dress summit meetings between party and government leaders of both countries annually since 1971. The meeting that took place in June, 1973, in East Berlin produced a joint document, entitled "Consolidating the Friendship and Deepening the Relations Between the Polish People's Republic and the German Democratic Republic," to which both sides have accorded considerable importance as a concrete expression of their mutual desire for a special relationship and an impetus to its further development.³⁶ In fact, the joint declaration was unprecedented in that no comparable document had previously marked the bilateral ties between other Warsaw Pact countries. Within the framework it provided, ideological and other party contacts have proliferated at all levels, from top Central Committee and Secretariat echelons down to regional and district party organizations, especially in the areas immediately adjacent to the Oder-Neisse frontier.³⁷

One of the concerns of such joint local party meetings may involve various practical issues relating to the sizable number of Poles who daily cross the frontier to work in the GDR and the approximately forty thousand Polish workers who actually reside in East Germany. Both groups help relieve the GDR's increasingly acute labor shortage

and their employment has been hailed as a manifestation of "socialist internationalism in action." The very same designation has also been applied to the upsurge in tourism between the two countries following upon the introduction of visa-free travel in January, 1972, even though the experiment had subsequently to be curtailed through the reimposition of currency restrictions and customs barriers.

Both the movement of labor and the expansion of tourism fit into more elaborate schemes for closer and better coordinated bilateral economic relations. As Poland's second largest trading partner, the GDR has long been looked to for capital equipment, specialized industrial products, and technological know-how. In order to tailor Polish wants to East German needs in foodstuffs, raw materials, and manpower, joint economic planning has been undertaken in a variety of areas. In addition, a few major joint investment and management cooperation projects aimed at "interlocking" specific economic sectors have been initiated and others are on the drawing boards. The most notable arrangements so far have involved the construction of a jointly financed and operated cotton spinning plant near Katowice and the establishment of "Interport" to administer jointly the six Polish and East German Baltic ports, thereby presumably

ending the rivalry between them and settling the long standing East German-Polish conflict over Szczecin (Stettin).

To what extent, however, does all of this serve as a harbinger of political coordination with respect to foreign policy? Apparently such bilateral coordination was undertaken with some success during the period of initial Soviet, Polish, and East German negotiations with the FRG.³⁸ Underlying that success were congruent interests vis-à-vis West Germany and, for that matter, the Soviet Union, lest Moscow have slighted GDR and Polish interests in its rush to reciprocate Bonn's Ostpolitik. It is also notable that on the occasion of his 1973 visit to East Berlin, Gierek pronounced the existence of "a coincidence of interests and a political interdependence"³⁹ between Poland and the GDR. If such a "coincidence of interests" does exist, it can only be based upon a perpetuation of a degree of hostility between the two German states which would leave the development of relations with the FRG to Poland, as well as, of course, to the Soviet Union. All signs suggest that the Poles are particularly and quite understandably distrustful of any significant degree of reassociation between the GDR and the FRG and determined, if need be, to counter what one Polish commentator has referred to as the GDR's "very active foreign policy."⁴⁰

GDR relations with Czechoslovakia have been devoid

of such subtleties, at least since the 1968 invasion or, to be more precise, the "normalization" that began when Husak replaced Dubcek in April, 1969. In fact, it has been with respect to Czechoslovakia more than toward any other single Warsaw Pact state that the GDR has arrogated to itself the role of tutor-patron. The tutelage began even before the Honecker-Husak summit meeting in Lany in November, 1971 and has developed steadily ever since. By the end of the following year no less than 188 "exchanges" of party and state delegations, dating back to April, 1969, had been recorded. These contacts led to the conclusion of a wide range of interstate agreements and protocols covering cooperation in cultural fields, including general educational affairs, university education, radio, television, films, as well as more technical matters, such as postal and telecommunications.⁴¹ All of these agreements, no less than the concomitant contacts between ranking ideological functionaries of the SED and the KPCS, embodied the GDR's active role as mentor to a Czechoslovakia trying to find its way along the unfamiliar road of "normalizing" party rule and reinstating orthodox Leninist practices in the aftermath of their corruption by "revisionism." Under the circumstances, the East German-Czechoslovak relationship was bound to be an unequal one with special privileges conferred upon the GDR.

Among other things, this was manifest in the border transit agreement which came into effect in January, 1972. In essence, it opened up Czechoslovakia to a veritable invasion by East German tourists without granting the Czechs anything like equal rights of unrestricted travel to the GDR.⁴²

Czechoslovakia's post-1969 political realignment also facilitated the intensification of its economic relations with the GDR. While economic ties remain less comprehensive than those between East Germany and Poland, the GDR has become Czechoslovakia's second largest trade partner, immediately after the Soviet Union. Cooperation has been intensified particularly in scientific-technical fields. At last reckoning, there were 11 inter-governmental, 7 inter-ministerial, and 90 other agreements on specialization and cooperation in research and production, covering some 1,800 products in the fields of engineering, electro-technology, and the electronic, chemical, and light industries.⁴³

Nowhere has the patron aspect of the GDR-Czechoslovak relationship been more apparent than in the coordination of relations with the FRG. In return for vociferous support for Prague's position on the extent of renunciation of the 1938 Munich agreement to be required of Bonn, East Berlin took an active hand in concocting the difficulties

raised by Czechoslovakia with respect to the inclusion of a Berlin clause in the treaty establishing diplomatic relations with West Germany.⁴⁴ The compromise eventually engineered between the FRG and Czechoslovakia could be accounted a setback for Bonn. In any case, Czechoslovakia seems destined to remain under constant East German pressure to follow the GDR's lead in relations with West Germany, in accordance with the stipulation of the recent East German-Czechoslovak agreement that both states would insist on the "consistent implementation" of all the treaties concluded between the states of the Socialist community and the FRG and on "strict observance" of the quadripartite agreement on West Berlin.⁴⁵ That stipulation was contained in the comprehensive "Declaration on Strengthening the Friendship and Deepening the Fraternal Cooperation between the CPCS and the SED, and Between the CSSR and the GDR," concluded in October, 1974, and modelled on the 1973 Polish-East German document of comparable title, but even more imposing by virtue of its inclusion of party relations. Unlike the case of Poland, Czechoslovakia may be expected to remain in close alignment with the GDR, at least as long as Czechoslovakia continues to labor under the international and domestic handicaps that have afflicted the Husak regime.

As concerns the GDR's role in the Socialist community

as a whole, East German influence wanes in direct proportion to geographic distance. To be sure, the GDR remains an economic and technological power within COMECON, a position that it will retain for the foreseeable future.⁴⁶ But its very status as a highly developed industrial society renders the GDR less than wildly enthusiastic about contributing to the industrial growth of less developed member-states, with the conspicuous exception of the Soviet Union. As East Germany's Permanent Representative on COMECON's Executive Committee is fond of putting it virtually as an afterthought, "the GDR has also contributed in recent years, with the limited means available to it, to support the industrialization of formerly less developed countries, in order to create preconditions for industrial cooperation with all member states."⁴⁷ Within COMECON's overall institutional structure, the GDR does not yet enjoy particularly notable weight. Of COMECON's twenty nine Standing Commissions, the East Germans at present chair only three, those on Standardization, Construction, and Chemical Industry. All told, the GDR can scarcely be regarded as having attained disproportionate influence within the Soviet-led Eastern bloc, except perhaps within the ideological arena and there only because of its strict adherence to Soviet positions.

This does not, of course, mean that the East Germans

would not like to play a greater role within the Socialist community. It does, however, suggest that the political resources available to the GDR in attempting to do so have always been sharply circumscribed. The Chinese option may have been toyed with by Ulbricht, but quite elemental geopolitical considerations have always ruled out any real possibilities of turning the Sino-Soviet dispute to the GDR's advantage. China's current flirtation with West Germany may not be a major factor in global politics but it does serve to align the GDR even more closely to the Soviet Union. With the transformation of the German problem since 1972, all that remains to the GDR in its relations with the Socialist community and with the Soviet Union is the developing East German - West German connection. It is obviously too soon to tell, but conceivably that connection may yet look quite large.

VI. FUTURE PROSPECTS

From a "state that might not to have been" to a limited actor in its own right in East-West relations, what future to predict for the GDR? Or, since specific predictions are at all odds completely ill-advised, what can be said about the general prospects for the future of the East German - Soviet relationship?

Barring a scenario such as that depicted by Amalrik's Will the Soviet Union Survive Until 1984?, it is utterly improbable either that the Soviet Union will decide to abandon the GDR or else that East Berlin will seek to break away from Moscow. If East German anxieties on the first count live on, that is in part because it is in the Soviet interest not to let them subside entirely. By the very same token, however, the GDR leadership under Honecker, no less than was the case under Ulbricht during his last years but under quite different circumstances, may find itself impelled toward more active self-assertion in the relationship, especially where its own vital interests are at stake. That may seem only self-evident but it also points to the crux of the entire matter. If there is a key to the future of the East German - Soviet relationship, it may be found in each side's assessment of its own interests.

As long as the Soviet Union continues to consider the

division of Germany essential to its own national security, along most if not all the lines (territorial, nuclear, ideological, and relative) along which the concept of 'national security' has come to be viewed by Soviet leaders,² Moscow's rapprochement with Bonn will never go beyond certain outer limits. Within these confines, to be sure, there is still considerable room for maneuver, especially as regards the Soviet desire for West German technology and credits. Although the volume of trade between the Soviet Union and the FRG has risen impressively, more than doubling between 1970 and 1974,³ Soviet expectations have barely begun to be fulfilled. In part, this has been because the Soviet Union has been unwilling or unable to create the political conditions that would have facilitated the attainment of its economic objectives vis-à-vis West Germany. As in the case of the recurrent difficulties concerning Berlin, this failure may merely be an illustration of the clash of different objectives on the part of Soviet policy makers. But if so, that clash itself may also testify to the consideration given in Moscow to East German concerns. To that extent, GDR interests become an integral part of the Soviet decision making process. As a result, the ensuing contortions, or even just delays in Moscow's decision making process may serve to deprive Soviet policy

toward West Germany of such of the desired political impact.

It may well turn out, to cite one topical example, that agreement will be reached, over East German objections, to string one of the power lines from the projected Kaliningrad nuclear energy plant through West Berlin. But any such agreement will have occurred only after protracted and otherwise unnecessary West German-Soviet wrangling over the issue. The particular matter is of even greater significance in one quite crucial respect. It clearly illustrates that despite the Soviet Union's determination that the GDR not be allowed to set the pace of détente, either by blocking the normalization of Soviet relations with the FRG or else by developing its own contacts with West Germany except under strict Soviet supervision, East Germany simply cannot be factored out entirely from any of the many Soviet-West German equations.

That being the case, the single most tantalizing aspect of the East German - Soviet relationship involves a possible change in the GDR's definition of its own vital interests. For much if not most of its quarter century history, GDR interests have been predicated upon a state of unremitting hostility toward the FRG. There is no need at this point to rehearse the elemental reasons why this

has been the case. It is much more pertinent to inquire into the prospects for a redefinition of GDR interests and explore the ramifications of any such change.

Certainly, the GDR has always had a special interest in its unique economic connections with the FRG. Under the disadvantageous conditions that have developed with respect to its position in international trade in general and in its economic relations with the Soviet Union in particular, that interest seems bound to persist and even grow for the foreseeable future. The really crucial question, however, is the extent to which the GDR's overall relationship with the FRG can be uncoupled from the SED leadership's calculations of East Germany's internal stability and domestic security.

Thus far at least, East Berlin has good grounds for feeling some confidence about its ability to contain the domestic impact of contacts with West Germany. According to officially released figures, there were almost three and a half million West German visits to the GDR in 1972 and an additional three and a half million from West Berlin during the same year. For 1973 the figures were approximately the same. Presumably the number of West Germans and West Berliners who visited the GDR during 1974 declined, if only because of the increased currency exchange requirements. But the number of East German pensioners visiting

the West continued to climb. In fact, each year since 1965 an average of one million retired East Germans have visited the West and returned to the GDR without any noticeable political effect. The impact of the influx of West Germans and West Berliners into the GDR has been and is still being carefully scrutinized by means of survey research-type questionnaires conducted under the auspices of the SED Central Committee. Whatever they may show, the East German system's ability to withstand the initial shock of a massive popular invasion from the West is now beyond serious doubt. Should Honecker also succeed, now admittedly against heavier odds than before, in continuing to raise the East German standard of living, that might go some additional distance toward quieting official anxieties about the stability of SED rule, even though it is unlikely that the underlying concern will ever be completely removed.

In this connection, it is tempting to speculate on possible differences of opinion within the SED's top echelons. Though alluring, the exercise is not yet a particularly profitable one. Apart from the security chief, Erich Mielke, who was appointed a Candidate-member of the SED Politburo in October, 1973, the Defense Minister, Heinz Hoffmann, elevated to full Politburo membership at the same time, and ranking ideological functionaries with

Politburo membership, such as Kurt Hager and Albert Norden, all of whom are known as "hardliners" disposing of personal connections to comparable figures in the Soviet hierarchy, Honecker's own personal entourage appears ambivalent as **must** be the case with Honecker himself. That none of the still very fragmentary evidence relating to possible East German options in foreign policy can presently be linked to particular elites, much less to any distinctive "factions" in the top SED leadership need not be surprising; it should, however, serve to focus attention on the public expression of SED elite attitudes in the future. For, however strenuously GDR spokesmen may remonstrate against the supposition that relations with the FRG are now in any way a subject of special consideration, the fact is that West German developments continue to be subject to the most intense scrutiny.⁵ Some rather significant conclusions, reaching considerably beyond the recent GDR-FRG agreements covering the "swing" (i.e., West German credits) in trade and related cooperative ventures, may well be in the offing.

However that may turn out, there is one issue on which the GDR in pursuing its own vital interests seems destined to remain obdurate if not actively needlesome. That issue is, of course, the future of West Berlin. The 1971 Four Power Agreement on Berlin constitutes a standing

challenge to the GDR's very sovereignty and, as a result, it invites East Germany to seize upon every available opportunity to whittle down its provisions with a view to "neutralizing" West Berlin or even eventually absorbing it into the GDR.

All of this adds up to a "two track strategy" on the part of East Germany toward the West,⁶ which ^{may} turn out to be partly in phase and partly out of tune with the requirements of Soviet policy as viewed from the Kremlin. Underlying such a strategy lies the growth of mixed motivation on the part of the GDR toward the FRG and therefore in part also toward the Soviet Union. The situation evokes a real sense of what an astute European analyst some time ago described as a "'mixed motive' Europe of 'imperfect partnership' and 'incomplete antagonism,' of overlapping groupings and cross-cutting alignments, of spectacular but unsequential manoeuvres, of subterranean but essential evolution."⁷ That the GDR has now come to share some of the basic characteristics affecting European international politics as a whole may be accounted a measure of the degree of normalization that East Germany has actually achieved, not only unexpectedly but also in a surprisingly brief span of time. Whether that rate of progress can be sustained in the future, however, would still seem to lie far less with the GDR than with the Soviet Union.

Footnotes

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Bruno Mahlow, "Freundschaft mit der Sowjetunion - Herzschlag unseres Lebens," Einheit, 29, No. 9-10, 1974, p. 516. For whatever it may be worth, a comparable formulation in Deutsche Aussenpolitik (East Berlin) proves even stronger, viz., "Today relations between the GDR and the USSR ... have reached so mature a level of development that there is no longer any sector of work and of daily life that is not co-determined (mitbestimmt) by fraternal relations with the Soviet Union." Siegmur Quilitzsch, "Freundschaft und Zusammenarbeit mit der USSR - Grundbedingung für die erfolgreiche Entwicklung der DDR," Deutsche Aussenpolitik, XIII, No. 4, 1974, p. 841.
2. Erich Honecker's interview on Soviet television (n.d.), as reprinted in Deutschland-Archiv, 5, No. 11 (Nov. 1971), p. 1226.
3. V. Mikhailov, "An Active Factor in the Struggle for Peace and Security in Europe," International Affairs, June, 1972, p. 23.
4. Heinz Timmermann, "Deutsche Frage offener denn je,"

Deutschland-Archiv. 7. No. 2 (February 1974).
p. 190.

II. ISSUES AND APPROACHES

1. C. L. Sulzberger, "East of the Ostpolitik," New York Times, June 25, 1973. Cf. Theo Sommer, "Deutschland zu zweit," Die Zeit (North American edition), Jan. 4, 1974, where June 21, 1973 is described as a "deep caesura in German history" in the threefold sense of (a) the final end of World War II, (b) the end of the Cold War, and (c) the point of departure for normalization in Germany.
2. Pierre Hassner, Europe in the Age of Negotiation, The Washington Papers, Vol. I, No. 8 (Beverly Hills and London, 1973), p. 68.
3. Arguing against identification of the German problem with German reunification, Philip Windsor noted in 1969 that "the question is not so much whether the German problem will disappear as reunification comes to seem increasingly remote; it is how the German problem will continue to affect international relations during the process." Philip Windsor, German Reunification (London, 1969), p. 9. Cf. his Germany and the Management of Détente (London, 1971), passim.

4. This point has been cogently argued by, among others, Karl Kaiser, German Foreign Policy in Transition (London and New York, 1968).
5. For the astute observation that one aim of Brandt's Ostpolitik was to uncouple the linkage between the domestic and the intra-German and international politics of the German problem and, in particular, to invalidate the "unhealthy relationship" whereby stabilizing one part of the divided nation simultaneously threatened to destabilize the other, see Karl E. Birnbaum, "Pan-European Perspectives After the Berlin Agreement," International Journal (Ottawa), Jan. 1972, p. 36. Obviously, it would be premature to pass judgment on the success of this decoupling aspect of Ostpolitik.
6. The CDU/CSU opposition in Bonn, of course, purports to view matters quite differently. For a detailed and spirited defense of Brandt's Ostpolitik against its domestic critics, see Peter Bender, Die Ostpolitik Willy Brandts - oder Die Kunst des Selbstverständlichen (Hamburg, 1972). Bender makes much of Soviet willingness to cease treating West Germany as a bogey without seeming to realize that this Soviet "concession" is, as Soviet commentators themselves have repeatedly hinted, readily revocable and thus less a concession

- nan a basis for possible political blackmail. .
7. I. Aseyev, "Europe 1972: Time of Hopes," International Affairs, October 1972, p. 17.
 8. Cf. Peter Christian Ludz, "Two Germanies in One World," The Atlantic Papers, No. 3, 1973 (Paris, 1973), p. 16, German original Deutschlands doppelte Zukunft (Munich, 1974), p. 64, ff.
 9. Ernst Richert, "Zwischen Eigenständigkeit und Dependenz," Deutschland-Archiv, 7, No. 9 (Sept. 1974), pp. 955-982.
 10. Dettmar Cramer, Deutschland nach dem Grundvertrag, Stuttgart, 1973, p. 53.
 11. Ibid.
 12. For a stimulating discussion of the concept of interdependence and its application to the contemporary international political system in general, see Herbert J. Spiro, "Interdependence: A Third Option Between National Sovereignty and Supra-National Integration," A paper for the Ninth World Congress of the International Political Science Association, Montreal, 1973. A somewhat different although related approach may be found in "linkage" theory, especially as expounded by James Rosenau. See his "Theories and Pre-Theories of Foreign Policy," and "Toward a Study of

National-International Linkages," in James N. Rosenau, The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy (New York, 1971) and James N. Rosenau, ed., Linkage Politics (New York, 1969). In Rosenau's terms, the GDR constitutes a "penetrated" political system in which, however, "penetrative" linkages with the Soviet Union have, in part, been replaced by "emulative" ones. But some of the crucial Soviet-East German linkages would seem to qualify as "fused" which Rosenau defines as "a sequence in which an output fosters an input that in turn fosters an output." (Linkage Politics, p. 49), a concept that, alas, does not exactly aid the cause of descriptive analysis in the Soviet-East German (or any other) case.

13. Cf. Roger Morgan, "Washington and Bonn: A Case Study in Alliance Politics," International Affairs (London), 47, No. 3 (July, 1971), which applies this scheme to West German-American relations, p. 500, ff.
14. Arnold L. Horelick, A. Ross Johnson, and John D. Steinbruner, "The Study of Soviet Foreign Policy: A Review of Decision-Theory-Related Approaches," The Rand Corporation, R-1334 (December 1973).
15. Gerhard Wettig, "Fallstudien zum Verhältnis zwischen

Sowjetunion und DDR," Berichte des Bundesinstituts für Ostwissenschaftliche und Internationale Studien (Cologne, 1973-74). There were eight such cases which together with a summary of conclusions are scheduled to appear as a monograph, entitled, "Die Sowjetunion, die DDR und die Deutschland-Frage. Einvernehmen und Konflikt im sozialistischen Lager."

16. Ibid., "Überlegungen zu acht Fallstudien für den Zeitraum 1965-1972," 14/1974, p. 3.
 17. See, for example, B. Kozin, "Socialist Countries: Unity and Cohesion," International Affairs, March 1974, p. 3, ff.
 18. Horelick, Johnson, and Steinbruner, loc. cit., p. 49.
 19. Daniel Bell, "Ten Theories in Search of Reality," World Politics, April 1958, as reprinted in Vernon A. Aspaturian, Process and Power in Soviet Foreign Policy (Boston, 1971), pp. 289-323, p. 323.
- III. THE BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE RELATIONSHIP
1. Milovan Djilas, Conversations with Stalin (New York, 1962), p. 153.
 2. Ibid., p. 114.
 3. See, for example, Ernst Richert, Das zweite Deutschland: Ein Staat der nicht sein darf (Gütersloh, 1964).

4. For whatever it may be worth, Milovan Djilas reports that at the end of World War II, it was made quite explicit within the top Soviet leadership that "all of Germany must be ours." Djilas, op. cit., p. 153.
5. This development was also prompted by the 1948 Tito affair and Stalin's determination to crack down throughout Soviet-controlled East Central Europe.
6. A number of thoughtful non-German observers also subscribe to this interpretation. See, for example, Coral Bell, Negotiation From Strength: A Study in the Politics of Power (London, 1962). For a detailed and balanced discussion of Soviet-Western diplomacy with regard to Germany during this period, cf. James L. Richardson, Germany and the Atlantic Alliance: The Interaction of Strategy and Politics (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), esp., Chap. II.
7. For its part, the West, by failing to raise the German issue at all between 1955 and 1959, when renewed Soviet pressure in Berlin forced new big-power negotiations, did nothing to challenge Soviet claims.
8. The phrase is Brzezinski's. See his Alternative to Partition (New York, 1965), p. 77.
9. Described by Brzezinski as a "policy of fragmentation"

which he characterized as "still basically an offensive policy." Ibid., p. 82.

10. Among other things, the 1964 Treaty implicitly reasserted the principle of four-power responsibility for Germany as a whole by including an explicit reference to "international agreements which are in force, including the Potsdam Agreement." (Art. 9).

11. This may be illustrated by the memorandum handed the West German ambassador to Moscow, Hans Kroll, in December, 1961. Professing indifference to the FRG's membership in NATO, the Soviet memorandum offered an extremely critical appraisal of the German policy of each of West Germany's major allies in order to demonstrate how little their own interests coincided with Germany's national aspirations. Were the Federal Republic to act in its own behalf and accept national division, the 1961 memorandum suggested, then relations between the two German governments would certainly improve and West Germany itself would gain major additional benefits, such as access to the markets and resources of all the Communist countries, especially those of the USSR itself. The full text of this memorandum can be found

- in the official Bulletin of the Press and Information Office of the Federal Republic (German edition), Jan. 10, 1962.
12. For the text of Stalin's telegram, see Dokumente zur Aussenpolitik der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (Berlin, 1954), I, p. 232.
 13. Cf. the discussion in Carola Stern, Porträt einer bolschewistischen Partei (Köln, 1957), *passim*.
 14. Ibid.
 15. Tägliche Rundschau, June 13, 1953.
 16. In addition to the pronouncement of Tägliche Rundschau, cited above, there were insiders' reports that the SED leadership was ordered to prepare itself for participation in free all-German elections and for the eventuality of serving as an opposition party and even, should the need arise, of going underground. See "Ein Generalplan der SED," SBZ-Archiv, May 25, 1955, pp. 147-49 and also the observations of Richard Lowenthal, "Europa und die deutsche Teilung," in Walther Hofer, ed., Europa und die Einheit Deutschlands (Köln, 1970), p. 319.
 17. Pravda, March 10, 1963. Ulbricht himself made similar charges on several occasions, notably at

the 14th SED Central Committee Plenum, convened in the wake of the XXI Congress of the CPSU. See Ulbricht's report to the SED Central Committee Plenum, Neues Deutschland, Nov. 26, 1961.

18. Apparently, as early as April, 1953, Moscow had counselled a moderation of the "construction of socialism" but Ulbricht persisted in it and sought to salvage the economic situation by ordering an increase in workers' norms. See Stern, op. cit., p. 147, ff.
19. For some of the relevant details, see Carola Stern, Ulbricht: Eine politische Biographie (Köln, 1964), pp. 170-74.
20. The latter interpretation is based upon the fact that the Soviet High Commissioner Semyënov who was appointed by the Kremlin to introduce the necessary changes in East Germany was not subsequently reprimanded, which would have been the mildest fate that would have befallen him, had he been acting as Beria's agent alone. Cf. Lowenthal, loc. cit., p. 319.
21. Khrushchev stated flatly that as far as the Soviet Union was concerned the future of the GDR was no longer subject to Four Power negotiation. Cf. Lowenthal, loc. cit., p. 321. In their private con-

sultations in East Berlin, the Soviet leaders directed that measures be taken to make East Germany economically more viable in the interest not only of the consolidation of the GDR internally but also its assertion internationally. See Stern, Porträt, pp. 87-89.

22. See the remarks of Heinrich Rau at the 35th SED Central Committee plenum, as reported in Neues Deutschland, Feb. 25, 1958.
23. See Joachim Nawrocki, Das geplante Wunder (Hamburg, 1967) and Fritz Schenk, Das rote Wirtschaftswunder (Stuttgart, 1969). For the official East German presentation, cf. Hans Müller and Karl Reissig, Wirtschaftswunder DDR (Berlin, 1968).
24. The 1965 suicide of Erich Apel, head of the GDR Planning Commission, was widely regarded as a protest against such exploitation but this remains unproven. Cf. the discussion in Nawrocki, op. cit., pp. 172-84.

IV. INTERESTS, ROLES, AND PERCEPTIONS

1. Honecker's interview on Soviet television (n.d.), as reprinted in Deutschland-Archiv, 5, No. 11 (Nov. 1971), p. 1226.
2. A major editorial in Neues Deutschland (Dec. 23, 1969) denounced "the idle talk of so-called intra-German relations and allegedly still existing 'unity of the nation'" as part of the "ideological political preparation of plans for subduing the GDR." It pointedly noted "the experiences of the years 1953, 1956, 1961, and 1968" in terms of "plans for wrenching a single member from the community of socialist states." Cf. also the discussion in Robin A. Remington, The Warsaw Pact (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 1971), p. 129.
3. Honecker's interview on Soviet Radio and Television, as reprinted from Neues Deutschland, Dec. 10, 1973, in Deutschland-Archiv, 7, No. 1 (Jan. 1974), p. 104.
4. Cf. the discussion in Ilse Spittmann, "Zum 11. ZK-Plenum," Deutschland-Archiv, 7, No. 1 (Jan. 1974), pp. 3-5.
5. Cf. the general discussion in Dettmar Cramer, "Denkpausen" Deutschland-Archiv, 6, No. 9 (Sept. 1973), pp. 897-9.

6. See Melvin Croan, "East Germany: Lesson in Survival," Problems of Communism, May-June, 1962.
7. Cf. Carola Stern, "East Germany," in William E. Griffith, ed., Communism in Europe, Vol. II (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), *passim*.
8. The following analysis is based, in part, on Melvin Croan, "East Germany," in Adam Bromke and Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, eds., The Communist in Disarray (Minneapolis, 1972), esp., pp. 78-81.
9. See Melvin Croan, "Czechoslovakia, Ulbricht, and the German Problem," Problems of Communism, January-February, 1962, pp. 1-7.
10. Ibid.
11. Anatole Shub, "A Guide to Soviet Policy -- Social Fascism," International Herald Tribune, March 28, 1969.
12. For some details, see the Radio Free Europe Research Reports, "The GDR's 'Public Relations' in the Soviet Ukraine," 11 June 1970 and "GDR Propaganda in the Soviet Ukraine," 6 July 1970.
13. The full text of Ulbricht's January 1970 press conference may be found in Deutschland-Archiv, 5, No. 1

(Feb. 1970), pp. 190-195.

14. This interpretation seems far-fetched, however.
15. "Grundsatz Erklärung von Ministerpräsident Stoph," in "Dokumentation: Das Gespräch von Kassel," Deutschland-Archiv, 2, No. 6 (June, 1970), p. 633.
16. Cf. R[olf] Z[undel], "Bahr nach Ostberlin," Die Zeit (North American edition), Dec. 1, 1970.
17. Cf. Ulbricht's Jan. 1971 speech on Berlin, in The New York Times, Jan. 30, 1971.
18. Neues Deutschland, April 1, 1971.
19. Cf. Ilse Spittmann, "Warum Ulbricht stürzte," Deutschland-Archiv, 4, No. 6 (June 1971), pp. 568-9.
20. Cf. the useful discussion in Peter Bender, Die Ostpolitik Willy Brandts (Hamburg, 1972), pp. 92-6.
21. As, for example, has been suggested by Karl E. Birnbaum, East & West Germany: A Modus Vivendi (Lexington, Mass., 1973).
22. Dettmar Cramer, "Bahr am Ziel," Deutschland-Archiv, 5, No. 11, (Nov. 1972), p. 1123.
23. Policy Statement Delivered by Chancellor Willy Brandt

to the Bundestag, January 18, 1973, Supplement to The Bulletin (Press and Information Office of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany), Jan. 23, 1973, p. 2.

24. Policy Statement to the Bundestag, Jan. 24, 1974.
25. Joachim Nawrocki, "Kontaktverbot für Genossen," Die Zeit (North American edition), Dec. 12, 1972.
26. Joachim Nawrocki, "Sorgen der SED," Die Zeit (North American edition), Nov. 28, 1972. Cf. The Christian Science Monitor, Dec. 19, 1972, Theo Sommer, "Jetzt ein Mauer aus Papier?" Die Zeit (North American edition), Dec. 19, 1972 and "Die DDR erschwert Besuche aus dem Westen," ibid.
27. The increase was first officially promulgated on Nov. 5, 1973.
28. The revision entailed substituting the designation "socialist state of workers and peasants" for the 1968 formulation, "socialist state of the German nation." Added also was the stipulation that the GDR was allied with the Soviet Union "forever and irrevocably" and constituted "an inseparable part of the Socialist community of states."
29. One interesting example of Soviet restraint may be

found in V. N. Bolzrew, Westberlin und die europäische Sicherheit (Berlin, 1973).

30. This has been well documented by Dettmar Cramer, Deutschland nach dem Grundvertrag (Stuttgart, 1973), who concludes that the SED has no consistent "concept of Germany."
31. At the 13th SED Central Committee Plenum in December, 1974, Honecker gave a green light to such discussions by coining the formula: "Citizenship - GDR; Nationality - German." At the same time, he also stressed the difference in the class character of German national identity between the GDR and the FRG as "decisive." See the text of Honecker's Report to the 13th Plenum, as reprinted in Deutschland-Archiv, 8, No. 1 (Jan. 1973), esp. p. 93.
32. Cf. "Across the Barbed Wire," Survey, East-West Trade, Supplement to The Economist, January 6, 1973, p. 14.
33. Thus, in an interview with C. L. Sulzberger, Honecker underlined the importance he attached to the stipulation of the FRG-GDR Basic Treaty that trade would be developed "on the basis of existing agreements" and stressed that the GDR had "no intention of down-

grading trade with Bonn." new York Times, Nov. 23, 1972.

34. This interpretation is slightly different from that advanced by Gerhard Wettig, "The SED-SPD Dialogue: Communist Political Strategy in Germany," Orbis, Summer, 1967.

35. Neues Deutschland, Nov. 17, 1972.

7. THE PATRON-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP IN THE ERA OF DEFEAT AND DÉTENTE.
1. Peter C. Ludz, Two Germany in One World, The Atlantic Papers 5, 1973 (Paris, 1973), p. 14.
2. Aussenpolitik der DDR - Für Sozialismus und Frieden (Berlin, 1974), p. 168.
3. J. F. Brown, "Détente and Soviet Policy in Eastern Europe," Survey, 20, No. 2/3 (91/92) (Spring-Summer 1974), pp. 46-58.
4. Mieczyslaw F. Rakowsky, "Our Common Duty," New Times, No. 16 (April 1973), p. 5.
5. Brown, loc. cit., p. 50.
6. B. Ladygin, "Socialist Internationalism: Fraternity and Cooperation," International Affairs, No. 6 (June 1973), p. 4.
7. On this point, see Fritz René Allemann, Bonn ist nicht Weimar (Cologne and Berlin, 1956), pp. 115-29, 149-50.
8. As has been done, for example, by Ernst Richert. See his "Zwischen Eigenständigkeit und Dependenz," Deutschland-Archiv, 7, No. 9 (Sept. 1974), p. 960.
9. This occurred immediately after Honecker's succession

to the post of SED First Secretary and gained full expression at the Eighth SED Party Congress in June, 1971.

10. See Erich Honecker, "UdSSR und DDR - untrennbar verbunden," Einheit, No. 11 (Nov. 1972), pp. 1395-1403.
11. Endless citations could be given. One of the most extreme may be found in Militärwesen, January 1973, pp. 23-31. A much more moderate position was taken by the SED historian S. Doernberg, "Soviet Experience and the Socialist Community," International Affairs, No. 1, (January 1973) which stressed the relevance to the Socialist community of some of the features of the multinational experience of the USSR.
12. Ludz, op. cit., p. 14.
13. See Honecker's speech, "A Quarter-Century on the Path of Socialism," Pravda, Oct. 7, 1974, in The Current Digest of the Soviet Press, XXVI, No. 40 (Oct. 30, 1974), p. 2.
14. Ibid., pp. 4-5
15. On Honecker, see Der Spiegel 29, No. 4 (Jan. 20, 1975), p. 18.

16. See the contribution of the Polish Ambassador, Stefan Olszowski, in "People's Poland in the Struggle for Peace and Security," International Affairs, No. 9 (Sept. 1974), p. 23 ff.
17. For a good interim summary, see Kevin Devlin, "The European Conference: Confrontation and Concealment," Radio Free Europe Research Report, April 29, 1975.
18. Pyotr Demitschew, "Gemeinsam auf dem Wege des gesellschaftlichen Fortschritts, des Aufbaus der neuen Gesellschaft," Einheit, 9/10, 1974. p. 1057. But Demichev also cited Czechoslovakia (!) as another illustration.
19. Aussenpolitik der DDR - Für Sozialismus und Frieden (Berlin, 1974), p.89.
20. Ibid., p. 90.
21. See, Rolf Dlubek, "Die neue MEGA eine bedeutende Gemeinschaftsarbeit der UdSSR und der DDR," Einheit, 11, 1972, pp. 1492-99.
22. Aussenpolitik der DDR - Für Sozialismus und Freiden, p. 90.
23. The exact number of such agreements is unclear. According to Neues Deutschland, May 23, 1973, as

quoted in Ibid., op. cit., p. 10, there were sixty. A more recent East German source mentions "more than forty." Aussenpolitik der DDR, p. 94.

24. Thomas W. Wolfe, "The Soviet Union's Strategic Stake in the GDR," The World Today, August 1971, pp. 340-1.
25. Cf. Peter Bender, East Europe in Search of Security (London, 1972), p. 35.
27. See the data contained in The Military Balance 1974-1975 (London, 1974), pp. 12-13.
28. See Heinz Hoffmann, "Unsere Errungenschaften sind zuverlässig geschützt," Einheit, 9/10, 1974, p. 1089.
29. Ibid., p. 1088.
30. Cited from a report that appeared originally in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Nov. 19, 1972, in Ilse Spittmann, "Die 8. Tagung des Zentralkomitees der SED," Deutschland-Archiv, 6, No. 1 (January 1973), p. 9.
31. As calculated from the data contained in Einheit 9/10, 1974, p. 1202.
32. For further details, see Henry W. Schaefer, Comecon and the Politics of Integration (New York, 1972), passim.

33. "The exchange of the most recent scientific-technical discoveries whose speedy application serves the economy of both countries, will in the future take place on the contractual basis of license stipulations. In this sense, both countries have announced the exchange of scientific-technical documentation from 1969 to be carried out in principle on the basis of payment according to their real value." Günter Prey, "Mit der Sowjetunion gemeinsam die wissenschaftlich-technische Revolution meistern," Einheit, 11, 1968, p. 1308. Italics in original.
34. Aussenpolitik der DDR, p. 93.
35. Vernon V. Aspaturian, "The Impact of Détente on the Ideological and Political Importance of Eastern Europe to the Soviet Union," (unpublished paper), 1975, p. 18.
36. See Radio Free Europe Research Report, "Polish Visit to GDR: New Impetus to Special Relationship," June 26, 1973.
37. Aussenpolitik der DDR, p. 104.
38. Ibid., pp. 100-1.
39. As quoted in Radio Free Europe Research Report, "Polish Visit to GDR: New Impetus to Special Relationship,"

June 30, 1975.

40. "Discussion: Problems of International Politics," in Miesiecznik Literacki, June 1973, Polish Press Survey, No. 2423 (RFE), August 24, 1973, p. 26. For deeper Polish fears concerning the "inevitability" of German national reunification, see Jozef Lubojanski, "Europe Without the German Problem," Zycie Literackie, Sept. 23, 1973, Polish Press Survey, No. 2427, (RFE) October 10, 1973, pp. 3-4.
41. For the details, see Radio Free Europe Research Report, "Czechoslovakia - GDR: An Evolving "Special Relationship," Nov. 21, 1972.
42. Ibid., p. 14.
43. Radio Free Europe, Situation Report, Czechoslovakia, Oct. 23, 1974, p. 4.
44. See The Christian Science Monitor, Nov. 11, 1973,
45. As quoted in the RFE Situation Report, Czechoslovakia, Oct. 23, 1974, p. 4.
46. See the projection by the Czechoslovak Research Institute for Planning which predicts that the GDR will enjoy first place in per capita income within COMECON in 1990. Der Spiegel, Jan. 20, 1975.

47. Gerhard Weiss, "Die DDR - fester Bestandteil des RGW," Einheit, 1, 1974, p. 26. Italics added.

VI. FUTURE PROSPECTS

1. Ernst Richert, Das zweite Deutschland: Ein Staat der nicht sein darf (Gutersloh, 1964).
2. See Richard Lowenthal, "Changing Soviet Policies and Interests," in Soviet-American Relations and World Order: The Two and the Many, Adelphi Papers No. 66, March 1970 (London, 1970), pp. 13-14.
3. Cf. "Schmidt nach Moskau," Die Zeit (North American Edition), Sept. 27, 1974 and The New York Times, Jan. 18, 1975.
4. According to the East Germans, the exact figures for 1972 were as follows: Visits from West Germany: 3,435,190; from West Berlin, 3,549,725. (Neues Deutschland, Jan. 6, 1973). For 1973, the figures were given as: Visits from West Germany: 3,650,526; from West Berlin: 3,461,504 (Neues Deutschland, Jan. 3, 1974.) West German statistics are considerably lower, the discrepancy being explained by the East Germans counting total number of visits and the West Germans recording individual visitors only once. For the FRG and West Berlin together, West German data

show, for 1972: 1,540,381 visitors to the GDR; for 1973: 2,278,989; for 1974, 1,919,141. They also record the following totals of East German pensioner visits to the West: for 1972, 1,045,385; for 1973, 1,257,866, for 1974, 1,316,006. Bunderminister für innerdeutsche Beziehungen, Informationen, No. 1, 1975, Anlage.

5. Thus although the recent volume, Aussenpolitik der DDR - Für Sozialismus und Frieden (Berlin, 1974) devoted only nine pages (pp. 182-90) to relations with the FRG, which are treated after GDR relations with the United States and France, the East German Institute for International Politics and Economics (IPW) employs about five hundred analysts to follow developments in the FRG. See Joachim Nawrocki, "Das letzte Wort hat immer die Partei," Die Zeit (North American Edition), Feb. 7, 1975.
6. For a timely analysis of recent developments, see Joachim Nawrocki, "Doppelstrategie der DDR," Die Zeit (North American Edition), Apr. 11, 1975.
7. Pierre Hassner, "Change and Security in Europe. Part I: The Background," Adelphi Papers, No. 45, February 1968, (London, 1968), p. 24.

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