The Divided Nation

A History of Germany 19181990

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New York Oxford
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
1992

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Crystallization and Consolidation, 194961

The period from the foundation of two separate states in 1949 to the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961 is one in which the division of Germany was confirmed, and in which the peculiar characters of the two new states were consolidated. While in 1949 much still appeared open, by the beginning of the 1960s patterns had been laid which were to shape the next quarter of a century of German history.

Before considering the historical development of East and West Germany in this crucial decade, we must briefly consider certain features of their constitutions and political systems. The very different political systems liberal democracy in the West and a 'democratic centralism' based on Marxist Leninist theory in the East provided the framework for the very different patterns of political, social and economic development in the two German states which succeeded the Third Reich.

The Constitution and Political System of the Federal Republic

The Federal Republic of Germany represented Germany's second attempt at a liberal parliamentary democracy in the twentieth century. The writers of the constitution in 19489 had an ever-present regard for the failures of the Weimar Republic, and although the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*) was the result of many positive considerations, it was also a document written with an eye to perceived weaknesses in the Weimar

constitution. But a simple comparison of the constitutional and political frameworks of the Bonn and Weimar democracies can only serve to open the question of the bases of the stability and longevity of Bonn democracy in contrast to that of Weimar. Just as the Weimar constitution cannot be blamed as the total explanation of Weimar's failure, so too there is more to the explanation of Bonn's success. The constitutional framework could not in itself guarantee the success of Germany's second attempt at democracy, but it at least provided certain safeguards and provisions to protect the new democracy against some of the problems experienced on the first attempt.

There were a number of key differences between the Bonn and Weimar constitutions. In the Federal Republic, the role of the President remembering the fateful actions of President Hindenburg was weakened considerably. The President of the Bonn Republic was to be more of a ceremonial figurehead, a head of state in the symbolic sense with few real powers. He was not to be elected by popular plebiscite, as in the Weimar Republic, but rather reflecting a certain mistrust in the voice of the people indirectly by an electoral college. Chancellors could only be ousted by what was called a 'constructive vote of no confidence'. This meant that parliament could not simply indicate its lack of support for a particular Chancellor; it had at the same time to vote in, 'constructively', an alternative who could command majority support in parliament. If no majority could be found for a successor, then a General Election was to be called. (Normally there was no leeway for deciding to call an 'early' election, as in Britain: the standard term of office of West German governments was to be four years.) Thus the President could not simply appoint his own Chancellor and promulgate laws by emergency decree. The notorious article 48 of the Weimar constitution, with its dubious history, had gone.

The voting system was to be a rather complicated one based on the so-called 'd'Hondt' formula. According to the Electoral Law of 1956, each West German elector was to have two votes: one for a named local representative (the equivalent of the British constituency MP), and one for a party. The political parties were to draw up lists of candidates and take as many

representatives from these lists as their proportion of the vote entitled them to. The system of proportional representation was however modified by the five per cent hurdle: in order to receive parliamentary representation, a party must receive at least five per cent of the popular vote, or win one constituency outright. This provision was intended to hinder small parties from gaining a national platform for their programmes, as the NSDAP did with only 2.6% of the vote in 1928, and to avoid the problem of having numerous small parties rendering complicated post-election coalition bargaining necessary before a government could be formed. In the event, the fairly numerous small parties active in the early years of the Federal Republic soon became absorbed into the main larger ones, with a couple of important exceptions (the FDP throughout, and from the early 1980s the Greens). There was also a restriction on the type of party that would be permitted to compete for a share of the popular vote: parties deemed to have aims and ideals at odds with those embodied in the 'free democratic basic order' of the constitution were to be banned from organization and activity. The Federal Republic was to be formally a 'party state'. Article 21 of the constitution explicitly stated that 'the political parties shall take part in forming the political will of the people. They may be freely established. They must publicly account for the sources of their funds.' [1]

Elections were to take place also for regional (*Land*) governments. The Federal Republic was to be, as its name implies, a federal state: the separate regional states were to have considerable powers over their own internal affairs. Locally elected *Land* parliaments (*Landtage*) were to control such matters as cultural policy and education. Federalism was an extremely important feature of West German politics, with local elections being matters of considerable importance, and local personalities and issues having high profiles.

(The most notable example for much of West Germany's post-war history until his death in 1988 was the 'uncrowned king' of Bavaria, and leader of the Bavarian CSU, Franz-Josef Strauss.) The *Länder* were to send representatives to the second chamber in Bonn, the *Bundesrat*. This was to have certain powers of veto (when the issues

directly concerned the *Länder*) and some powers of amending and delaying legislation. The party which commanded a majority in the lower house, the *Bundestag*, need not necessarily command a majority in the *Bundesrat*, given the variable election dates and different political complexions of the local states. The West German upper house thus had a rather different composition than the (historically peculiar) British House of Lords. As a city under Allied control with special status (and not able to elect members of the Bonn parliament directly), West Berlin's city government was also able to send representatives to Bonn.

The West German constitution, as adopted in 1949, subsequently underwent a number of amendments and alterations, both with respect to specific issues (such as remilitarization) and with respect to broader questions, such as the balance between the central *Bund* and the regional *Länder*, and the nature and location of emergency powers. Originally, the constitution stressed a representative, rather than participatory, form of democracy (as in, for example, the indirect election of the President): few Western democrats in 1949 were prepared to trust the German people, so soon after the war, with the degree of democratic freedom that had allowed them, in the Weimar Republic, to bring Hitler to power. The question of the degree to which the constitution of the Federal Republic contributed to its political stability, in contrast to the Weimar Republic, is one to which we shall return below.

The Constitution and Political System of the GDR

In 1949, when the first constitution of the German Democratic Republic was proclaimed, its status and future prospects were by no means certain. The constitution, which was not ratified by popular vote, was designed to be compatible with that of the Federal Republic,

providing the basis for possible future reunification.

Nominally, the German Democratic Republic was to have a multiparty political system with a two-tiered parliament. The lower house of parliament, the *Volkskammer* or People's

Chamber, was the equivalent of the West German *Bundestag* although its actual role and make-up were in practice somewhat different. The upper house, the *Länderkammer*, was to represent the interests of different *Länder* in the GDR, being the equivalent of the West German *Bundesrat*. The *Volkskammer* included representatives of all the permitted parties CDU, LDPD, NDPD, and DBD as well as members of the mass organizations, including the Free German Youth (FDJ) and the Confederation of Free German Trade Unions, the FDGB. However, according to Marxist Leninist principles, elections were held on the basis of single lists of candidates, and each party or organization had a previously determined number of allotted seats in the *Volkskammer*. Thus, given both the fact that the SED had the largest number of seats, and that it dominated the personnel and policies of the other parties and groups which were only nominally independent of communist control, the real character of East German democracy was rather different from that in West Germany.

Formal similarities existed in 1949 in other respects too. But the constitutional similarities between the two systems disappeared as the realities of political, social and economic divergence developed over the decades after the founding of the two Republics. In 1952, the five *Länder* of the GDR were abolished and replaced by thirteen *Bezirke*. These rather smaller regions aided the SED's attainment of its goal of the centralization of politics, and the suppression of regional political strongholds for alternative power bases. In 1958 the *Länderkammer* was abolished.

Another initial similarity with the Federal Republic was the position of the ceremonial head of state, the President. In 1960 the first President of the GDR, Wilhelm Pieck, died; and with his demise went that of the office of President. In its place the *Staatsrat*, or Council of State, took over as a collective head of state, chaired by the leader of

the SED, Walter Ulbricht. But the pre-eminence of the *Staatsrat* was similarly short-lived. When Ulbricht was replaced by Honecker in 1971 as First Secretary of the SED, Ulbricht retained the chairmanship of the Council of State; but this was shortly thereafter demoted in

importance in favour of the *Ministerrat* or Council of Ministers. In 1968 and again in 1974, there were major amendments of the East German constitution, to take account of changed political realities. In 1968 the 'leading role' of the SED was enshrined in the constitution, rendering any remaining apparent similarities to the West German constitution devoid of all real significance, since the Marxist Leninist party was able to interpret the formal 'rights' of citizens in any way it chose. In 1974 the constitution was again changed in response to the new status of the GDR under *Ostpolitik* (*see* Chapter Eight).

In theory, the state structure of the East German political system consisted of a pyramid. At the top was the formal head of state first the President, later the collective head of state, the *Staatsrat*. Below this was the Council of Ministers, to which the different ministries were responsible and where important decision making in such areas as economics and state security took place. Below this was the People's Chamber, (*Volkskammer*), which met infrequently, effectively to ratify and promulgate legislation decided upon at a higher level. Its functions were therefore very different from those of the West German parliament. There were bodies for local government at regional, district and local levels. At all levels of government, the leading role of the SED was evident and, indeed, after the 1968 revision, enshrined in the East German constitution until the revolution of 1989.

The SED was itself organized hierarchically, according to the principle of democratic centralism. Lower levels of the hierarchy, while able to have a say in any formulation of policy, were bound ultimately to accept and execute the decisions taken by superior bodies. Ultimately, power lay with the leadership in the Politburo and its secretariat, with the party leader (General Secretary or First Secretary) *primus inter pares*; below the Politburo, the next most

important body was the Central Committee, with its specialist subgroups, although membership of the Central Committee might imply more of an advisory than a decision-making role. This was particularly true of so-called 'candidate members' of the Central Committee, who did not have voting rights. Membership of these bodies was, particularly

from the 1960s, increasingly predicated on a level of technical expertise in some important area whether the economy, military matters, or culture. But political commitment to party goals and methods remained the decisive factor. The Central Committee was elected by the Party Congress, which met about every five years (although it was also possible to convene extraordinary party congresses under certain circumstances). At lower levels, there were regional and district party organizations comparable in organizational structure to those at the national level, with their own executive, secretariat, and conference. At the most basic level, party membership was organized in work-based branches, or, where this was not possible, in branches based on place of residence.

As with the West German, so the East German constitution provides only a partial insight into the realities of political development in the GDR. More dramatically than in the West, East Germany actually adopted new constitutions in 1968 and 1974, prior to the more fundamental upheavals of 1989. These were intended partly to reflect more accurately changed political circumstances; and it is in the political realities, rather than the constitutional provisions, that clues to the development and longevity of the GDR must be sought. We shall return to a discussion of the political structures and dynamics of the two German states in more detail in Chapters Ten and Eleven, below; first, however, we must establish a basic chronological framework for the political and socioeconomic development of the two Germanies, and for their relations with the wider world and with each other.

The Problem of Missed Opportunities, 194961

A number of open questions concerning the future of Germany remained, even after the formal foundation of the two Republics in

1949. For one thing, it was still quite possible that some means would be found to facilitate reunification. For another, even if Germany remained divided into two states, incorporated into different international spheres of influence, there were a number

of possible options available for the internal political development of each Germany. Many Germans, returning from exile or emerging from 'inner emigration', still hoped that a means would be found to develop a democratic, socialist Germany. In the event, in neither East nor West were their hopes to be realized.

In 1949, Adenauer was elected Chancellor by a majority of only one vote, supported by a coalition which had been put together only after considerable politicking and pressurizing. It seemed quite possible that the CDU-dominated coalition government could soon be ousted by an SPD-led government, or at least a coalition of the two major parties (an option which had been seriously canvassed). Had this indeed been the case, the whole future course of West German history and then also that of both Germanies might have been quite different. Under Adenauer, the rump state formed out of the British, American and French zones of occupation was to be transformed into a western-orientated, liberal-conservative, materialistic form of 'Chancellor-democracy'. The price paid for the Federal Republic's rapid economic and political rehabilitation was the jettisoning of fellow-countrymen to their fate in the east and Adenauer deemed it a price worth paying. The Adenauer era poses many problems of evaluation: many criticize Adenauer's policies on a range of grounds while recognizing that the early economic success of the Federal Republic and its importance to western defence strategies in the Cold War were vital to the successful establishment of Bonn democracy. Debates about 'missed opportunities' and 'suppressed historical alternatives' are also debates about the likely consequences of alternative policies; and evaluations are frequently complicated by confusions between the immediate effects or acceptability of certain policies on the one hand, and their long-term consequences on the other. These points will be considered in detail in connection with the

economic and foreign policies of Adenauer's Germany, as well as the inevitably controversial question of the integration of former Nazis into the new democracy.

Similarly, the dominance of Walter Ulbricht and his particular brand of hardline communism was by no means predetermined

in the GDR. Indeed, his authority and position were seriously in question at the time of the June Uprising of 1953; and it was an ironic outcome of this event that Moscow decided to confirm Ulbricht in power rather than topple him, purging Ulbricht's opponents instead. Ulbricht was able in the course of the 1950s to deal with further factional dissent of one sort or another, and from the late 1950S until the 1980s the SED was marked by relatively little internal factional strife. The form of communism which became established in the GDR was a variant of Stalinism which was anathema to humanistic Marxists of the 'Third Way'. Curiously, this too had as a consequence a relative stabilization of the political system in East Germany. In contrast to those communist states where reform communists retained a hold or developed factions within the ruling party, and which subsequently experienced major revolts (Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, Poland in 19801), East Germany was relatively stable for four decades, before the revolutionary year of 1989. While the longevity of the GDR as a communist state cannot be explained solely in terms of the relative cohesion of the ruling party, this was undoubtedly an important factor; and one which Ulbricht's early hardline policies and purging of dissent did much to create.

In neither Germany, then, were democratic socialists or humanist Marxists able to impose their vision of what they thought post-Nazi society should be like; in the course of the 1950S and 1960s very different patterns emerged and crystallized. And in different ways, the two new Germanies repressed their past. The issue of Nazism was ignored, suppressed, or argued away, as new realities and new struggles took precedence in contemporary life.

Associated with the consolidation of new patterns was the question of non-reunification. As with internal politics, certain key turning-points or missed opportunities can be discerned. One such is the

Stalin overture of 1952. By 1955, when the Soviet Union made another gesture towards reunification, it was clearly too late. In August 1961 the division of the two Germanies was literally cemented, with the building of the Berlin Wall, which closed the last means of escape from East to West.

While the two Germanies had been radically ripped apart in the 1950s, and energetically pointed in different directions, there had yet been a lingering sense of impermanence; but in the 1960s, with division sealed, the two societies witnessed changes of generation and internal divergences as they more gradually, but no less fundamentally, proceeded to grow apart.

Foreign Relations

In October 1949, only a few months after the foundation of the Federal Republic, West Germany became a member of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC); in March 1951 the Occupation Statute was revised; in April 1951 West Germany entered the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and in May became a full member of the Council of Europe. In 1957, in the Treaty of Rome, West Germany became a founder member of the European Economic Community. Curiously, what began as an attempt to contain the German threat eventuated ultimately in a strong German economy becoming one of the pillars of emerging West European integration in the later post-war period, in contrast to the declining economic power and European influence of Britain, which tended to lag behind as far as European affairs were concerned. Meanwhile, in July 1951 the western powers declared the state of war with Germany to be at an end, although there could still be no peace treaty, as there was no all-German government with which to negotiate it.

Along with West German economic integration went plans for western European defence. In 1950 France began planning the European Defence Community. In the event, considering the proposal for 'mixed units' from different states participating in a supranational force to be an inadequate safeguard against potential future German aggression,

the French Parliament in the summer of 1954 failed to ratify the participation of a French army in this Defence Community, following earlier British refusal. (It is curious that a form of this was later revived with a small joint German-French defence force in January 1988.) However,

Eden's plan for Germany to become a full member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which had been founded in 1949, was agreed in the Paris Treaties, including the German Treaty, of autumn 1954, which took effect on 5 May, 1955. On this date, the Occupation Statute lapsed and the Federal Republic of Germany became a fully sovereign state. The Saar, following a plebiscite, was returned to Germany in 1957. Political and economic rehabilitation of the partial state appeared to be well underway.

But this western integration was not without considerable opposition, both from within West Germany and from the East. As far as the western alliance was concerned, the strategic dimension was crucial: forward troops had to be stationed on German soil to make NATO effective. But within West Germany there was widespread opposition to remilitarization. In the light of the disasters of recent history, many Germans adopted the so-called '*ohne mich*' attitude (literally 'without me', or 'count me out') in relation to rearmament. The refoundation of a German army and the introduction of conscription were highly contentious issues, by no means unanimously supported by the populace of Adenauer's new Germany. (We shall consider the nature and political implications of the army further in Chapter Ten, below.) As far as the USSR was concerned, western integration of the Federal Republic appeared extremely threatening, and to be averted if at all possible.

The year 1952 was a key turning-point which has provoked debates about responsibility for 'lost chances' for reunification. In March 1952, at a crucial stage of negotiations between Paris and Bonn over the European Defence Community, Stalin sent a famous note in which, in return for the abandonment of the West German rearmament process, he proposed a united, neutral, unoccupied Germany. Western historians have spent considerable time speculating on whether or not

Stalin's motives were genuine at this time a debate which reflects the puzzlement of contemporaries, who were also divided and uncertain as to how to react to Stalin's initiative. The most plausible explanation appears to be that at the time of the first note on 10 March, Stalin was indeed genuinely pursuing what

was for him a relatively risky course in the interests of averting West Germany's absorption into a western military alliance. By the time of the third note, however, when the western powers had made it clear that they were not amenable to Stalin's overtures, Stalin was simply making propaganda and clarifying to the Germans themselves exactly what options were being closed by the policy of western integration. There is also the question of the responsibility for the failure of this last serious reunification attempt. Many have castigated Adenauer, who despite compulsory lip-service to the cause of reunification was firmly committed to a CDU-dominated, western capitalist democracy, and who viewed the prospect of a united, neutral, SPD-dominated state with a predominance of Protestants with little enthusiasm. Whatever the strength of Adenauer's personal views, however, it also seems clear that his ideas ran in the same vein as the perceived interests of the western allies. The American and British plans for western defence were too far developed for them to consider the Soviet offer seriously at this time. To official policies of 'containment' and 'roll-back' of communism, and the importance of negotiation from strength, the western allies could add the 'democratic' argument against Stalin's view that a peace treaty imposing neutrality should be signed before any elections that only a democratically elected all-German government could accord binding status to a peace treaty and it would have to be free to determine its own foreign policy, its own neutrality or alliances. Whatever the contribution of different considerations, different individuals and policies, the outcome was that Stalin's reunification initiative of 1952 failed. A subsequent Soviet attempt made in 1955 was viewed as a propaganda gesture with little if any credibility. [2]

In partial response to the integration of the Federal Republic in the west, the German Democratic Republic entered into a comparable set

of economic and military alliances in the east. In 1950 East Germany was integrated into the eastern bloc's economic system in the Council for Mutual Economic Aid (COMECON). In 1952 the 'building of socialism' was announced, making it clear that East Germany was now embarking formally on a path of development quite divergent

from that of West Germany. In March 1954 the Soviets made a declaration on East German sovereignty, granting the GDR the rights of an 'equal people's democratic state'. The 'People's Police in Barracks' (*Kasernierte Volkspolizei*), which had been set up in 1946, was renamed the 'national armed forces' in 1952; in January 1956 the 'National People's Army' (*Nationale Volksarmee*, NVA) was formally established, and become an integral part of the Warsaw Treaty Organization (or Warsaw Pact) forces. It consisted of 100,000 regular troops, which with additional security and border guards, made a total force altogether of somewhat under 200,000 men.

By the mid-1950s, far from a united German people being viewed with hostility by allied Soviet and western powers as a decade previously, a divided German people now faced each other in hostility, with their respective armed forces representing the wider opposition of the western and Soviet blocs. This dramatic transformation had much to do with the changed international system, and in particular the changed interests of the USA and the USSR in a Europe which they had divided into spheres of interest; but it also reflected the ways in which domestic politicians in each Germany responded to opportunities and constraints during this period. And, whatever the causes of the failure of reunification attempts, in practice both sides consolidated the division by the institutional embedding of the two partial states into two very different systems and spheres of influence.

Adenauer's Germany

When Adenauer came to power, the CDU/CSU held thirty-one per cent of the vote. He had to rely on the support of a number of small parties in addition to the liberal FDP. In many respects, the situation looked comparable to that of the Weimar Republic: larger parties were dependent on coalitions with small, frequently single-issue or

regional, parties. Despite the transformation from a purely Catholic party into a more broadly-based Christian Conservative one, the CDU/CSU was not simply assured of

a majority; and it seemed quite possible that the instabilities of Weimar politics might bedevil the Federal Republic also. Two extremist parties which were deemed to be hostile to the constitution were outlawed: the right-wing SRP (Socialist Reich Party) in 1952, and the Communist KPD in 1956. At the same time, many adherents of small permitted parties (such as that representing refugees and expellees) began to be won over to the CDU/CSU. In 1957, the CDU/CSU gained over fifty per cent of the vote, achieving an absolute majority for the first time.

A number of factors are relevant to any explanation of the success of Adenauer and the CDU in the 1950S. Probably the single most important factor was the vigorous rate of economic growth. Pragmatic, material considerations undoubtedly played a major role in sustaining and increasing popular support for the CDU. The so-called 'economic miracle', with the astonishing leaps in West Germany's productivity, an economy growing at around eight per cent a year, and rapid improvements in living conditions, made many Germans willing to accept a regime that seemed to be delivering the goods. Adenauer's election slogan of 'No experiments!' (*Keine Experimente!*) symbolized the cautious, pragmatic approach to politics of many people who had been through too many ideological and socio-economic upheavals in recent years to want to commit themselves in a wholehearted, idealistic way to a new political orientation. They were prepared simply to assent, relatively passively, to the system that appeared to be working for the time being. This benefited both the political system in general-democracy was at last being associated, not with economic crises, as in the Weimar Republic, but with economic success and the CDU-led government in particular, since it was Adenauer's Economics Minister, Ludwig Erhard, who was presiding over the economic miracle. Few were willing to risk or jettison this fragile,

recent success in order to experiment with Social Democratic theories or policies.

The economy of the western zones of occupied Germany was already beginning to pick up before the full impact of the Marshall Plan, or European Recovery Programme, was felt. The role of Marshall Aid in furthering an economic recovery

which was already underway was not only financial it has been estimated that in the western zones the total occupation costs and reparations may have exceeded the amount of actual aid received but also, perhaps more importantly, it was a stimulant to economic activity and a psychological prop, lending credence to the Deutschmark and encouraging investment in an economy which had American backing. The Marshall Plan also had consequences for the psychology of industrial relations, and the political organization of the economy, which are more nebulous and difficult to quantify but in the long term just as important for German economic recovery. The fostering of a managerial climate of opinion, and the depoliticizing of industrial relations, with a focus on enhanced productivity rather than social redistribution, were certainly important factors in post-war economic growth. Low wage demands, a low strike record and a relative lack of militancy characterized the conduct of federal German trade unions. The refugees' urgent desire for jobs even at low wages was an obvious factor but other factors too, including the exclusion of communist influence, were important. And as the economy grew, people were even less inclined to rock the economic boat, subscribing rather to the psychology of 'rebuilding' (*'Wir bauen wieder auf'*). [3]

The structure of the West German economy has often been labelled 'social market', a term that became current among neo-liberal economists in the late 1940s. (Whatever the relevance of the label at first, the Western German economy turned towards neo-Keynesianism in the mid and later 1160s, and changed again in the 1980s, but the original label has tended to stick.) To some extent the revival of neo-liberal (or so-called Ordo-liberal) ideas represented an understandable desire to mark a break with the state-directed economy of the Nazi period, and to give a freer rein to market forces, with the state merely guaranteeing the conditions for productivity but not playing too

interventionist a role. Some analysts have suggested however that the West German economy of the 1950s and 1960s was neither 'social' nor 'market'. Interventions, steering, and control by the state made the notion of a 'free market' into at best a half-truth. The qualification 'social' was intended to deal with this, since

the state was not only to ensure the conditions for economic growth, but also to protect the weaker members of society from the full ravages of market forces. Conservatives and Social Democrats differed in their interpretations of the extent and character of such protection. It was quite clear to both supporters and opponents of the conservative government in the 1950S that its economic policies would serve to increase the gaps between rich and poor, would increase disparities in wealth and lead to a more unequal society. High profits, tax incentives, and squeezes on domestic credit encouraged investment, while workers' wages were kept low, with only modest increases. By the mid-1960s, a large proportion of the nation's wealth was concentrated in a small minority of hands. But the assumption was made that overall growth would be of a sufficient scale and speed that *all* members of society would benefit from increased shares in a larger national cake, even if some benefited more than others. And the 1952 Equalization of Burdens Law was intended to compensate those who had suffered disproportionately as a result of the war, particularly refugees from the east.

In the event, the average disposable income of West German households grew by four hundred per cent between 1950 and 1970. People compared their own situations, not with the degree to which other people's prosperity had increased, but rather with their own past: and they were for the most part able to register an extraordinary change from the ruins and devastation of the immediate post-war period. Being well-fed and well-housed mattered more to most West Germans than the seemingly more academic question of whether theirs was becoming a more unequal society. Interestingly, the percentages supporting democratic rather than monarchical or Nazi-political views in opinion polls of the 1950s and early 1960s grew in close correlation with the increase in the average weights of ever more

satiated West Germans. [4]

A number of factors are relevant to explaining West Germany's rapid growth, in addition to the direct and indirect effects of the Marshall Plan mentioned above. It was uniquely adapted to benefit from the Korean War which broke out in June 1950, and

from subsequent defence policies (in favour of nuclear, rather than conventional, defences, as favoured by Defence Minister Franz-Josef Strauss). The structure of unions was simplified, with one union per industry, and the unified unions belonging to a single umbrella organization, the DGB. A myth soon grew up of 'social partnership' between employers and employees. 'Co-determination' in industry (*Mitbestimmung*) was in fact only introduced, against considerable employer opposition, in a limited fashion in 1951, so that all joint stock companies in the coal and steel industries with over a thousand employees had to have representation of workers' views at the managerial level. (It was extended, again against considerable employer opposition, in 1976 to cover *all* joint stock companies with over two thousand employees.) In 1952, the Works Constitution Law provided that there should be works councils for enterprises with more than twenty employees. West Germany had a relatively low strike record. It also uniquely benefited, in the first decade or so after its foundation, from a supply of cheap and mobile labour: the refugees from the German Democratic Republic. Initially these people represented a burden of extra bodies to be housed and fed; and in 1950 the unemployment rate stood at 8.1%. But the rapidly expanding economy was soon able to absorb them (with early help from the Korean War boom), and by the mid-1960s the unemployment rate stood at a mere 0.5%. During the 1950s, around three million people fled from the east, and a large proportion of these were young, skilled people in search of better career prospects than they could find in East Germany. Many of the attempts by the Allies to restructure and decentralize the economy were successfully resisted by West German industrialists: there was fairly rapid reconcentration and recentralization, and the revised Law on Decartelization which was passed after many amendments in 1957 left sufficient loopholes as to be little impediment to West German industrialists.

Whatever the reasons, in the course of the 1950s West Germany was becoming a prosperous society. By the later 1950s, writers such as Heinrich Böll were beginning to pour scorn on what they saw as a bourgeois, self-satisfied materialism

which lived only for current comforts and suppressed the past; but rapid economic success was certainly a powerful factor in ensuring the early commitment of vast numbers of formerly undemocratic Germans to the new democracy which had been in large measure thrust upon them in an hour of national humiliation and defeat. The contrast to the early years of Weimar democracy is striking.

Despite the relative lack of positive ideological commitment to democracy, there was nevertheless a powerful transitional ideology in the 1950s: that of anti-communism. Anti-communism had long been a prevalent orientation among the German middle classes, and it had played an important role in the rise of Hitler. It was not something new which had to be inculcated in the Germans by foreign powers. Yet it took on new flavours during the Cold War, and was stimulated by the anti-communism in particular of the Americans. Fear of the 'bolshevist threat' provided powerful support for Adenauer's policies of western integration, outweighing the natural desire of most Germans to see their country reunified. At the same time, the example of Marxist Leninist practice in the East was used to cast aspersions on the West German SPD, which, despite its constant and genuine avowal of commitment to democracy, was adversely affected by slur campaigns from the right.

The SPD itself was somewhat in disarray in the 1950s, and did not present a powerful and united opposition to Adenauer and the CDU. There had always been tensions within the SPD since its foundation, and we have seen the way in which splits among socialists facilitated the rise of Hitler. In the 1950s, there were debates on a number of issues, including the fiercely divisive question of German rearmament and remilitarization. But by the late 1950s, under the rather drab leadership of Erich Ollenhauer who had succeeded Schumacher as leader on his death in 1952, the issue was less one of principle than of

pragmatic politics: how, with its electoral support static or even declining, could the SPD ever hope to present a serious challenge to the broadly-based and recently triumphant CDU? The SPD's solution to the conundrum of being seen as a working-class and radical party in an increasingly middle-class, affluent, and materialist society,

was contained in the Bad Godesberg programme of 1959: the SPD simply abandoned the electorally damaging Marxist rhetoric it had inherited from its pre-Nazi past, and aimed instead to become a 'catch-all people's party' (*Volkspartei*). No longer did the SPD profess the revolutionary aim of transforming and overthrowing the capitalist socio-economic order; rather, like the CDU, it aimed to improve its functioning so that inequities could be alleviated by growth in the national cake. [5] Differences in domestic socio-economic policy between the parties were subsequently to be more differences of method, rather than of principle or goal. Nevertheless, certain key differences between the two major parties remained, particularly in the sphere of foreign policy before the completion of *Ostpolitik*.

In West Germany in the 1950s, many people were able to find a new way of life and to forget or repress unpleasant memories of the recent past. People were able to find jobs and live in relatively comfortable homes; they obtained enough food to eat, and increasing numbers were able to afford luxuries and durable consumer goods such as fridges and cars. Under Adenauer's leadership, West Germany was beginning to be able to assert itself as a responsible and necessary partner in a number of transnational activities, both economic and political, in the western world. The Nazi past could be ignored, except insofar as the privations of recent years of war and occupation were contrasted with the modest but increasing prosperity of the present. Former Nazis, both the committed and the conformists, were able to fit relatively easily into Adenauer's Germany. Although in the immediate post-war period about 53,000 civil servants had been dismissed for membership of the NSDAP, only about 1000 were excluded permanently from any future employment. Under the 1951 Reinstatement Act, many were reemployed in the civil service, and obtained full pension credits for their service in the Third Reich. By

the early 1950s, between forty and eighty per cent of officials were former NSDAP members. Similarly, only a very few members of the judiciary were permanently disqualified.[6] Former Nazis were even able to gain prominent positions in public life: Adenauer was quite prepared to include former Nazis in his cabinet, such

as former SS-member Oberländer as Minister for Refugees. Perhaps the most controversial of Adenauer's appointments was that of Hans Globke, the author of the official commentary on the Nuremberg Race Laws of 1935, as Adenauer's chief aide in his Chancellery. (Subsequent apologists for this appointment have tried to suggest that Globke's interpretation of the Nuremberg Laws was a milder one than others might have written.) [7] Past misdemeanours in different circumstances were ignored in favour of current attitudes and expressed changes of heart. If the Hitler-period was considered at all, it was more or less dismissed as an isolated aberration in German history when a madman unfortunately took over the country and misled the poor German people, leading them into war and committing atrocities in their name about which they had known nothing. (On the other hand, many West Germans still assented to the statement that Hitler would have been one of the greatest statesmen there had ever been, if only he had not lost the war.) For the most part, however, working for the present and the future was more important and certainly more productive than raking over the ashes of the past. The main point was to rebuild, not sort through the ruins.

The period is an exceedingly difficult one to evaluate if indeed it is part of the task of historians to evaluate. It is a period which has provoked heated debates among Germans. A number of facts are clear, and lead to somewhat contradictory conclusions. From one point of view, it can be pointed out that many former Nazis received minimal, if any, punishment for their crimes or complicity in an evil regime. It can even be shown that entrepreneurs who built up vast personal fortunes on the basis of Nazi 'aryanization' policies (forcible expropriation of Jewish concerns) and exploitation of slave labour, working Poles and Jews to the bone before their death by exhaustion, starvation or gassing, were able to use the capital thus amassed to

continue successful entrepreneurial careers in the Federal Republic and to influence prominent politicians in their favour.[8] It can be pointed out that there was a massive wastage of talent, as thousands of courageous people who had refused to compromise with the Third Reich found

their paths to post-war careers in the Civil Service blocked, as positions were retained or re-filled by Nazi time-servers. [9] It can be pointed out that the chance of a fundamental restructuring of German society was missed, as neither structure nor personnel were radically changed in an era of conservative 'restoration'. Against all this, it can be asserted that without the integration of former Nazis, and without the startling economic success, Bonn democracy might have had as little chance of survival as Weimar democracy. Radical anti-system opposition on the part of a few activists would have combined with mass discontent based on economic misery and uncertainty to provide powerful forces for political destabilization. The argument can be mounted that the end, retrospectively, might have justified the means: actions which can be criticized on moral grounds might have had consequences which even the critics would applaud. In any event, the ambiguities which are contained in these historical reflections were ambiguities which were to explode into the West German public arena in the 1960s, although not always in a manner characterized by rational discussion.

Ulbricht's Germany, 194961

Meanwhile, a comparable if rather more fragile consolidation based more on repression than success was taking place in the GDR. In 1948, the SED had become a 'party of a new type', in line with the general Stalinization of East European Soviet satellite states. The proponent of the notion of a 'German road to socialism', Anton Ackermann, was subjected to a process of 'criticism and self-criticism' and forced to recant.[10] Stalin was introduced as a new idol, and party schools forced the Stalin cult onto party members. Although the word *Volksdemokratie* (People's Republic) was not formally used until the Second Party Conference of July 1952, in practice the GDR was already in 1949 comparable to other Soviet satellite states.

At the Third Party Congress of the SED, 204 July 1952, Walter Ulbricht was elected General Secretary of the SED (a title which was changed to First Secretary in 1954, when the

Soviet Union moved to a more collective form of leadership after Stalin's death), thus gaining a position of dominance which he succeeded in retaining until 1971. The late 1940s and early 1950s saw the transformation of the structure of the SED, with the introduction of a Central Committee and Politburo in 1950 and the development of cadre politics, as well as the 'cleansing' of the party with the purging of individuals with social-democratic or western leanings or associations. At the Second Party Conference of 912 July 1952, the 'building of socialism' was announced.

A combination of methods were employed to ensure the compliance of the East German populace, including terror as well as attempted ideological indoctrination, as the SED sought both to control the state means of administration, policing and justice, and to exert its influence in education, the media and all avenues of opinion formation. Schoolteachers were supposed to teach the new political principles, and those unwilling to do so were likely to be replaced. Christians were subjected to coercion, with the secularization of schools, and the squeezing out of religious education although curiously, given the radical measures of expropriation taken in other areas, church property had been left intact in the occupation period, and the churches had been left to denazify their own personnel (which, it might be noted in passing, they had accomplished in a less than energetic manner). While Christian institutions remained relatively unscathed and at this time retained their all-German links individual Christians were subjected to considerable harassment. The young Christians' organization *Junge Gemeinde* was tarnished as an 'illegal organization' of political opposition, supposedly harbouring enemy agents and spies. The introduction in 1954 of a secular state 'confirmation' ceremony, *the Jugendweihe* (*see* plate 15), which Christians viewed as incompatible with confirmation

in church, was used as a means to identify and discriminate against the children of those not fully committed to the state ideology. [11] Members of the 'bourgeoisie' and their children were also systematically discriminated against, in favour of the ideologically committed and the politically sound members of the working classes and peasantry. Life was less than

comfortable for many previously relatively privileged people in the new GDR of the 1950s.

Admittedly, it could be claimed that this coercion was in a good cause: that of greater social equality. But it appeared to many that it was merely replacing one form of privilege by another, and one form of dictatorship by another. Yet no-one could foresee how long the current situation was likely to last. Moreover, the particular, hardline form of communism which developed in the GDR in the 1950s was not inevitable alternatives seemed possible to many socialist humanists and the dominance of Ulbricht as party leader did not go unchallenged.

There were serious differences of opinion within the higher echelons of the SED in the summer of 1953, which to some extent reflected differences in Moscow after Stalin's death in the spring of that year. In some conflict with Ulbricht over certain areas of policy were Rudolf Herrnstadt (editor of *Neues Deutschland*) and Wilhelm Zaisser (Minister for State Security). They were supported in Moscow by Beria, and Moscow was seriously considering the ousting and replacement of Walter Ulbricht, who was not an entirely convinced supporter of Moscow's 'New Course'. Differences of opinion within the SED played a key role in the origins of the only major uprising in the GDR's history before the revolution of 1989, that of June 1953. [12] While productivity goals (or 'work norms') were being increased for industrial workers, causing an exacerbation of already existing discontent with living conditions in the 'Soviet zone' (as it was still called by those who refused to concede legitimacy to the GDR), concessions were being made to other groups, including the middle classes and the peasantry. These somewhat contradictory policies in relation to increased work norms were announced suddenly, and not only was there no prior warning to the general population, there was

also inadequate prior discussion and preparation for those party functionaries who would have to justify the new line. Remarkably for a communist state, quite different official views appeared in the press. On 4 June an article in *Neues Deutschland* (which was of course edited by Herrnstadt) criticized the SED's hardline policies; while on 16 June an article in the official trade union

(FDGB) newspaper *Tribüne* came out in support of the raised work norms.

On 16 June workers in the Stalinallee, who were employed on the massive construction of this imposing street as a monument of Stalinist architecture, decided that rather than sending two representatives they would together down tools and go as a group to the central union building to protest against this measure. Soon the workers from the first site were joined by others. A series of accidental circumstances turned this spontaneous protest against a specific measure into a more general political demonstration. On arrival at the FDGB house, no-one in authority appeared; so the crowd moved on to the *Haus der Ministerien*, where they shouted down Minister Selbmann and Professor Havemann (who was later to gain a reputation as a dissident humanist Marxist, placed under house arrest for most of his life). The situation became further confused as a result of contradictory announcements. While Selbmann proclaimed the retraction of the raised work norms, a Politburo announcement simply said that the decision of the Council of Ministers would have to be reconsidered. There was an increasing sense of power among the crowd, who began to make political demands for the resignation of the regime; but they remained lacking in central direction and leadership, and there was no strike committee to take overall direction of the protest. Nevertheless, one enterprising worker seized a loudspeaker and pronounced a general strike for the following day, 17 June. In the event, on 17 June there were uprisings and demonstrations in a number of places spread across the GDR, with between 300,000 and 372,000 workers going on strike an estimated 5.5% to 6.8% of the work force. Most of those demonstrating were industrial workers, with little or no participation from the middle classes, the intelligentsia or the peasants.

Despite this evidence of widespread popular dissatisfaction among the workers, who were now supposed to be an emancipated proletariat, and despite the obviously quite serious challenge to his authority, Ulbricht came out of the June Uprising with his power augmented rather than decreased. The protestors had failed to develop an adequate organization or leadership,

and their movement was already losing impetus and direction before it was finally suppressed by a display of force by Soviet tanks on the afternoon of 17 June. Twenty-one people were killed, and shots were fired mainly in the air as a warning: the level of violence was relatively low in comparison with conflicts on German streets earlier in the twentieth century. Although Ulbricht had to back down on work norms, and workers thus obtained an apparent concession, ironically the main result of the uprising was the confirmation in power of the hardliners and Ulbricht himself. Herrnstadt and Zaisser were removed from their positions in the Politburo, and in January 1954 they were expelled from the SED for 'factionalism'. This was made easier by the downfall of their supporter in Moscow, Beria. The Justice Minister, Max Fechner, who had been inclined to lenience towards the strikers, was removed from his position on 16 July, and harsh sentences were imposed on many 'ringleaders' who were convicted on political charges (since there was under the GDR's first constitution a right to strike). In the course of the following months, the SED was purged throughout its ranks, with the denunciation of approximately twenty thousand functionaries and fifty thousand ordinary members as 'provocateurs'. Former Social Democrats were particularly affected in this way.

There were still challenges to Ulbricht's views in the course of the 1950s. Ulbricht himself had considerable difficulty with the destalinization initiated in Eastern Europe by Khrushchev's speech at the Twentieth Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in February 1956. In the end, he was again more or less saved by another uprising this time in Hungary. In the context of political instability elsewhere in Eastern Europe, it seemed too risky to the Soviet leadership to open the opportunity of destabilization in the GDR by a change of leadership there.

Ulbricht also had to deal with a number of individuals and groups in the GDR who hoped for a real destalinization and liberalization of East German socialism. A curious and eclectic set of political demands from a group of critical Marxists associated with Wolfgang Harich was published in 1956. Their programme implied a general liberalization and democratization

and even, in the context of possible reunification with West Germany, suggested that the SED would have to step down in favour of the SPD if this were the democratic majority will of the people in free all-German elections. Harich was himself in communication both with the West German SPD and the Polish reform communists. Ulbricht was understandably less than enthusiastic about Harich's proposals and activities, and Harich was sentenced to ten years' imprisonment (but released in 1964 after an apparent change of heart). His associates received varying lesser sentences. Politics as such was not the only area in which Ulbricht had to contend with vocal, explicit differences of opinion. Fritz Behrens, Arne Benary, and other revisionist economists were advocating economic reforms implying decentralization. They too were at this time attacked and silenced (although some of their ideas were subsequently resurrected in the New Economic System of the 1960s). Finally, in 1958, certain rivals or opponents of Ulbricht in the Central Committee and Politburo Karl Schirdewan, Erich Wollweber, Gerhart Ziller, Fritz Selbmann, Paul Wandel and Fred Oelssner were removed. By the end of the 1950s, Ulbricht had effectively consolidated his political hold and eradicated the presence of 'Third Way', humanistic Marxists, at least from the higher echelons of the SED. [13]

Ulbricht had not however gained the kind of pragmatic support among the population that was evident in Adenauer's Germany. The differences were partly political, partly economic. People resented the repression, the existence of the security police, the harsh measures imposed on those with differences of political opinion, the constraints on the activities of Christians, the uniform world-view which was being inculcated in the schools and the media, the sense of fear and the pressures towards conformity in every area of life which necessitated the continuous leading of a double life (to which many

Germans had become all too accustomed, in different ways, under the Nazi regime). At the same time, there were few material advantages to be enjoyed in the GDR, particularly for skilled people who could potentially be high earners in the West. The East German concentration on heavy industrial production rather than consumer goods, and

the extraordinary difficulties experienced in transforming and centralizing the economy led to difficulties in the supply and quality of basic necessities such as food and clothing. People simply did not like the standard of living in the GDR in the 1950s, particularly in comparison with the ever-improving living conditions in West Germany.

Throughout the 1950s there were attempts at central state control of the economy launched via major 'plans' on the Soviet model. These were perpetually being subjected to revision in order that at least some measure of fulfilment might be seen to have been achieved. There were numerous problems associated with central planning. The aim in industry was the production of *quantity*, with little concern for the quality or saleability of goods. Prices were fixed, in order to aid planning, and did not represent any true measure of supply and demand. The time lag of plans meant that they were generally out-of-date before they were implemented; and the one-year focus of plan-fulfilment meant that managers would either produce 'soft' plans that were easily 'overfulfilled', or, if difficulties were experienced in fulfilling a plan, use up stock and not replace capital equipment in order to achieve the appropriate balance at the end of the year. The lack of managerial responsibility for investment also led to a wastefulness in the use of resources.

Initially the emphasis was, in line with the Soviet Union, on heavy capital goods industries. Following the death of Stalin in 1953 and the introduction of the 'New Course' under Malenkov, there was in theory a shift towards greater consumer orientation in production (also related to the impact of the 1953 Uprising). However, in 1954 the New Course was abandoned in the USSR, and the GDR now adopted the dual aim of combining consumer orientation with the production of capital goods. The need for greater inter-regional specialization

within the COMECON states was recognized, and reflected in the second Five Year Plan announced for 195660. However, considerable problems were experienced in the reorientation of the East German economy towards its eastern neighbours and partners. The Five Year Plan was abandoned, and a Seven Year Plan was announced for 195965 to synchronize the GDR's

economic development with that of the USSR. The end of the 1950s actually saw an upturn in the GDR's economy, coinciding with a brief period of economic difficulty in the Federal Republic. The GDR now proudly proclaimed that its goal was to overtake the West Germans in material as well as moral terms. It was even suggested that those considering flight to the West would be better off staying in the East. However, the beginning of the 1960s saw renewed economic problems, and the Seven Year Plan had been dropped by the summer of 1962. A second Seven Year Plan was announced for 196270, but was never enacted, as other developments intervened (on which more below).

The 1950s also witnessed the collectivization of East German agriculture. In 19523 agricultural production co-operatives (*Landwirtschaftliche Produktionsgenossenschaften*, LPGs), were set up. Initially, only the land was tilled together, and use was made of machine and tractor-lending stations. (These were known as 'Type I' collectives.) By 1959, LPGs accounted for about 45% of the agricultural sector. In 195960 there was a further wave of enforced collectivization, raising the proportion of co-operative farms to about 85%. By the end of the 1960s, most co-operatives were of the so-called Type III, where there was total collectivization including livestock and machinery. Initial collectivization of agriculture was associated with decreased productivity. Just as the first wave of collectivization was associated with economic and ultimately political problems in 19523, so the second wave in 1960 saw the flight of farmers to the west, and of townspeople as the food position worsened, necessitating the reintroduction of rationing in 1961.

There was still one simple means for people to escape from East Germany, provided that they did not want to take too much by way of possessions: they could travel to East Berlin, proceed to West Berlin,

and then leave for West Germany from there. Figures of refugees adopting this route varied from year to year, with particularly bad figures in years of economic crisis, as in the wake of the rapid collectivization of agriculture in 195960. Up to 1961, an estimated three and a half million people left the GDR for the West (with a counter-traffic of perhaps half a million, implying a net loss to the GDR of three million). Given

the predominantly skilled, educated nature of these refugees who, according to some surveys, gave economic considerations and better material and career prospects in the West as their primary motives for leaving it was a drain of talent and labour that the post-war economy of the GDR could ill sustain. It served only to exacerbate the problems which were also the main cause of the haemorrhage. In 1961 Ulbricht terminated this flow with the building of the Berlin Wall. On August 13 1961, Berliners stood amazed and aghast as barbed wire, bricks and concrete rapidly divided their streets, and neighbours and families living only a few yards from each other were separated as finally and effectively as if they had been resident in Moscow and Washington. The building of the Wall was an admission that the population had to be contained by a form of national house arrest, imprisonment within its own country; but also, in some ways, it created the conditions for a subsequent process of coming to terms with, and finding an acceptable way of life in, that country. From 1961, there were very clearly two Germanies; and, with such different political and economic structures, they increasingly grew apart in their social and cultural patterns also. The 1960s proved to be a decade of divergence and inner transformation in East and West Germany alike.

Eight
Transformation and the 'Established Phase', 196188

At the time of Adenauer's stunning election victory of 1957, and the SPD's dispirited change of course at Bad Godesberg in 1959, it appeared that the CDU was in an almost unbeatable ascendancy. However, a mere decade later, in 1969, West Germany had an SPD Chancellor for the first time since the Müller cabinet of 192830. And, within three years of taking office, Willy Brandt had negotiated a series of agreements in his so-called *Ostpolitik* which fundamentally altered the relationship of the two divided Germanies. By this time, the climate on both sides of the Wall was quite different from that of the 1950s.

Adenauer's position began to wane in the late 1950s, his authority in his own party being seriously weakened by the crisis in 1959 over his vacillating and ambivalent candidacy for the position of President. He was persuaded to stand, then ultimately withdrew, partly because he was unable to resolve to his own satisfaction the question of who should succeed him as Chancellor, and partly because he realised the Presidency's lack of real power. But Adenauer delayed his departure from the national political stage too long; when he finally went, after having presided over West Germany's phenomenal early resurrection from the ashes of the Third Reich, he departed under a cloud. In 1962, Adenauer was seriously discredited by what is known as the *Spiegel* Affair. NATO autumn manoeuvres had revealed that West German civilian defences and conventional arms were essentially inadequate. It had been in the interests of West German industry in the 1950S to have a defence policy oriented towards potentially profitable nuclear armaments rather than

conventional defence forces, which would have been manpower-intensive in a period of labour shortage. The weekly news magazine *Spiegel* published a highly critical article, which was in fact but one in a long series seeking to discredit Adenauer's Minister of Defence, Franz-Josef Strauss, through accusations of improprieties, misconduct and corruption. *Spiegel's* offices were raided (recalling methods employed by the Nazis) and eleven members of the journal's staff were arrested and charged with leakage of defence secrets (one was even hauled back from holiday in Spain for this purpose). In the ensuing controversy, the article itself became infinitely less important than issues relating to freedom of the press in a democratic state. Nor did the politicians always act with integrity: Strauss himself at first lied over his role in the Spanish arrest, and it was revealed that Adenauer and Strauss had seriously misled Parliament. After considerable pressure (including the refusal of FDP ministers in the coalition to work with Strauss), Adenauer was forced to accede to Strauss' resignation and to confirm that he would himself retire in 1963. The 'affair' was thus significant, less for what *Spiegel* had actually printed, than for the sea-change in German politics which it helped to inaugurate.

Adenauer was succeeded as Chancellor by the mastermind of the economic miracle, Ludwig Erhard. Unfortunately, Erhard was less adept at politics than at economics and even in the latter field his Chancellorship ran into difficulties. The FDP had been in alliance with the CDU-CSU since the elections of 1961 (when the CDU/CSU lost 28 seats, the SPD gained 21 and the FDP gained 26); this alliance was reconfirmed after the 1965 election (when the FDP lost 18 seats, the CDU/CSU gained 3, and the SPD gained 12). However, difficulties in the West German economy by the mid-1960s led to serious problems in attempting to balance the budget. In October 1966

Erhard's proposals, which included higher taxes, were not accepted by the FDP, and the FDP cabinet ministers resigned. At the same time, increasingly vocal currents in the SPD were arguing that it was time to show that the Social Democrats were capable of taking governmental responsibility, rather than remaining permanently in opposition.

A powerful government appeared all the more desirable because of a worrying rise in right-wing activities in the shape of the neo-Nazi NPD, as well as considerable criticism from left-wing quarters. Shades of Weimar appeared to loom on the horizon. In the event, responsible politicians decided to take effective action to ensure stable majority government: in November 1966 a 'Grand Coalition' between the CDU/CSU and the SPD was formed, with the CDU's Kurt Georg Kiesinger (a member of the NSDAP from 1933 to 1945) as Chancellor, and SPD's ex-Mayor of Berlin, Willy Brandt (who had an impeccable anti-Nazi record and was accused by some nationalists of having been a 'traitor' for having fought against the Germans in the Second World War), as Foreign Minister. This participation of the SPD in government opened a new period in West German political history.

Neo-liberal economic policies were replaced by neo-Keynesian policies (a transition which had begun already under Erhard). The 1967 Law for Promoting Stability and Growth in the economy gave the government new tools to intervene in the economy. Tax concessions were reduced and a programme of investment in the economic infrastructure (particularly in expanding education and improving motorway and rail networks) was introduced. Co-operation among workers, employers and the state was encouraged in the so-called 'Concerted Action', which was held to be a means of dealing effectively with policy formation in periods of economic crisis. Particularly after 1969, when there was a coalition government between SPD and FDP, there was what has been termed a veritable 'planning euphoria', with a new Research and Technology Ministry established in 1972.

The supply of refugee labour had dried up with the building of the Berlin Wall. The West German economy in the 1960s became

increasingly reliant on cheap 'guest workers' (*Gastarbeiter*), who were encouraged to come to Germany from the Mediterranean countries. While in 1960 foreigners represented 1.1% of the workforce, by 1973 they constituted nearly 10%. These foreigners were brought in with little thought for their

future status or the well-being of their families. They were in the main simply seen as a supply of labour which could be exploited in low-paid, unskilled, temporary and frequently dirty or dangerous jobs which unionized German workers were unwilling to take on. Moreover, they had incurred no previous costs to Germany by way of education or training, and their tax and insurance contributions helped the German welfare system considerably. Insofar as thought was given to the future of these workers, it was by and large simply assumed that young men would come and work for a few years, without dependents, and would send money home to their families, to whom they would eventually return. In the event, however, many families came and settled, and inevitably, too, many children of *Gastarbeiter* were actually born in Germany, which was more 'home' to them than an unfamiliar country which they rarely visited. The *Gastarbeiter* were to find that they were less than welcome guests in West Germany when oil crises and world recession in the 1970 and 1980s were accompanied by rising unemployment and economic difficulties.

After the startling rates of economic growth experienced in the 1950S, the German economy began to come into line with the performance of other western economies in the 1960s. It also began to be westernized in other ways. With a change of generations, younger entrepreneurs began to adopt American attitudes and patterns of industrial organization. [1] Importantly for the firm anchoring of the new democracy, economic elites found that they could use the political system to their advantage in contrast to the Weimar Republic, when it was viewed as a hindrance. Under the form of corporatism which developed in West Germany, employers' organizations, unions, and the farming lobby were able to meet and hammer out compromise policies which then informed the legislative process in the *Bundestag*. From one point of view, this could be argued to be a less than

democratic influence on the parliamentary decision-making process; from another, it could be seen as an efficient means of policy-formation which sought the views of a range of organized interests in advance of any detailed legislation.

West Germany became, visibly, a very different place in the course of the 1960s. Old, ruined town centres were rebuilt, with modern buildings and pedestrian shopping precincts. Transport was improved, with rapidly expanding networks of autobahns bringing formerly isolated communities into a more modern, fast-moving society. Fewer people were working on the land, and in the old heavy industries: more were beginning to work in the service sector and in new electronics and other high-tech industries. The image of affluence was spreading: the 'typical' West German was no longer an emaciated ex-POW, a person lacking an arm or a leg, a prematurely aged widow in black, but rather a bloated, cigar-smoking businessman, an efficient banker or industrialist, or a fashion-conscious, smartly-dressed woman. The 'toytown' image of new, freshly-painted housing, clean streets, pleasant facilities, was developing. The charge that Germany was an 'economic giant, but a political dwarf might have been partially justified; but new generations were growing up who would radically change the face of German politics. The passage was to be a stormy one.

As we shall see further (in Chapter Eleven, below), the 1960s was a decade of political polarization: it saw increasing antagonism between comfortable conservatives and the idealists of an emerging New Left. This was partly also a polarization of generations: between the older generation who had lived through the Third Reich, with their baggage of compromise and expediency and their rationalizations and repressions, and younger people who challenged the role, conduct and values of their parents' generation. Numerous factors were involved in the cataclysmic clashes of the 1960s: wider trends in the western world (the emergence of a youth culture characterized most succinctly by the slogan 'make love not war'); the expansion of higher education; political issues such as American involvement in Vietnam; and in the

German case the reaction against the lack of effective parliamentary opposition during the Grand Coalition, necessitating so it seemed the development of extra-parliamentary opposition. The clashes came to a head with the shooting of a student on a demonstration in Berlin in the summer of 1967, and the year of student revolt in 1968.

In the following years, left-wing protests diversified and became more sectarian; one notorious group was to be the terrorist Red Army Faction, active throughout the 1970s.

East Germany in the 1960s

By late 1961, Ulbricht appeared to have secured the future of his form of communism in East Germany. Mass dissent had been suppressed; revisionists had been purged from the SED; the building of the Berlin Wall had ended the damaging drain of skilled manpower to the west; and the lack of effective intervention of the western powers, both in 1953 and 1961, indicated that no-one was willing to make an international issue, involving violent confrontation, of the German question. Although not formally recognized as a legitimate separate state by the Federal Republic of Germany whose 'Hallstein doctrine' also meant refusing diplomatic relations with any other country which did recognize the GDR to all intents and purposes East Germany was now an established state. It was moreover one of considerable economic and military importance to the Soviet empire in eastern Europe. And to the people of East Germany, after the building of the Berlin Wall it seemed that they would simply have to make the best of a life to which there was no longer any alternative.

There was even something of an upturn in the East German economy in the 1960s, although interesting experiments in the economic sphere were not given long enough to prove themselves. There had been discussions in the later 19500 by certain GDR economists such as Professor Fritz Behrens and Dr Arne Benary about possible economic reforms, but in 19567 they had been officially attacked and denounced as 'revisionists'. In 1962 discussion started in the USSR of ideas officially associated with the name of Liberman. At first, these Soviet discussions were merely reported without comment in the GDR; then

they were taken up for discussion there too. On 15 January 1963, at the Sixth Congress of the SED, Ulbricht suddenly revealed reform proposals which

showed the influence of the Liberman debate. The spring of 1963 saw small-scale experiments; these were discussed in the Central Committee of the SED in June 1963; and on 1 July 1963 the Council of Ministers approved the 'Principles for the New Economic System of Planning and Management of the National Economy'. This was defined as 'the organic combination of (a) scientifically based leadership in the economy, and (b) scientifically grounded central state planning of the long term, together with (c) the comprehensive use of material interest in the shape of the consistent system of economic levers'. [2]

The New Economic System (NES) differed somewhat from comparable experiments in other Eastern European states in the 1960s. It did not represent a simple adoption without alteration of the Liberman principles in the USSR: profit was not to be the only economic indicator. Overall central state planning was retained; the NES in the GDR did not imply a form of market socialism along Yugoslavian lines, nor the sort of economy introduced in Hungary and attempted in Czechoslovakia. The state retained the functions of forecasting, long-term planning, and overall control of the economy. There was however some devolution to intermediate and lower levels of economic organization, and increased flexibility. At the top stood the Central State Planning Commission (Ministry of Planning) and eight industrial ministries, which retained overall control. At the intermediate level there were eighty so-called *Vereinigungen Volkseigener Betriebe* (VVBs) which were organizations combining clusters of individual enterprises, and which were given considerable powers of decision-making. These VVBs had general directors who co-ordinated the production of all the individual enterprises the *Volkseigene Betriebe* (VEBs). Profit was to become the main criterion of performance of each production unit; hence enterprises had to

manufacture products of a quality which could be sold, and to keep a close eye on production costs. Profits were to be reinvested, but there was to be a certain flexibility in reinvestment, with stimulation of research and development technology. Bonus incentives and wage differentials were

introduced. Banks were given an entrepreneurial role: credit was to be given to encourage the technologically advanced sectors of industry. Market research accompanied the so-called 'scientific-technical revolution'.

In many respects this all seemed very promising. Along with the introduction of the New Economic System went the development of what has been called an 'achievement-oriented career society'. [3] Since the building of the Berlin Wall, aspiring young technologists and managers could no longer leave to seek more promising careers in the West. The New Economic System and the stress on the application of technical expertise in production appeared to offer prospects of advancement and professional fulfilment in the East. The 1960s saw members of the technical intelligentsia increasingly being solicited for professional advice, and enjoying a relatively high social and political status. At less elevated social levels, a new generation was coming to maturity who had achieved upward social mobility through state policies to sponsor the children of workers and peasants. Many of these felt they had something of a stake in a system which had facilitated their rise.[4]

It nevertheless remained the case that professional technical advice was not able to outweigh entirely political considerations: the introduction of the economically unfavourable Soviet trade agreement of 19667, for example, was a result of political pressures which overrode economic considerations. It was also clear that there were considerable intrinsic difficulties which the New Economic System would have to overcome before it could function smoothly. Three sets of price reforms were required in the period 19647. There was a failure to develop an adequate long-term plan, despite the emphasis on forecasting. The lack of managerial and business administration expertise among managers, who had not been used to bearing such

responsibilities, was soon revealed; yet they were not given enough time or opportunity to acquire relevant training and experience. The fixed pricing system continued to cause problems, and all sorts of dislocations in the economy emerged. There were problems associated with the hoarding of raw

materials to overcome log-jams in the supply of materials from other countries in the socialist bloc. Even the introduction of wage differentials and the profit incentive did not seem to be working very well, particularly when the range of consumer goods on which income could be spent was rather limited and of inferior quality.

Many of these problems might have been overcome, had the New Economic System been given time to develop. But external political developments intervened. In particular there was a change of political climate in the USSR, and following the upheavals of the Prague Spring and the subsequent invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, and the Polish troubles of 1970, a recentralization process started throughout the Eastern bloc countries. Although Ulbricht had made it quite clear throughout that, unlike the Czechoslovakian reform communists, he had no intention of allowing political decentralization or democratization to be a concomitant of economic decentralization, the Soviet Union was no longer willing to countenance further experiments in this line. Already in 1967 changes had been inaugurated with the Economic System of Socialism (ESS) which superseded the New Economic System, and in the late 1960s a process of recentralization began. The New Economic System was quietly dismantled with none of the fanfare which had accompanied its inauguration.

Meanwhile, account had been taken of the changed realities of political life in the GDR. In 1968 a new constitution was proclaimed, and presented as a 'socialist' replacement of the earlier 'anti-fascist' constitution of 1949. This new constitution of the 'socialist state of the German nation' held that power no longer derived simply from 'the people' but rather from the 'working people' under the leadership of the Marxist-Leninist Party. Thus the leadership of the SED was for the first time explicitly enshrined in the constitution. Its leading role was

justified ideologically by the notion that Marxist-Leninist theory alone provided a guide to the laws of history, and that the Party was thus uniquely placed to lead the people through the necessary and sometimes uncomfortable transitional stages to achieve the final goal of history, truly communist society.

Other amendments ensured that 'liberal' aspects of the 1949 constitution, such as the right to strike, and rights of free speech and assembly, were effectively abolished or formally restricted by clauses further empowering the party to decide what was or was not permissible under socialism. The differences between Ulbricht's conception of developed socialist society, and other Marxists' vision of the transition to the perfect communist society (the ultimate stage of human history) were marked not to mention the differences between official ideology and non-Marxist views.

But for the time being, whatever criticisms people might privately harbour about the East German state, dissenting voices as that of Robert Havemann remained largely isolated and subdued. Many who were not committed Marxists now felt they had to try to work within socialism, and to confront and make the best of the constraints within which they had to operate. During the 1960s, less emphatic attention was paid by the state to trying to convert people ideologically, or to repress them with overt coercion, and there was a realization of the need to achieve a 'minimal consensus' or at least to 'neutralize' those of different views. [5] New modes of 'dialogue' were introduced, as for example with certain church leaders who were, however, regarded with suspicion by many Christians as not genuinely representative of church views.[6] However forced and limited such attempts at 'dialogue' were, they indicated a degree of willingness to accept lack of wholehearted commitment so long as people were prepared to conform and not undermine the system. Limited concessions were made: while conscription was introduced in 1962, in 1964 a form of alternative service was made possible for those whose consciences would not allow them to bear arms. But the course was a rocky one: a brief period of seeming cultural liberalization was again followed, from 1965, by a renewed clampdown in the cultural sphere. Whatever

the gestures towards economic improvements, career incentives, and less overt repression, East Germany in the 1960s was a place which many of its citizens would not freely have chosen to live in, had they had the choice. And at the beginning of the 1970S, with the normalization of relations between the two Germanies,

it increasingly looked as if the initially impermanent division was one which was there to stay.

Ostpolitik and Mutual Recognition

The relations between the two Germanies were transformed by the so-called *Ostpolitik* of Willy Brandt's SPD-led government after 1969. Against strong conservative opposition, Brandt pushed through negotiations which regularized relations between the two Germanies, entailing mutual recognition and an amelioration of conditions for furthering human contacts between the two parts of the divided nation. These efforts were criticized, both at the time and subsequently, as a form of 'appeasement' towards communists, from which the latter benefited while giving very little, if anything, in return. The argument ran that the boundaries produced by aggression were being accepted, that money was being sent which in improving people's conditions merely served to prop up an illegitimate state, and that supposed concessions on the human rights front were basically ignored in practice. Against this, supporters of the policy saw it as merely a realistic acceptance of an essentially unalterable situation, and as a means to improve relations and make the borders more permeable for individual human contacts, by a policy of 'little steps'.

The groundwork had already been laid when Brandt was Foreign Minister in Kiesinger's government. In the West German elections of September 1969, the CDU/CSU won a total of 242 seats, the SPD 224, and the FDP 30. The FDP had taken a somewhat leftwards move when at the end of 1967 Walter Scheel had replaced Erich Mende as leader. After three weeks of bargaining, in 1969 a coalition was formed between the SPD and the FDP, with Willy Brandt as West German Chancellor. This marked a major step in West German political history: after two decades of conservative dominance, a

Social Democrat was in charge of government in a social-liberal coalition.

Brandt was also in many respects a unique individual for West Germany to have as Chancellor. Born illegitimate, as a

young man Brandt had opposed Nazism, fled Nazi Germany and fought in the Norwegian resistance. With his modest social origins and anti-Nazi record, he marked a real break with the compromised pasts of the former NSDAP member, Chancellor Kiesinger, and of President Lübke (who resigned early and did not stand for a second term of office because of stories about his role in the construction of Nazi concentration camps, or slave labour barracks). A former Mayor of Berlin, Brandt also had experience of divided Germany's position in the front line of Europe, and had been forced to witness the construction of the Berlin Wall. A man of strong moral convictions, Brandt was arguably more successful in his foreign policies than he was on the domestic front. Whatever the controversies surrounding the end of his chancellorship in 1974, as well as the end of his period chairing the SPD (in 1987), Brandt's moral stature introduced a new chord to the difficult politics of post-Nazi democracy.

Brandt's period in office is chiefly noted for his drive to achieve some sort of 'normalization' of relations between the two states in divided Germany. This initiative coincided with a period of detente between the superpowers, in which it suited both the Americans and the Russians (who both had preoccupations in Asia) to defuse the previously volatile situation in central Europe. Preliminary meetings were held between Willy Brandt and East German Prime Minister Willi Stoph in Erfurt in the GDR (where the East German public greeted Willy Brandt with notable enthusiasm) in March 1970, and in Kassel in West Germany in May 1970. In August 1970 West Germany signed the Moscow Treaty with Russia, and in December 1970 the Warsaw Treaty dealt with relations with Poland. In 1971 the ageing Ulbricht, who was far from being a convinced supporter of *Ostpolitik*, was prematurely removed from office and replaced as leader of the SED by the more obliging Erich Honecker. In September 1971 the

erstwhile allies of the Second World War were able to reach agreement in a Four-Power Accord on Berlin, in which they regularized certain arrangements with regard to Berlin's status and agreed to resolve future disputes by negotiation rather than resorting to force. The

way now seemed to be clear for a treaty on the relations between the two Germanies.

There was however a problem of serious opposition to *Ostpolitik* in West German conservative circles. To them it appeared to be an unconstitutional acceptance of the permanent division of Germany, given the explicit commitment in the Basic Law to work towards German reunification. Some FDP members defected from the coalition to vote with the CDU/CSU, and CDU leader Rainer Barzel moved a vote of no confidence in Brandt's Chancellorship. This was lost by two votes, and various rumours were rife concerning scandalous bribes and corruption. In September 1972 Brandt made the second use of this constitutional measure, engineering the dissolution of parliament and the calling of new elections by instructing SPD members to refrain from supporting his government in his own vote of no confidence. This tactic duly succeeded, and elections were called for 19 November 1972. The elections were fought largely on the *Ostpolitik* issue, and saw an unprecedented ninety-one per cent turnout. It was clear that the electorate were more interested in recognition and improvement of German-German relations than in taking a principled stand on reunification. For the first time, the SPD won more seats than the CDU/CSU, with 229 and 225 respectively and this despite a vilification campaign partially funded by far-right circles determined to oust Brandt from the Chancellorship. The FDP rose from 30 to 42 seats; and the NPD, which had loomed so alarmingly in recent local state elections, revealed its essential irrelevance on the national scene by polling only 0.6% and failing to gain national representation. With a slightly more comfortable parliamentary margin, Brandt was able to go back into Parliament and conclude, in December 1972, the Basic Treaty between what West Germany now recognized as the 'two German

states in one German nation'. This Treaty was ratified (again in the face of considerable opposition) in May 1973. In September 1973, both Germanies were accepted as full members of the United Nations.

Although the Hallstein doctrine (of breaking off diplomatic relations with states which recognized East Germany) was

renounced with the signing of the Basic Treaty, West Germany still refused to view East Germany as a completely foreign state. There was to be, for example, an exchange of 'representatives' rather than 'ambassadors'; and East Germans leaving for the west still could automatically claim West German citizenship. Constitutionally, West Germany viewed the border between the two Germanies as in principle no more than a border between two West German *Länder* although in practice, of course, this highly fortified frontier was of a very different order. The West German constitutional commitment to reunification was not abandoned, but the focus switched to working for an increased permeability of the two states, with improved human contacts and communications between citizens of each Germany, to keep alive the sense of a shared national identity. By contrast, in East Germany, as the physical barriers changed, so there was a conscious policy of cultural *Abgrenzung* and stressing of differences in GDR national identity from the identity of the West German capitalist state. In the period after mutual recognition relations between the two Germanies developed a certain dynamic of their own, but so too did the divergences between the two Germanies become more apparent. Until late 1989, few thought that the issue of reunification would return to become a serious question of contemporary politics. Rather, it was simply a sacred cow to which lip-service could be paid while recognizing the reality, and likely permanence, of division.

West Germany in the 1970s and 1980s

Recognition of the division of Germany meant a twofold development: on the one hand, the two Germanies diverged further as societies, as their common historical past receded ever further; on the other hand, they in some ways came closer together, as communications between the two states improved, and as the dynamic

of inner-German relations developed in ways sometimes at odds with the interests of the superpowers.

Willy Brandt remained Chancellor of West Germany until 1974. In this year, a serious spy scandal became the immediate

occasion for his resignation. One of his senior aides, Günter Guillaume, was revealed as an East German spy. Brandt was forced to resign although many suggested that there may have been additional personal or health reasons behind this decision. Brandt was succeeded by Helmut Schmidt, a smooth Chancellor with excellent English, a certain distrust of and independence from American policy, and a generally conservative approach within Social Democracy. Schmidt's Chancellorship, in coalition with the FDP (with elections in 1976 and 1980) was confronted with difficulties on several fronts.

The left-wing movements of the 1960s had partly dissolved, and partly diversified. While many former radicals became mainstream citizens, others retired into retreatist subcultures or sectarian squabbles; but a few became terrorists. The Red Army Faction, or Baader-Meinhof gang (named after two of its prominent members, Andreas Baader and Ulrike Meinhof, organized a series of physical attacks on the West German 'system'. These began with offences against property such as the bombing of department stores, as a statement against capitalist materialism but developed into the systematic murdering of individuals prominent in economic and political life. Just as the Federal Republic appeared to be gaining a new reputation as a politically stable, 'model' democracy, which could begin to develop more of an independent role on the international political stage, a small minority of people were challenging the very essence of the system and provoking it into measures which would justify their criticisms of repression. While their acts of assassination could in no way be justified, new controversies flared as some liberals attempted to criticize the state's responses to the terrorist threat. With wider (and initially unrelated) measures to weed out 'radicals' from public service employment, there remained a degree of uneasiness about the nature of West German democracy.

Terrorism was not the only domestic problem for the Schmidt government. The 1970s saw energy crises, occasioned by the spiralling of oil prices internationally. The attempt to replace oil by nuclear power had political implications, and Schmidt's relatively right-wing form of Social Democracy came under

attack from left-wing Social Democrats. Nuclear power was not the only issue provoking protest: the stationing of nuclear missiles in Germany became a major bone of political contention in the late 1970s, with the USA in 1979 deciding to station nuclear missiles in Europe (including Britain). Protest movements in favour of peace and disarmament, as well as about environmental concerns and the dangers of destruction from methods of production, began to proliferate.

While the Schmidt government was having problems with its left-wing and grass roots, it was also experiencing strains with its more right-wing coalition partner, the FDP, largely because of problems in the economy. An ageing population, in which relatively fewer people of working age were having to support the pension schemes of relatively more retired people who were living longer, gave rise in any case to problems in relation to the benefits system; these were exacerbated by the general economic recession which set in during the 1970S. Although the West German economy performed relatively well in comparison with, for example, the British, there was nevertheless some increase in unemployment and inflation, giving rise to serious frictions in the coalition over the budget. In 1982, the FDP decided to switch its allegiance away from the SDP to the CDU/CSU. In a constructive vote of no confidence, Schmidt was voted out as Chancellor and Helmut Kohl of the CDU/CSU voted in.

There was considerable unease in the country that a small party, commanding only a minimal fraction of the popular vote, should be able to change so radically the complexion of the government without reference to the general will of the people. After considerable debate and consideration (including reference to the constitutional court at Karlsruhe) a new vote of no confidence was engineered which the new Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, arranged to lose, such that the

President could dissolve Parliament and call new elections in the spring of 1983. The election was won by the conservatives, and the coalition of FDP with CDU/CSU was confirmed in office. This change of government in 19823 was generally known as *die Wende*, the turning-point: after thirteen years of social-democratic

government, Germany entered a new phase of conservative dominance, confirmed by a second election victory in the 1987 elections.

With the accession of the CDU government came a jettisoning of Keynesian economic policies. Once the budgetary deadlock of the SPD-FDP government had been broken, the CDU-FDP government introduced measures to control inflation and stimulate investment while allowing unemployment rates to remain relatively constant at an uncomfortable figure of around 810%. This was exacerbated by the continuing problem of the now very much less than welcome *Gastarbeiter*. Although the overall proportion of foreign workers fell slightly to around 8% in 1980, in some areas such as the traditionally working-class Kreuzberg district in Berlin they constituted as much as 50% of the inhabitants. Furthermore, in the course of the 1980s a stream of ethnic German refugees came into the Federal Republic from eastern European countries and the Soviet Union even before the stream became a flood, with hundreds of thousands of East Germans entering West Germany in the summer and autumn of 1989. While the budgetary deficit was successfully cut, growth rates in the 1980s remained relatively low (around 2.5% in 1984). Nevertheless, with low inflation, the West German economy certainly performed a great deal better than the British economy in the 1980s. There was a continuing shift in emphasis away from the old heavy industries of the Ruhr to a new stress on the microelectronic industries, concentrated notably around Stuttgart, Frankfurt and Munich. Furthermore, West Germany was at the forefront of initiatives with respect to closer European economic and monetary integration in the context of the European Community. While Mrs. Thatcher's British government dragged its feet with respect to European union, Germany played a key role. This was of course to be complicated by the reopening of the

German question in late 1989, only two years before the projected institution of a single European market in 1992.

During the 1980s, the SPD was provoked into considerable rethinking of its position. This re-evaluation was related to the fact that some people who formerly supported the SPD, as well

as many new young voters, were switching their allegiance to the new ecological and environmentalist party, the Greens. In 1983, the Greens gained national representation, and even held the balance of power and participated in government in some *Länder*. They had, however, their own internal dissensions, with splits between 'realists' (*Realos*) and 'fundamentalists' (*Fundis*), as well as differences of aims and emphasis between the 'green Greens' (ecologists), 'brown Greens' (right-wing defenders of the German *Heimat*) and 'red Greens' (anti-growth socialists of a 'small is beautiful' persuasion). The conservative and free-democratic government parties were also not without their own problems. They were beset by a series of scandals, ranging from serious allegations of financial corruption in party finances (in the so-called Flick Affair which necessitated the resignation and trial of certain prominent politicians), through the puzzle of the murky election campaign and mysterious death in 1987 of the CDU Minister-President of Schleswig-Holstein, Uwe Barschel, to the series of more mundane political banana skins to which Helmut Kohl was prone. At the same time, widespread, vocal concern for such issues as the 'death of the forests' due to acid rain, the implications of the national census, the scandals relating to nuclear waste disposal, and American and Soviet policies towards nuclear weapons in Europe, continued to dominate the public agenda in the 1980s.

East Germany under Honecker

The period from Honecker's taking office in 1971 up to the mid-1970s was in many ways promising. *Ostpolitik* had resulted finally in international recognition for the GDR, which was now able to take up formal relations with many foreign countries, including the USA. In the sphere of culture, Honecker announced a policy of 'no taboos' under socialism, which helped promote a ferment of new cultural activity (or the release of previously suppressed energies). On the

economic front, while the economy was recentralized and while political ideologists regained predominance over technical specialists, pragmatic

consumer-orientation and concern with material satisfaction began to prevail. Utopian ideas of 'jam tomorrow', prevalent in the Ulbricht era, gave way to attempts to ensure more bread and butter, and even cake, today. The phase of 'actually existing socialism' was recognized to be a relatively long-lasting one, and not a brief transitional stage; moreover, it was one with certain social tensions which could not be resolved by being ignored or denied, but which had rather to be faced, examined, and dealt with in an appropriate manner.

Economically, after the recentralization which took place in Ulbricht's last years as leader, further shifts took place under Honecker's regime in the balance between overall central planning and direction of the economy on the one hand, and a flexibility of decision-making utilizing steering mechanisms at a more decentralized level on the other.

Following economic difficulties in the mid and later 1970s, the 1980s saw the replacement of VVBs by combines. These linked production processes with technological research and development and with market research, in order to enhance overall efficiency and productivity. While ultimate control and supervision remained with the central state organs, both direct and indirect steering mechanisms, including the use of profit incentives, operated at the enterprise level.

Further changes also took place in the sphere of agriculture, with reorganization starting in the early 1970s. Larger, more specialized units were created, and specialization continued in the 1980s, with different units focusing on crop-farming or animal husbandry, for example. Planning and inter-farm co-operation was aided by co-operation councils, which operated at an intermediate level between district councils and individual farms. Farming in the GDR was relatively productive and advanced in its degree of mechanization: the

contrast between serried ranks of tractors or combine harvesters moving in efficient formation across East German fields and the lonely horse-drawn carts and ploughs ubiquitous in the small peasant agriculture of neighbouring Poland, was striking. East Germany achieved a high degree of agricultural self-sufficiency; its principal imports were grain and animal feed.

Despite certain difficulties, the economy under Honecker was relatively successful, at least in comparison with certain of its East European neighbours. There were advantages and disadvantages in the GDR's economic situation in the 1970s and 1980s. The GDR was heavily reliant on foreign trade, particularly for imports of fuel and raw materials. It was thus highly sensitive to world energy prices, and was adversely affected by the energy crises of the 1970s. Although about thirty per cent of the GDR's total foreign trade was with the developed market economies of the West, it imported a considerable proportion of its energy at unfavourable prices from the USSR, particularly oil, coal and gas. The main source of energy was lignite ('brown coal', which emits an unpleasantly dusty and characteristic smoke) although there were moves in the direction of developing nuclear energy supplies. Lignite supplied around seventy per cent of the GDR's primary energy requirements in the mid-1980s. Conversely there were also advantages associated with the GDR's reliance on foreign trade. Nearly a third of the GDR's trade with developed western market economies was with the Federal Republic of Germany, including West Berlin; and this trade was based on very favourable conditions. As a result of agreements between the two Germanies there were no trade barriers or external tariffs; hence the GDR was in practice a secret extra member of the European Economic Community (EEC). There were automatic credits for trade deficits, and the GDR was often able to overcome East European bottlenecks in supplies with efficient deliveries of material from West Germany. West Germany also made sizeable loans available to East Germany. The arrangements were favourable economically to the GDR, while the Federal Republic sought political gains (for example in ease of visiting, or for improved human rights) from its close economic links with the GDR. The Federal Republic was affluent enough to want to pay for improved relationships with the GDR and

for improved conditions for its people (who were officially considered by the West German government to have 'German' citizenship, valid also in West Germany); the East German economy benefited sufficiently from its links with the West for the East German government to be prepared to pay

the political price of some dependency. As a result of its unique links to West Germany, the GDR was able to weather relatively smoothly some of the economic storms experienced in the early 1980s by other East European economies.

In the 1980s, the emphasis was on such fields as micro-electronics, electrical engineering, computer production, in addition to traditional strengths in such areas as the chemical industry and vehicle manufacture. However, in all these fields the GDR lagged significantly behind western developments, in both quantitative and qualitative respects. Moreover, it paid little attention to its serious pollution problems and the consequent adverse effects on public health and on the environment. While voices in West Germany were increasingly strident in their complaints about the death of the forests, the problems of pollution were downplayed in the infinitely more polluted East. The true extent of the problem was only revealed in 'Round Table' discussions, after the East German revolution, at the beginning of 1990. There were also signs that despite its relatively good performance in East European terms, the GDR economy was in deteriorating shape: growth rates fell from 5.5% in 1984 to 2.8% in 1988-well before the deleterious effects of mass emigration in the latter half of 1989. But the implications of economic performance varied with political circumstances; until the collapse of the Iron Curtain in 1989, most East Germans were prepared to put up with their situation, contenting themselves with the thought that things were not as bad as elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

Honecker made a concerted effort to establish the GDR, not merely as a viable economic entity, but also as an accepted feature of the political landscape. The foundations had to a considerable degree been accomplished by *Ostpolitik*, but this opened new risks and opportunities. A new constitution introduced in 1974 was

characterized by a determined emphasis on a GDR national identity, a symbolic separation from notions of Germany and German. The GDR was proclaimed to be linked in undying friendship with its partner (and big brother!), the Soviet Union. This special relationship was formally sealed by a friendship treaty between the GDR and the USSR in October 1975. At

the same time, the role of the Party became more prominent, against Ulbricht's more pragmatic approaches. And with the new broom in charge, there initially appeared to be a promise of liberalization on the cultural front. International recognition could perhaps permit an easing of domestic repression, and coaxing as well as coercing people into having greater pride in what now seemed a securely established state.

From the mid-1970s, however, it became apparent that tensions and strains had not been successfully resolved. In 1976 a renewed period of cultural repression was inaugurated with the exile of Wolf Biermann, a guitarist and singer who, late in 1975, was refused permission to re-enter the GDR after a permitted concert tour in the West. A number of writers, artists and intellectuals protested against this enforced exile, only to find repressive measures directed against them as well. In the later 1970S a number of GDR writers left for the West. At the same time, the energy crises affecting western economies were having a comparable impact on eastern bloc countries. Rises in the standard of living faltered, and the East German economy appeared to stagnate. Moreover, in the late 1970S and early 1980s a new era of frosty relations and even a second Cold War appeared to be developing between the superpowers, the USA and USSR. Following the American and Soviet decisions to station nuclear missiles in Europe, the GDR regime had to agree, reluctantly, in 1984 to the stationing of Soviet nuclear missiles on East German soil. The one area in which domestic politics appeared to be becoming more relaxed and tolerant was in relation to the church. Following a meeting between leaders of the Protestant churches and the state in 1978, a new accord was reached which permitted Christians greater latitude of activity and practice in the GDR. The relative toleration of dissenting views, at least until the mid-1980s, may have made a considerable

contribution to the political stability of the GDR in the early 1980s.

The pragmatism and the odd combinations of repression and relative toleration which had characterized the Honecker era were by the mid-1980s looking vulnerable. The accession to the Soviet leadership in 1985 of the active reformer Mikhail

Gorbachev, with his ideas of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, posed challenges to all the countries of the eastern bloc. The initial official responses in the GDR ranged from the cool and relatively dismissive to the formally friendly and assenting. Yet among certain groups in the East German population expectations were raised of a further democratization of East German politics and society. Instead, the events of late 1987 and early 1988 with arrests and imprisonment or exile for certain activists suggested the start of a period of renewed repression.

Meanwhile, relationships between the two Germanies had been developing with a certain dynamic of their own, partly independent of, partly related to, the dynamics of superpower relations. In the period of superpower hostility partially provoked by the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan the two Germanies were nevertheless pursuing a form *of mini-détente* and *rapprochement* of their own. Yet a visit to West Germany planned by Honecker for September 1984 had to be called off at the last minute, following certain blunders in the West and pressures from the USSR. In the changed international context of 1987, when, under Gorbachev's leadership, relationships with the USA had markedly improved, the postponed visit of Honecker was finally able to take place. The relationship between the two Germanies in the 1980s was designed to reduce tensions and improve conditions for all Germans. Favourable loan, credit and trade agreements were reached, benefiting the East German economy. There were improvements in travel and communications between the two states, although there was a fifty per cent drop in the number of visitors to East Germany after the compulsory currency exchange was increased following the Polish disturbances of 1980. [7] In 1987, there was an amnesty of prisoners in the GDR. After a wave of officially sanctioned emigrations in 1984, 1987 witnessed an unprecedented

number of permitted short visits to the West by East Germans. According to the official 'Address on the state of the nation' by Helmut Kohl, there were five million visits by East Germans to West Germany in 1987, of which approximately one million were by citizens under pensionable age, travelling on 'urgent family business'. A few years earlier, the figures had been 1.3 million visits by

pensioners and only 40,000 family visits [8]. (The concept of 'urgent family business' was also reinterpreted with some considerable elasticity.)

In the context of international negotiations on the stationing or removal of certain nuclear missiles from Europe, the two Germanies had very specific and unique interests in common. Both were particularly vulnerable as front-line states in a divided world. In both Germanies there were strong movements for a nuclear-free central European zone. But the events which were to change fundamentally the relationships between the two Germanies and the very existence of the German Democratic Republic occurred with the revolutionary upheavals of the autumn of 1989.

Before considering these dramatic developments, the following chapters will analyse in more detail the socio-political dynamics of the two Germanies, and assess the degree to which their societies and cultures had diverged. In this way, a deeper understanding can be gained of the conditions upon which each country's stability was predicated for over forty years, the factors contributing to the ultimate demise of the East German communist state, and the nature of the two rather different Germanies which in 1990 were to embark on a process of unification, with all its attendant tensions and difficulties.