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          Soviet Occupied Zone of Germany,
          1945-46

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Executive Summary

This paper traces the history of the first year of the Soviet military occupation of Germany with particular emphasis on the ways in which the Soviet administration changed, defeated, and encouraged the political aspirations and responses of large numbers of people to their situation in the zone. The focus is especially on the fate of the German left under Soviet rule immediately after the World War II. The paper begins with a discussion of the structure and functions of the Soviet Military Administration of Germany (SVAG in Russian, SMAD in German). Then it considers two major cases of Soviet intervention in socialist politics: the suppression of the anti-fascist committees and the formation of the Socialist Unity Party. In these cases, as well as others in the Soviet Zone of Occupation (SBZ), Russian administration frustrated the hopes of political revolution, while it destroyed the social bases for counterrevolution -- a situation not unlike that of the Soviet Union itself.

It does not stretch the evidence to characterize the role of SVAG in the politics of the Eastern zone as fundamentally counter-revolutionary. When arriving in the towns and villages of the Eastern zone, Soviet officers welcomed the participation of anti-fascist committees in the setting up of new administrations and the punishment of Nazis and their collaborators. But the committees presented numerous problems for the Soviets. First, the radicalism of the German left, the desire to set up governments styled on the soviets of 1917-1918, alienated Soviet authorities who were anxious to put the West at ease about Soviet postwar intentions. But equally important,

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one could argue, was the lack of interest of the Soviet Union in 1945-46 in a German revolution that might eventually challenge the Soviet model. George Kennan put it nicely when he noted that Stalin was "well aware that the Communist revolution in Germany could not be controlled from Moscow, because the questions would immediately arise: 'Where is the home of Communism?'."

The anti-fascist committees also represented a genuinely spontaneous, popular alternative to the institutions of the military occupation government, as well as to Soviet-style communism. Occupation authorities in the West were no more inclined than were the Soviets to allow these Germans to take control of their towns and villages. At the same time, the Soviets had a serious reparations mission in the East zone, and the anti-fascist committees could too easily become an obstacle to dismantling and to the removals by trophy brigades. Moreover, the Moscow KPD leadership -- especially Ulbricht and Pieck -- were not at all interested in sharing their privileged position among the occupation authorities with anti-fascist committees, doing everything they could to malign them and have them disbanded.

The first act of the counterrevolution was to crush the popular movement, to take away its spontaneity, to recast it into the shape of administration. In the second act, SVAG attacked the Social Democratic Party and undermined its ability to direct socialist activity in the East Zone. With by far the most radical program among the political parties in the zone, the SPD was a danger to the KPD and, more important, to SVAG's conception of the evolving German

question. Immediate merger after the war might have meant the victory of a distinctively German socialism directed by the SPD. When the KPD was sufficiently strengthened, the Soviet authorities moved to eliminate the SPD from the political spectrum through the unity campaign. Taking advantage of genuine desires among the SPD rank-and-file for the "unity of the German working class" and applying pressure on local organizations and national leaders, sometimes subtly, sometimes brutally, SVAG critically shaped the future of German socialism in the East zone by eliminating its only serious rival.

It is tempting to leave matters at the point where the Soviets turn back the chances for a German revolution and genuine German socialism. But the problem is more complicated than that. By the nature of its occupation, SVAG was also a revolutionary force, expropriating large landowners, dividing up their estates, and instituting land reform in the SBZ as a whole (September 1945). The June 1946 referendum for expropriation of industry in Saxony was followed by expropriations throughout the SBZ. Local commandants, often not attuned to the subtleties of policy from Karlshorst, brutalized "big capitalists", forced others to flee for their lives, intimidated the landowners as a whole, and refused to accept the sometimes sentimental attachment of local populations to the regional aristocracy. As Marshall Sokolovskii put it in a speech at a June 1947 meeting at the "House of Culture of the Soviet Union", "We have plenty of experience in struggles against all kinds of criminals and enemies of progress, as the counterrevolutionaries were in our own country." In Pieck's discussion with Captain Kagan, the KPD leader

praised the Soviet army for changing the population structure of the East zone. "The masses of the reactionary forces of Germany, the War criminals, the active Nazis and their helpmates, the big landowners and the big capitalists are frightened by Soviet power. They looked to their own security and fled to the West to their own kind, to their class brothers." In other words, SVAG accomplished in many ways precisely what Soviet power accomplished in Russia; it drove out the upper classes and redistributed the wealth of the nation, creating the basis for a communist revolution. At the same time, it established a form of authoritarian socialist government that strangled the socialist and democratic impulses of those who supported it.

"The war ... destroyed fascism and
brought freedom to the world. The war...
gave to nations equality, peace and security.
Good is stonger than Evil. Reason won over madness..."
Vasilii Grossman, Krasnaia zvezda, September 5, 1945.

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of the Soviet military occupation of Germany with particular emphasis on

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people to their situation in the zone. My interest here is especially in

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others in the Soviet Zone of Occupation (SBZ), one can argue that Russian

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Given the importance of the Soviet occupation zone (SBZ) to the

development of modern Germany and contemporary Europe, it is remarkable

that so little has been written about this period of direct Soviet

administration.(1) Symptomatic of a lack of attention to the subject is

the fact that the best analyses of the Soviet Military Administration in

Germany (SVAG in Russian, SMAD in German) still come from memoir sources

of former SPD and KPD activists, expatriate Soviet soldiers who had

served in Germany, and from Soviet officers who were important in

SVAG.(2) Part of the reason for the underdevelopment of scholarship on the Soviet military administration is that its papers, located in the Ministry of Defense Archives in Moscow, have been accessible in part only to rare Soviet scholars.(3) The unpublished papers of the American military government in Germany (OMGUS) and the recently published papers of its governor, General Lucius Clay, tell us more about what Americans thought was happening in the East zone than about actual policies and their implementation.(4) Still, with the help of a number of excellent Western studies of German politics in the Soviet zone and of Soviet policy towards Germany in the postwar period, as well as equally interesting East German studies of the "antifascist-democratic transformation" of the period 1945-49, one can piece together the contours of Soviet activities in the zone during this period.(5) Using the Soviet and German periodical press of the period along with published and unpublished memoirs of those who defected and those who stayed, one can fill in the social history of the times, and describe what happened in the villages, factories, and towns when the Soviets took control of Eastern Germany.

The Soviet Military Administration of Germany

On April 16, 1945 -- at 5:00 A.M. Moscow time -- the Soviet army launched the last great offensive of World War II from its staging area on the Oder and Neisse rivers. More than two and a half million soldiers took part in the attack, as well as 42,000 guns and mortars, 6,200 tanks and armored personal carriers and 7,500 fighter planes.(6) The largest salient of the offensive was occupied by the First Belorussian Front, commanded by Marshal G. K. Zhukov. His troops drove straight to Berlin, entering the northeastern parts of the city by nightfall of April 21. The Second Belorussian Front, commanded by Colonel General V. I. Chuikov, headed north towards Schwerin, Rostock and the Baltic sea. The First

Ukrainian Front, commanded by Zhukov's major rival, Marshal I. S. Konev, seized Leipzig and Dresden, and, on April 25, met up with advanced units of the American First Army at Torgau on the Elbe, effectively splitting the German armies into northern and southern sectors. By May 1, Hitler and his entourage had committed suicide in their Berlin bunker and Soviet soldiers had raised the red flag on the Reichstag.

The victorious Red Army refused to recognize the capitulation of the Germans to its Western Allies at Rheims on May 7. Instead, Stalin insisted that the real capitulation ceremony be held in Soviet-occupied territory.(7) On May 8, 1945, with the Western Allies taking part, the unconditional surrender was signed by the Germans in the former Engineering Academy at Karlshorst, a suburb of Berlin. Shortly thereafter, on June 6, 1945, the USSR Council of People's Commissars issued an order to create the Soviet Military Administration of Germany. On June 9, Marshal Zhukov announced the creation of SVAG and defined its tasks: 1) to supervise the unconditional surrender of Germany, 2) to administer the Soviet occupied zone (SBZ), and 3) to carry out the most important military, policial and economic tasks in Germany through the decisions of the Allied Control Council.(8) On June 10, Soviet military units on German soil were reorganized into the Group of Soviet Occupation Forces in Germany, whose commander was also Marshal Zhukov.

For the next four years -- until the formation of the German Democratic Republic in October 1949 -- the supreme government official in the Soviet zone, the commander of SVAG, was also the Commander in Chief of the Soviet forces of occupation. On the other hand, the Military Council of SVAG, created on June 28, placed the commands of the military and civilian administrations of the states and provinces in the hands of different officers.(9) This move was made necessary in part by the

aversion of many important commanding officers to the tasks of civilian administration.(10) At the same time, from the first days of the occupation, SVAG appropriated the skills of local German authorities, and executed its policies with the help of German communists and socialists.

Without starting out to create a new country, the Soviet military government instinctively, almost by force of habit (rather than the dictates of ideology), drove out independent "bourgeois" groups and politicians, undermined German socialist traditions (of the SPD and KPD), and introduced what the Soviets called "the Bolshevik way" of organizing society. SVAG destroyed selected institutions and classes while helping to rebuild the economic lives of Germans in the East zone. Equally important, it planted the seeds of a new Sovietized German culture. The creation of the GDR in November 1949 was the direct result of SVAG policy in Eastern Germany. Certainly East German communists helped. Events elsewhere in Europe and in the world as a whole influenced the course of the short history of the SBZ. Even power struggles in the Kremlin -- especially the complicated involvement of Zhdanov's Leningrad "group" in SVAG -- effected the politics of administration in the Soviet zone. But it was primarily the organized political activity of Soviet soldiers and German Communists in the states and provinces, towns and villages, of Eastern Germany that determined the flow of events.

It would be difficult to argue, as do most Soviet sources, that "There has never been in history such a case where the victor acted so beneficently toward the vanquished, as the Soviet Union and its Armed Forces acted in Germany."(11) At the same time, the occupation was not simply a story of rape and plunder, as some Western sources assert. Fraternization was widespread, especially in the first two years of the occupation. Indeed, given the brutal German behavior in Soviet

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occupation, it is astonishing that Russian soldiers and German civilians got along as well as they did.(12) In some senses, this fraternization helped build the foundations of contemporary East German socialism as much as the creation of a new administration.

That Soviet officers and men could exert different kinds of influence in different parts of the zone derived from the administrative structure of the USSR in the postwar period. The Stalinism of that time was not a perfectly functioning system of dictatorial hierarchy that controlled all aspects of state and society. Stalin was a dictator, to be sure, but one who spoke rarely in this period, and in opaque terms, providing deliberately ambiguous policy directives. A great deal of latitude was given to Stalin's administrators, especially those located far from Moscow. At the same time, there was little incentive for taking initiatives and there were no clear lines of responsibility. Rather, Stalin and the system he created perfected localized mechanisms for destroying social networks, class and professional associations, labor solidarity and village community.(13) If we compare, for example, the American and Soviet military administrations in Germany, it is apparent that General Lucius Clay, governor of the American Military Administration in Germany (OMGUS), had much more power than did Marshal Zhukov or his replacement General V. D. Sokolovskii. To be sure, Clay spent a great deal of time and energy protecting his freedom to make decisions against a variety of bureaucracies and politicians in Washington. But the Soviet administration had many more checks and balances and had much more difficulty carrying on united decision-making than did Clay. First of all, SVAG represented the interests both of the State and of the Communist Party, CPSU(b). Although it was responsible ultimately to the Council of People's Commissars (in 1946 Council of

Ministers) -- and in the first year of the occupation especially to the Commissariat of Foreign Trade under Anastas Mikoyan-- SVAG was also subject to orders from the Main Political Administration of the Soviet Army, as well as from the Soviet ministries responsible for the military, which, to make matters more complicated, underwent a bewildering series of reorganizations after the war.(14)

Under Lavrenti Beria, the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD/MVD) established offices in the SBZ that operated completely independently of the military government, as did the dismantling teams that were subservient to a variety of special committees and ministries in Moscow. In the case of the interministerial committee on reparations -- which supervised an operation in the SBZ of over 70,000 officials, almost all with officer's rank -- the departments of SVAG in charge of the economy and manpower could do little else but defer to the reparations officials' wishes.(15) For instance, there were a number of cases in which Marshal Sokolovskii assured Wilhelm Pieck, head of the German Communists, that particular factories would not be subject to dismantling, and then would have to rescind his promise when he discovered that the matter was not within his jurisdiction.(16) Wolfgang Leonhard tells the story of driving through the Soviet sector of Berlin with an officer of the Main Political Administration. In a residential neighborhood, the officer waved his hands and noted: "That's where the enemy lives!" "Who -- the Nazis?" asked Leonhard. "No, worse still," the officer answered, "our own reparations gang."(17)

Further complicating lines of authority was the fact that SVAG was also subject internally to a party organization, headed by Col. Sergei Tiul'panov, chief of the Information (earlier Propaganda) Department. Moreover, the commandants of each of the five major Soviet military

districts (as well as those of the largest city kommandantura) carried out actions independent of the SVAG headquarters in Karlshorst.(18) Major General I. S. Kolesnichenko earned his reputation in Thuringia as a despot by bullying local "bourgeois" politicians, intimidating opponents of the SED, and actively suppressing the influential "Buchenwald Group." On the other hand, the commandant for civilian affairs of state Saxony, Lieutenant General D. G. Dubrovskii, was known to restrain Communists, encourage democratic politicians and protect local manufacturing and administrative institutions from overzealous socialist activists. Even Soviet commandants of remote localities and small towns had much more autonomy in making decisions and, as a result, engaged in a far greater variety of activities than is often assumed. There had been no schools to prepare the commandants for their tasks. There was no blueprint to help them rebuild industry or bring in that first crucial harvest. As a result, they often had to rely on their instincts and experiences at home.(19)

SVAG and the Anti-fascist Committees

The Council of People's Commissars assigned SVAG its immediate tasks. Among them was to develop local German institutions of "self-government" which would supervise the reconstruction of normal civil life in the Eastern zone. The Soviets charged these administrations with providing the population with food, water, shelter, and decent health and sanitation services. At the same time, SVAG formed German "central administrations" whose task it was to coordinate the efforts of the self-governments in these areas of concern. By the end of July 1945, SVAG allowed the central administrations to issue orders with the force of occupation law. The German administrations were supervised by the corresponding section of SVAG, each of which was headed by a Soviet officer and his staff.

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Political questions in the Soviet zone were handled primarily by two sections of SVAG. First, there was the "political advisor to the Commander in Chief," who ranked third in the occupation administration after the Commander in Chief and the Deputy Commander. In some senses, the political advisor was the "foreign minister" of SVAG and usually belonged to the diplomatic service. (A. Ia. Vyshinskii was the first to hold the position; V. S. Semenov held it for most of the period until 1949.) The political advisor's tasks overlapped with those of the Department of Information, initially called the Department of Propaganda. This department -- headed by Colonel Sergei Tiul'panov -- quickly became the largest and most important of SVAG's administrations. Tiul'panov and his deputies (D. S. Davidovich, A. Dymshits, and I. Zdorov) in effect controlled German cultural and political life. With a staff that exceeded 500 officers, many fluent in German, Tiul'panov's organization ran the central Soviet occupation daily newspaper, Tägliche Rundschau, published books and periodicals in the SVAG press, and supervised the entire anti-fascist propaganda machine that ranged from films and theater to House of Appreciation of Soviet Culture.(20) As secretary of the party organization in SVAG itself, Tiul'panov was in a particularly strong position to carry out his ideas of how German politics should be organized in the Soviet zone.

The thrust of the Soviet conception of political life in the SBZ after the capitulation focused on the recreation of political parties. These parties would join together in an "anti-fascist democratic bloc" whose task it was to fill the local self-governments and central German administrations with competent, compliant functionaries. Their job was to carry out the German obligations defined at Potsdam, above all to smooth

the way for the delivery of reparations from the Eastern zone.(21) There was a second level of politics in the Soviet zone in which leading German communists, led by Wilhelm Pieck and Walter Ulbricht, worked together with Tiul'panov on behalf of an anti-fascist and pro-Soviet transformation of German political life. Three groups of KPD activists had accompanied the Soviet armies into Germany: the "Ulbricht group", which joined the First Belorussian Front on April 27; Anton Ackermann's group, which joined the First Ukrainian Front on May 1; and Gustav Sobottka's group, which joined the Second Belorussian Front on May 6. These groups formed the backbone of the KPD in the Soviet zone, which was legalized along with other anti-fascist parties by Order no. 2, June 10, 1945. Like the Soviet political authorities in the zone, the KPD leadership supported the popular-front style, bloc program, referring for its justification to the pre-war "Brussels" (1935) and "Bern"(1939) programs of the KPD, the resolutions of the VII Comintern Congress, and the activities of the KPD on behalf of the National Committee on Free Germany (NKFD), the anti-fascist organization of German prisoners-of-war in the Soviet Union.(22) Long years in the Soviet Union had convinced most of the leading members of the KPD that careful attention to the Soviets' political and international needs paid organizational and personal dividends, and few were better schooled in this lesson than Walter Ulbricht.

We know a great deal about the politics of the German administrations and of the KPD leadership in the Eastern zone. It is the third level of politics that we know the least about, and that is the activities of socialists and communists in the German population itself. To be sure, at the end of the war the majority of Germans -- workers included -- thought of themselves as defeated, rather than liberated.(23)

Especially in the villages, but also in the cities, the population still was influenced by the Nazis. Mostly, Germans were exhausted and apathetic, viewing the future with a combination of indifference and fear. Nevertheless, the approach of the end of the war brought significant numbers of German communists who had been in jails, concentration camps, and in the underground into political action. These communists cared no less for the Soviet Union than their comrades who had spent the war years in Moscow, but they were generally less adept at adjusting to the Kremlin's political line. Their views were remarkably consistent given the lack of any central underground commmunist organization. The collapse of fascism and the victory of the Soviet Union made possible the creation of the socialist Germany for which they had fought so long and suffered so much. However, their approaches to accomplishing this task were basically two. On the one hand, a number of groups suffered from what East German historians criticize as "sectarianism."(24) In other words, they wanted to set up soviets, fight the counterrevolution, and -- with the establishment of the Soviet military occupation -- begin the process of bringing about a German Soviet Republic. Like the communist cells in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, these groups felt no need to ally with other emerging parties because the combination of a highly centralized KPD (modelled on the Bolsheviks) and the Soviet Army would be enough to force the success of the revolution.(25) In fact, some groups even demanded weapons from the Soviet commandants to begin the revolution.

The second response of underground communists to the approach of the Soviet occupation was no less acceptable to the Moscow KPD, and that was the abandonment of normal party activity for anti-fascist fronts, a tactic that many Communists had learned initially from NKFD broadcasts to

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Germany in 1944-45. Several Communist groups called, for instance, for a "Bloc of fighting democracy," which would join all antifascist organizations, parties, groups, and individuals in the struggle for a socialist democratic republic.(26) These communists looked to the end of the KPD and the formation of new political unions as the way out of the traumatic errors of the past, when, in their view, disunity among the working class parties allowed the bourgeoisie to gain control of the Weimar republic. What was worse, they felt, disunity had made possible the tragic Nazi seizure of power. Few of them were interested in the SVAG-sponsored meeting of KPD and SPD-representatives on June 19, 1945, which confirmed the Soviet policy of separate parties with "unity of action." Instead, both KPD and SPD activists in the countryside and towns -- at the grassroots, one can say with some confidence -- found a variety of ways to merge their parties and actions, sometimes even joined by local Soviet commandants unsympathetic to the SVAG line.(27)

The historian can get a better sense of the diversity of communists' political responses to the "collapse" of 1945 and the occupation of Soviet forces by looking at several discrete cases.

1) The Buchenwald Manifesto. In the concentration camp at Buchenwald, a large group of veterans of the socialist and communist movements who had worked together in the camp underground formed a united group "The League of Democratic Socialists," and helped seize control of Buchenwald at the end of the war. Their ten-point manifesto -- which was circulated upon their liberation -- called for the formation of a democratic-socialist republic. The capitalist system had been destroyed by the war; as a result, the "accomplishment of socialism was not the matter of a future state, but the immediate task of the present."(28) At the end of the war, the Buchenwald Group broke up to engage in the political rebuilding of

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Germany, particularly in surrounding Thuringia, which initially fell
under American occupation. But before dispersing, the leaders of the
group, Hermann Brill and Benedikt Kautsky, urged all social democrats and
communists to give up any idea of forming their own parties and instead
join a "people's front" that would create an anti-fascist militia
dedicated to the "socialist and democratic organization."(29)

As a leading anti-fascist, Brill was designated by the Americans to
be Minister-President of Thuringia. A large number of Communists (though
not all) rejected Brill's participation in the American sponsored
government and operated underground. At one point, American soldiers
attacked the united trade union building and burned the red flag that
communists hung out the window. A May Day celebration planned by the KPD
was similarly broken up by the Americans.(30) When the Soviets took over
Thuringia in the beginning of July, they refused to recognize Brill's
League of Democratic Socialists and disbanded the allied anti-fascist
group in Weimar. Rather, the Soviets insisted that Brill take over as
chairman of the Thuringian Social Democratic Party. The underground KPD
group now called on the Soviets to remove Brill as Minister-President,
and they received support from Tiul'panov in Berlin. At the same time, as
Gregory Sandford notes, Brill had support from Semenev, as well as from
KPD members in the League.(31)

Brill was removed in mid-July and invited to Weimar by SMA
commandant General Kolesnichenko for a discussion of the Buchenwald
Manifesto. The meeting, which took place on July 24, turned into a
vitriolic attack on Brill and his views. Kolesnichenko was especially
critical of the manifesto's call for the socialization of the economy.
When Brill responded that the big landowners and industrialists could use
their economic power to finance new fascist groups, Kolesnichenko

bristled: "The Occupation Army will see to it that fascism will never rise again." The general also noted the impossibility of the manifesto's political program, which called for a peaceful transition to a people's democracy through parliamentary elections. Finally, Kolesnichecko attacked Brill for not being a good Social Democrat, that is, for ignoring the Berlin Central Executive's policy of building separate party organizations. The interview ended badly, which did not bode well for Brill's future.(32) In the fall of 1945, when the Soviets and the KPD launched their own unity campaign, Brill resisted, as did many of the Buchenwald veterans, Communists and Social Democrats. With the clear support of the local KPD and Karlshorst, General Kolesnichenko attacked Brill again and had him removed as head of the Thuringian SPD.

(2) The Mansfeld Region. Not only the Soviet occupation forces had to cope with the obstinate independence of the anti-fascist committees. The Americans and the British faced conflict with radical circles and programs in Munich, Cologne, Bremen, and Leipzig, among other large cities. In the Mansfeld region (Sachsen-Anhalt), the KPD had a particularly strong record of underground activities at the end of the war. One Communist organized circle -- called "The Anti-Fascist Workers' Group of Central Germany" -- issued a leaflet in March 1945 asking workers not to allow the destruction of industry and to form armed groups to stop the war.(33) In Eisleben, an armed anti-fascist detachment of about 50 activists chased off the local Nazi administration and installed Communists as mayor (Robert Buchner) and Landrat (Otto Gotsche). Buchner, Gotsche, and other Communists went underground when the Americans arrived at the end of April and issued a program, which predicted the "sharpened contradiction between reaction and revolution, between imperialism and socialism." The Soviet march into Europe had made

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possible the great victories in the Greek and Yugoslav revolutions. Now the time for revolution in Central Europe had arrived.(34) East German historians claim that the Americans made it all too easy for Nazis and Nazi sympathizers to take over positions of power in the economy and administration of the Mansfeld region. In any case, the Americans pulled out on August 1, leaving those "fascists" and their property at the mercy of underground activists, who sometimes prevented them from leaving by force. In Eisleben, Buchner was returned by the Russians as mayor, and the Mansfeld communists were quickly convinced by the local commandant to give up their revolutionary "illusions."(35)

3) <u>Aue, Schwarzenberg, Stollberg</u>. One of the most fascinating cases of postwar Germany was the Western Erzgebirge, near the border to Czechoslovakia.(36) Because of an historical accident, this region experienced no occupation at all -- Western or Soviet -- for a period of nearly two months from the middle of April, when the Americans appeared briefly and then withdrew, until June 11, when the Soviets marched in. This relatively large mountainous area contained seventeen towns and cities and about eighty villages with a total population of over 300,000. For reasons that are still not clear, the Soviet commandant in Chemnitz (today Karl-Marx-Stadt) appeared unaware that the territory fell into the Soviet zone. The Americans, on the other hand, entered the area in mid-April but quickly evacuated to Zwickau.(37) A number of Nazi and SS groups operated in the mountains even after the capitulation. But the cities and towns of the area were seized by anti-fascist committees made up of members primarily of the pre-war socialist parties. In Stollberg county, for example, which included the towns of Stollberg, Zwonitz and Thalheim, these committees had 67 members during the war, 19 of whom belonged to the KPO before 1933, 25 to the SPD, and 23 belonged to no

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particular party.(38) In Meinersdorf on May 9, an armed anti-fascist group, comprised primarily of workers, seized the Rathaus, arresting the Nazi mayor and other functionaries. In Schwarzenberg, the anti-fascist committee decided to take over the police force first and on May 12 drove off the Nazi mayor with an armed workers' detachment of twelve men.(39)

Generally, Communists and Social Democrats cooperated well and joined forces effortlessly, though in some towns, Johanngeorgenstadt for example, the Social Democrats refused to let Communists in the local administrations.(40) In Auerbach, Gablenz, Hormersdorf and Jahnsdorf there were Social Democratic majors; in Leukesdorf, Lugau, Meinersdorf, Oelsnitz and Thalheim, Communists occupied the head positions.(41) In Stollberg county, the anti-fascist organization was called the "Notgemeinschaft" (Relief Organization) and devoted much of its energy to attempting to alleviate what the mayor of Stollberg called a "catastropic" food situation.(42) In addition, the Stollberg anti-fascist authorities attempted to get the coal mines working again. Thousands of miners participated in electing representatives to the factory councils, which in turn simply took over the two largest mines, "Germany" and "God's Blessing", and by May 9 and 10, had the mines working again. In Schwarzenberg, the anti-fascist organization of some 6000 members was known simply as the "anti-fascist movement," and it expressed its support for the program of the NKFD, which it had heard over the radio at the end of the war.(43)

(4) Berlin. The former capital of the Third Reich was the scene of a wide variety of KPD and anti-fascist responses to the end of the war. Radical, sectarian goals were shared by the "International Militia" in Spandau, the "Workers and Soldiers Soviet" which formed in Willenau, and the Wilmersdorf "International Communist Party."(44) The East German

scholar Siegfried Thomas carried out extensive interviews with Gertrud Rosenmeyer, the KPD chairman of Berlin-Neukolln, who recalled the radicalism of the day. "A great majority of our comrades thought that the destruction of fascism would bring socialism." "Not even the regular cadres understood at the beginning the orientation of the party [the KPD] regarding the completion of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, the construction of an anti-fascist-democratic order and cooperation with bourgeois forces." When Ulbricht attempted to convince her comrades that they should give up their socialist activities, their idea of a single workers party and enter the administration, Rosenmeyer recalls how various Communists resisted giving up their political goals with the justification: "We don't want to be bosses."(45) Ulbricht responded in a letter to Dimitrov (May 9, 1945): "I've had just about enough of fooling around with these antifas."(46)

A different variation of anti-fascist activity is described by Wolfgang Leonhard in his memoirs. Soon after arriving in Berlin in early May, Leonhard visited an anti-fascist group which had established its headquarters on the Kurfurstendamm in Berlin-Charlottenberg. Under the banner of the NKFD, whose broadcasts they had heard in the last days of the war, these anti-fascists from a variety of parties and backgrounds helped the Soviet troops enter the city and began organizing food and health services, as well as the reconstruction of housing and sanitation facilities. But this committee was no more acceptable to Ulbricht than the KPD radicals, and he ordered Leonhard to close it down. He insisted, in fact, that anti-fascist committees were nothing more than cover organizations to frustrate the development of true democracy among Germans. In any case, Ulbricht told Leonhard: "We cannot allow errors of

the Greek Party to be repeated here in Berlin. In Greece members of the party collaborate in committees like these while their enemies set about establishing control of the government."(47)

The Soviets, aided by Ulbricht and the KPD leadership, disbanded at least two hundred anti-fascist committees from all over the Soviet zone. SVAG was clearly more interested in administration than in politics. With a shortage of capable and reliable bureaucrats to occupy positions in town, and especially in village government, the anti-fascist groups disrupted the flow of personnel into the German administrations by their political, educational and cultural activities. The protests by anti-fascist committee members, some KPD activists, and even by some Soviet officers, were answered by the SVAG admonition; the best anti-fascists should leave political and ideological work to the parties and join in the administrations and self-governments.

SVAG also closed down the anti-fascist groups because it wanted activists to participate in the political life of the parties it was about to legalize. According to Order No. 2 (June 10), anti-fascist political parties, trade unions, and other professional and social organizations were allowed to carry on activities if they registered with -- and were found acceptable by -- SVAG. Essentially, the anti-fascist committees muddied the political waters, though, to be sure, many of the German activists -- especially the Communists -- were taken by surprise by the broad range of political options offered by the Soviets. On June 11, the KPD published its program for an anti-fascist Germany; the SPD announced its existence on June 15; and the Christian Democrats (CDU) and Liberal Democrats (LDP) followed soon after. By setting up the SPD and the non-socialist parties so quickly, and joining them in an anti-fascist bloc, SVAG undermined those communists (some of whom had actually

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mentioned the ideas of Trotsky) demanding the establishment of Soviet power and the crushing of the bourgeoisie. At the same time, it made clear that there would be no amalgamated workers party to seize control of the administrations.(48)

In the end, the Soviet administration closed down the anti-fascist committees because they could not control them. The Stalinist distrust of spontaneous institutions permeated SVAG's attitudes towards the relatively free-floating committees. If the NKFD had called for their formation to ease the entry of the Red Army into the towns and villages of Germany, to prevent the looting of factories, the mining of bridges, and the senseless and bloody resistance of young boys and old men in "Werewolf" detachments, their tasks were no longer relevant. It was time to get on with the job of rebuilding Germany on SVAG's orders. In some cases, the anti-fascist committees had chased off bourgeois specialists whom the Soviets wanted reinstated in the factories, or workers committees had expelled valuable Nazi workers from the factories.(49) In the villages, the anti-fascist committees demonstrated a much more flexible approach than the Soviets would have liked to the question of expropriating the junkers. They allowed some "progressive" junker families, for instance, to retain their mansions and immediate grounds, while confiscating the estates. Or they permitted junkers to buy land in neighboring areas while expropriating their hereditary estates. Even later the Soviets had great difficulty convincing anti-fascists that even progressive large landowners were inherently reactionary and should be driven out as a class from the German countryside.(50)

The Soviet and East German historical literature notes with great satisfaction that SVAG was the first of the Allied occupation governments to allow political activities in its zone. But for large numbers of

German anti-fascists, the beginning of political parties and the operation of the "anti-fascist democratic bloc" meant the end of active politics. For instance, large numbers of former KPD and SPD activists who had joined Brill's League of Democratic Socialists in Thuringia, refused to enter the reconstituted political parties after the League's banishment, convinced that these were a lower form of socialist development.(51) East German memoir literature by "activists of the first hour" make clear that the first months of liberation and occupation, April through June, were the most exciting and fruitful periods in these SED veterans' political lives.(52) SVAG's Order No. 2 did not simply create political parties; more importantly, it gave the Soviets the opportunity to monitor, check, and control all political activities in their zone of occupation.

SVAG and the Formation of the SED

One of the most important political decisions of the Soviet occupation authorities was to disband the anti-fascist committees and rely on centralized socialist and bourgeois parties, joined in a single bloc, to redirect the political energies of the people. Mass organizations -- like the Free German Trade Union, the Free German Youth, and the Democratic Women's Association -- also played an important role in bloc politics, and were used by the Soviets to channel and control political activity. Certainly within the bloc SVAG made every effort to support the KPD and its recruitment campaigns, publication efforts, and attempts to control the local administrations. But at the same time, Soviet commandants carefully nurtured the other parties and involved them in local government. More scrupulously than the KPD would have liked, the Soviets aided the SPD, creating the impression among some social-democratic leaders that the Soviets actually preferred working with SPD politicians. But SVAG had specific goals in mind. First, it

wanted to lure some Social Democrats away from their immediate postwar
desires to form a united party of the left. Second, the Soviets looked to
soften the SPD's program. The SPD was by far the more radical of the two
socialist parties, calling, for instance, for the immediate
nationalization of industry and the land. ("Democracy -- in the state and
the governments, socialism -- in the economy and society.")(53) The KPD
program of June 11, on the other hand, did not mention Marxism, much less
Leninism, and talked exclusively about the need to complete the bourgeois
revolution of 1848. As a result, for example, the SPD demanded the
nationalization of the land expropriated in the state of Saxony, while
the Communists followed the SVAG policy of turning it over to small-time
farmers.(54)

From the Soviets' point of view, neither the Communists nor the
Social Democrats were ready for unity. Not only were the Social Democrats
too strong, but their politics were too uncertain for SVAG's
purposes.(55) If a socialist unity party were to be formed in the future,
then SVAG wanted a more compliant and predicatable SPD as one of its
partners. For the moment, the Soviets rejected those proposals from
within both the SPD and KPD for immediate unity and encouraged instead
the platform of "unity of action." Formally, this KPD-SPD alliance was
intended to develop the ability of the two parties to work together. But
from the Soviet point of view, it was more important that the "unity of
action" help to establish order in the SPD and bring it into conformance
with Soviet ideas of social-democratic politics. In addition, the Soviets
could test the SPD's relationship to Kurt Schumacher, the emerging leader
of Social Democracy in the West, who was already proving to be an
obstinate foe of the Soviets and their occupation policies.

As a number of scholars have pointed out, SVAG's primary motivation for delaying unification was its desire to strengthen the KPD in size and ideological quality before allowing its merger with the SPD.(56) In fact, in the first months after the capitulation, the KPD grew at an extraordinary pace, due in part to Soviet encouragement, but also to the persistence of the KPD leadership and the attraction of Germans to the KPD program. (From approximately 100,000 members in 1932 on what was to be the territory of the SBZ, the KPD grew to 150,000 at the end of August 1945 and 375,000 in December 1945. The SPD had some 375,000 members at the end of August 1945, and 681,000 by March 1946, roughly duplicating its 1932 membership of 581,000 on what was to be the territory of the SBZ.)(57) Large numbers of left-wing SPD members also joined the KPD out of a spontaneous desire for unity. In fact, SVAG and the Ulbricht leadership tried to make clear to these SPD activists that it would be more suitable for them to work for "unity of action" within their own party.(58)

Most of the new recruits to the KPD were workers with non-Nazi backgrounds, who had been recruited initially by SVAG and the KPD leadership to take leading positions in the administrations and self-governments, as well as to assume important new posts as "people's judges", policemen, and school teachers. Many of them were exuberant, hard-working, and dedicated to the new Germany. At the same time, they were too willing -- in the view of SVAG and the KPD leadership -- to express their opinions on issues of Soviet occupation. For example, German Communists periodically complained about the behavior of Soviet soldiers among German women. Ulbricht was incensed by even the mention of the issue. Stalin apparently responded: "In every family there is a black sheep"; then later, "I will not allow anyone to drag the reputation of

the Red Army in the mud."(59) German Communists -- especially workers in the factories -- also expressed dissatisfaction with the sometimes wanton destruction of installations by Soviet trophy brigades and dismantling teams.(60) It was not so much the dismantling of war industries per se which caused the dissatisfaction. Most German Communists held to the Potsdam decisions and regarded them as just. But it was clear that other than war industries were being taken, that factories were incapacitated by the removal of just one section of the machinery, and that problems of transportation left much of the dismantled machinery to rust in the railway yards. As a result of criticism of Soviet occupation activities from the KPD rank-and-file, Tiul'panov and SVAG's Information Department on the one hand and Ulbricht and the KPD leadership on the other led an intensive effort of ideological training and retraining, the goal of which was to strengthen the internal discipline of the party.

The story of the eventual unification of the SPD and KPD into the Socialist Unity Party (SED) has been told often and well enough to justify only the briefest recounting here.(61) By the early fall of 1945, it became clear to the German communists and to the Soviets that the strengthening of the KPD had not given it a dominant place in society. Moreover, neither the KPD in the Western zones nor the SPD in the Soviet zone was able to counter the growing influence of Kurt Schumacher on the development of German social democracy. In elections in Hungary (November 4) and Austria (November 25), Communists made a very poor showing, demonstrating the vulnerability of the Central European communist parties and their growing isolation from the interests of the masses of workers and peasants.

The West German scholar Hermann Weber argues that cadre problems also encouraged the KPD to seek immediate unification with the Social

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Democrats. The KPD found itself short of experienced and capable working class activists to fill the administrations, self-governments, and economic institutions; the new recruits from the cities and villages had too little education and administrative experience to carry out the required tasks. At the same time, the SPD enjoyed much more continuity with pre-war labor organizations and represented a valuable source of administrative talent for the KPD leadership.(62) But the main impetus towards unity was the Soviet desire (and that of Ulbricht, as well) to crush the SPD as an active force in East zone politics. By the end of 1945, the SPD represented the most serious domestic threat to Soviet control of the zone. SVAG political officers -- despite early "comradely" relations with SPD leaders -- probably never lost their deeply held prejudices against the German SPD. In addition, Schumacher's intransigent and bellicose anti-Soviet socialism might spread to the East. From SVAG's viewpoint, the longer the Soviets occupied Germany, the more dangerous the threat from SPD revanchism.(63)

As a result, during the early fall of 1945, the first indications that unification was on the mind of the KPD came from speeches by Ulbricht and Pieck. In the long-term perspective, the "unity of the working class" -- that is, the joining of the KPD and SPD -- would serve the cause of the "anti-fascist democratic transformation." It would also conform to developing ideas of the "German road to socialism", which was broached by the KPD in its June 11 program and more fully articulated in a February 1946 article by Anton Ackermann.(64) While the KPD (and SVAG) became increasingly convinced of the necessity of unity, Otto Grotewohl and other leaders of the Central Executive of the SPD (East) grew increasingly wary. Schumacher's unequivocal opposition to unity made it clear that a new joint party might well jeopardize chances of an

inter-zonal approach to German politics. Meanwhile, within the SPD rank-and-file in the East (as well as within the KPD), there were still genuine sentiments from the early postwar period for the idea of the "unity of the working class."

Given the increasing pressure for unity from the KPD and SVAG, Otto Grotewohl, Max Fechner, Erich Gniffke and the other leaders of the Central Executive agreed to meet with KPD leaders in the so-called Conference of Sixty (thirty from the SPD and thirty from the KPD) on December 20-21, 1945. At the conference, the SPD leadership restated its position that no union could take place without the participation of all the zones of occupation in Germany. Grotewohl expressed the fear that unity might add to the threat of the division of Germany. Further, the SPD complained to their KPD interlocuters about the inequality of their treatment by the Soviet commandants and about the KPD control of many local administrations.(65)

Attempts to attract the Central Executive to the benefits of unity coincided with an apparent order from SVAG headquarters in Karlshorst for local commandants throughout the Soviet zone to begin the campaign for unity. Soviet officers pressured local SPD politicians to begin the process of unification and to insist that their Central Executive in Berlin to do the same.(66) In Thuringia, General Kolesnichenko attempted to speed up the merger in mid-January 1946. He summoned August Frolich of the SPD and the KPD district leader Werner Eggerath to his office and told them it was high time for the parties to unify. Even if the Central Executive was not ready for the merger, the local parties, Kolesnichenko noted, should lead by example. Frolich reported that the general insisted that unity "should come from below, where it is ripe, that is where there is the least hesitation. One should begin with the factories; joint [SPD

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and KPD] assemblies of workers should elect a united leadership."(67)
Kolesnichenko's vigorous involvement in the unity process paid dividends;
Thuringia was the first state in the SBZ to announce the union of the two
parties on April 6, 1946.

Soviet pressure on local SPD organizations sometimes amounted to
outright intimidation and threats. Isolated cases were reported where SPD
leaders were arrested and sentenced to prison terms as
counterrevolutionaries for resisting the unity campaign.(68) Usually,
however, it was enough to threaten SPD functionaries with the loss of
their administrative or party posts, which meant the reduction of their
rations and the loss of other privileges. A February 1, 1946 report from
the Magdeburg district SPD organization to the Central Executive
complained about SVA's interference in the SPD's successful election
campaign in the trade unions: "they don't even shrink from threats and
arrests. Two of our most qualified functionaries were taken off by order
of the SVA to Magdeburg, so that they would not appear at the conference.
In addition, our party secretaries are subject to constant surveillance,
and every speech is written down by stenographers and sent off to General
Kotikov in Halle...."(69) Even the KPD's Wilhelm Pieck admitted at the
second "Conference of Sixty" in February 1946 that the Soviets had
pressured local SPD politicians. But he claimed that the KPD intervened
on behalf of their social democratic comrades:

> Much has been made of the fact that here in the Soviet zone the
> process of union has been preceded by a campaign of force and of
> pressure carried out by the Soviet occupation authorities. Comrades,
> in general one doesn't need in the least to regret this fact, if as
> a result the unity of the working class is accomplished, with which
> one can grab the reins firmly in the hand against the Reaction....
> But, comrades, I tell you with complete candor: Where we heard that
> overzealous commandants have tried to speed up the understanding
> between the two parties through any kind of special influence, we
> protested to the supreme military government with absolute
> decisiveness, because we understood that the interference of the
> military commandants was completely unnecessary.(70)

This speech by Pieck, published in an East German historical journal for the first time only in 1981, makes clear that Western complaints of a "Zwangsvereinigung" (forced union) have some basis in fact. At the same time, as historians in both East and West Germany note, it would be a mistake to assume from this that there was no sympathy, especially at the local level, for the union of the two parties.(71)

If SVAG used coercion to accomplish the merger of the SPD and the KPD, it also used persuasion. In his memoirs, Erich Gniffke, the SPD leader, makes clear that the Soviets were so anxious for the Central Executive to approve the unity program that Marshal Zhukov assured Grotewohl that the military authorities would remove Ulbricht from the KPD leadership in order to smooth the SPD's entrance into the new party. Gniffke added that not only the SPD Central Executive that would have been pleased by Ulbricht's political demise. Numerous KPD leaders, among them Franz Dahlem and Anton Ackermann, resented Ulbricht's increasing control of the administrative apparatus, as well as his tendency to present the KPD party leadership with accomplished facts rather than political options.(72) Yet Ulbricht had powerful allies in the occupation government, and presumably in Moscow as well. Colonel Tiul'panov, who apparently had close ties with Andrei Zhdanov, repeatedly visited Central Executive members to coddle, bully, and tempt them into the union. In late January 1946, he informed the group as a whole that they must make a decision immediately; Karlshorst would not tolerate any further delay.(73) At the same time, Zhukov seemingly lost any remaining confidence in a short-term solution for the unity of Germany in a "parliamentary democratic republic" that he reportedly favored. As a result, in his last interview with Grotewohl at the beginning of February

1945, he encouraged the SPD leader to go ahead and unite with the Communists, and SVAG would insure that conditions in the SBZ would improve and even that Soviet troop levels would be reduced.(74)

Grotewohl's role in the SPD's final decision to unite with the KPD is a matter of historical speculation. There is simply not enough evidence to answer with complete satisfaction the question why he shifted his position from opposition to the immediacy (if not the principle) of unity in December 1945 to insisting in February 1946 that the Central Executive vote for unity.(75) Certainly, Grotewohl had grown fond of his privileged position in the Soviet zone, and he unquestionably understood that it could only get better if he joined the unity movement. But he also felt the pressure from the local organizations, and he sensed that the SPD faced a genuine dilemma. Meetings with Schumacher had produced no agreement with the SPD (West) and no commitment from the Western comrades to aid the Central Executive in its struggle to remain independent. Schumacher rejected Grotewohl's idea that Russian security interests would be fully satisfied by a strong German social-democratic regime.(76) Isolated from the SPD in the West, Grotewohl must have worried that the SPD (East) would become isolated from politics in the Soviet zone. As a result he argued, as did the SPD committee in Chemnitz, that to resist Soviet demands for unity would mean giving up any further influence on the political development of the zone: "Therefore there is nothing else for the SPD to do than to seize the initiative."(77) Gniffke reported from his travels around the provinces: "Everywhere I heard the same thing: Conclude a unity resolution in the Central [Executive]; otherwise we'll do it ourselves on the spot. We want finally to be left in peace. [Wir wollen endlich Ruhe haben.]"(78)

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On February 11, 1946 the Central Executive voted to endorse unity by a vote of eight to three; the chairmen of the five provincial organizations affirmed the Central Executive decision.(79) The Soviets prevented attempts by some party leaders to hold referenda on the unification in various areas of the SBZ. SVAG could not, however, prevent a referendum on unity from being held in the Western sectors of Berlin. With the majority of SPD members voting, 2,937 (12%) voted for unification; 19,526 (82%) voted against. Equally suggestive was the polling that demonstrated the continued strength of the sentiment among SPD members for unified activities. To the question of whether SPD members favored "an alliance [between the SPD and KPD] which will guarantee cooperation and exclude fraternal strife" 14,883 (62%) voted yes and 5,559 (23%) voted no.(80)

The unification congress of the new Socialist Unity Party (SED) was held in Berlin on April 21-22, 1946, amid great celebration and hope. The new joint party chairmen -- Wilhelm Pieck from the KPD and Otto Grotewohl from the SPD -- dramatically strode to the center of the stage and shook hands, to mark the compromise between the two parties. The union joined some 600,000 Communists and 680,000 Social Democrats in what would clearly be the most powerful and influential political party in the Soviet zone. The program of the new SED reflected both Moscow's insistence on a gradual transition and the KPD's efforts to develop a theory of a peaceful and democratic "German road to socialism." "The Socialist Unity Party of Germany fights as an independent party in its country for the true national interests of its people. As the German socialist party, it represents the most progressive and best national forces...."(81)

No doubt, many KPD members took this national, democratic rhetoric seriously. After all, SVAG and the KPD leadership had spent the better part of a year disabusing the KPD rank-and-file of common ideas of establishing a Soviet Republic of Germany. But from a number of sources it seems likely that the leading cadres of the KPD along with the political leadership of the SMAD, Tiul'panov and Sokolovskii, thought of the creation of the SED as a continuation of the KPD.(82) While the SED formally announced that it was a Marxist party, it is also apparent that Ulbricht, Pieck, Matern, Koenen, and others, did not at the same time give up their adherence to Leninism or their dedication to the Soviet system of government. In other words, SED adherence to inner-party democracy and parity between the two component parties, SPD and KPD, could last only as long as SVAG and the KPD leadership thought it was necessary to tolerate it.

It is also possible that the KPD's espousal of the "German road to socialism" and the SED's attempt to attract all-German loyalty may have concealed Tiul'panov and the KPD leadership's appraisal that a separate socialist Germany would evolve from the Soviet zone. Tiul'panov's recognition of "two Germanys" at the second SED Party Congress in September 1947 was presaged by a private conversation of Wilhelm Pieck with Soviet Captain Boris Kagan, one of Tiul'panov's deputies, in the Ballenstedt kommandatura a year earlier (September 4, 1946). According to Kagan, Pieck said:

> I believe that the division of Germany is unavoidable. Already now, the country is practically divided into two parts. The Western powers feel already today that the eastern part of Germany has been lost to the world of capitalism. As a result, they will do everything in their power to save at least the Western part for

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their social system.... Only the existence of the USSR and the presence of Soviet troops in these lands [of Eastern Europe] guarantee that the masses in these countries will be able to build true people's states.(83)

By the summer and fall of 1947, SVAG made no efforts to hide its influence on the SED. Tiul'panov met regularly with the communists Pieck and Ulbricht, while other members of the SED, especially former Social Democrats, were forced to go through them to get to the Soviet administration. At the Second Congress of the SED in September 1947, Grotewohl called his comrades to an intensive study of Leninism "in order to apply what is appropriate in it to Germany."(84) Soviet commandants arrested thousands of Social Democrats, many of whom, according to Fritz Schenk "were interned in cellars of the large kommandanturas in Halle, Leipzig, Dresden, Magdeburg, Gorlitz, Bautzen, and other cities." Many were deported to the Soviet Union, Schenk adds, and were sentenced to long terms of incarceration "because of alleged spying against the Soviet Union."(85) By the fall of 1948, Tiul'panov instructed the SED that it was time to abandon the thesis of the "special German way to socialism," a move that reflected the June 27 Cominform resolution condemning Yugoslavia for its nationalist deviations.(86) From the Cominform resolution, which signalled the call for uniformity in the bloc, the SED concluded that "we have to apply all our strength to making the SED into a party of the new type," a party that would also reflect the desire of its old KPD leadership to conform to the Soviet model and Soviet wishes.(87)

Conclusions. It does not stretch the evidence to characterize the role of SVAG in the politics of the Eastern zone as fundamentally counterrevolutionary. When arriving in the towns and villages of the

Eastern zone, Soviet officers welcomed the participation of anti-fascist committees in the setting up of new administrations and the punishment of Nazis and their collaborators. But the committees presented numerous problems for the Soviets. First, the radicalism of the German left, the desire to set up governments styled on the soviets of 1917-1918, alienated Soviet authorities who were anxious to put the West at ease about Soviet postwar intentions. But equally important, one could argue, was the lack of interest of the Soviet Union in 1945-46 in a German revolution that might eventually challenge the Soviet model. George Kennan put it nicely when he noted that Stalin was "well aware that the Communist revolution in Germany could not be controlled from Moscow, because the questions would immediately arise: 'Where is the home of Communism?'."(88)

The anti-fascist committees also represented a genuinely spontaneous, popular alternative to the institutions of the military occupation government, as well as to Soviet-style communism. Occupation authorities in the West were no more inclined than were the Soviets to allow these Germans to take control of their own towns and villages. At the same time, the Soviets had a serious reparations mission in the East zone, and the anti-fascist committees could too easily become an obstacle to dismantling and to the removals by trophy brigades. Moreover, the Moscow KPD leadership -- especially Ulbricht and Pieck -- were not at all interested in sharing their privileged position among the occupation authorities with anti-fascist committees, doing everything they could to malign them and have them disbanded.

The first act of the counterrevolution was to crush the popular movement, to take away its spontaneity, to recast it into the shape of administration. In the second act, SVAG attacked the Social Democratic Party and undermined its ability to direct socialist activity in the East

Zone. With by far the most radical program among the political parties in the zone, the SPD was a danger to the KPD and, more important, to SVAG's conception of the evolving German question. Immediate merger after the war might have meant the victory of a distinctively German socialism directed by the SPD. When the KPD was sufficiently strengthened, the Soviet authorities moved to eliminate the SPD from the political spectrum through the unity campaign. Taking advantage of genuine desires among the SPD rank-and-file for the "unity of the German working class" and applying pressure on local organizations and national leaders, sometimes subtly, sometimes brutally, SVAG critically shaped the future of German socialism in the East zone by eliminating its only serious rival.

It is tempting to leave matters at the point where the Soviets turn back the chances for a German revolution and genuine German socialism. But the problem is more complicated than that. By the nature of its occupation, SVAG was also a revolutionary force, expropriating large landowners, dividing up their estates, and instituting land reform in the SBZ as a whole (September 1945). The June 1946 referendum for expropriation of industry in Saxony was followed by expropriations throughout the SBZ. Local commandants, often not attuned to the subtleties of policy from Karlshorst, brutalized "big capitalists", forced others to flee for their lives, intimidated the landowners as a whole, and refused to accept the sometimes sentimental attachment of local populations to the regional aristocracy. As Marshall Sokolovskii put it in a speech at a June 1947 meeting at the "House of Culture of the Soviet Union", "We have plenty of experience in struggles against all kinds of criminals and enemies of progress, as the counterrevolutionaries were in our own country."(89) In Pieck's discussion with Captain Kagan, cited above, the KPD leader praised the Soviet army for changing the population structure

of the East zone. "The masses of the reactionary forces of Germany, the War criminals, the active Nazis and their helpmates, the big landowners and the big capitalists are frightened by Soviet power. They looked to their own security and fled to the West to their own kind, to their class brothers."(90) In other words, SVAG accomplished in many ways precisely what Soviet power accomplished in Russia; it drove out the upper classes and redistributed the wealth of the nation, creating the basis for a communist revolution. At the same time, it established a form of authoritarian socialist government that strangled the socialist and democratic impulses of those who supported it.

Notes

1. The most complete study to date of the Soviet administration in Germany is an unpublished "Werkstattbericht" from the University of Mannheim's "Arbeitsbereich Geschichte und Politik der DDR": Angelika Ruge, "Die Sowjetische Militarverwaltung in Deutschland, 1945-1949," Bonn, nd. Also useful is the East German thesis: Wolfgang Lohse, "Die Politik der Sowjetischen Militaradministration in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands," Doctoral Dissertation, Martin Luther University (Halle/Wittenberg), 1967. Especially relevant to this paper is Hermann Weber's "Die Sowjetische Militaradministration in Deutschland und das Parteiensystem der SBZ/DDR," Deutschland Archiv, no. 10 (1982): 1064-1079.

2. See, for example: Erich Gniffke, Jahre mit Ulbricht (Cologne, 1966); Wolfgang Leonhard, Die Revolution entlasst ihre Kinder (Cologne, 1955); Gregory Klimow, Berliner Kreml (Cologne, 1951); F. J. Bokow, Fruhjahr des Sieges und der Befreiung (Berlin, DDR, 1979); Robert Slusser, ed., Soviet Economic Policy in Postwar Germany (New York, 1953); E. Berg, "Dva goda v okkupirovannoi Germanii," Pamiat': istoricheskii sbornik, vyp. 5 (Moscow - Paris, 1981-82), pp. 7-41; and a number of articles/memoirs by S. I. Tiul'panov, including "Die Rolle der SMAD bei der Demokratisierung Deutschlands," Zeitschrift fur Geschichtswissenschaft, vol. 15, no. 2 (1967): 240-252.

3. The most useful Soviet study that cites the papers of SVAG is N. I. Shishkov, "Sovetskaia voennaia administratsiia i pomoshch' SSSR narodom tsentral'noi i iugo-vostochnoi evropy v 1944-45 godakh," Voprosy istorii, no. 2 (1979): 16-29.

4. For the OMGUS papers, see H. Weiss, "Abschlussbericht uber das OMGUS-Projekt (1976-1983)," Vierteljahresheft fur Zeitgeschichte, no. 2 (1984): 318-326. For Clay, see The Papers of General Lucius D. Clay: Germany, 1945-1949, Ed. Jean Edward Smith, 2 vols. (Bloomington and London, 1974).

5. For German politics in this period see, among others, Henry Krisch, German Politics under Soviet Occupation (New York, 1974), and Frank Moraw, Die Parole der "Einheit" und die deutsche Sozialdemokratie (Bonn, 1973). For Soviet foreign policy in Germany, see: Vojtech Mastny, Russia's Road to the Cold War (New York, 1979); William O. McCagg, Jr., Stalin Embattled 1943-1948 (Detroit, 1978); Alexander Fischer, Sowjetische Deutschlandpolitik im zweiten Weltkrieg 1941-1945 (Stuttgart, 1975); and Gavriel D. Ra'anan, International Policy Formation in the USSR (Hamden, Conn., 1983).

6. Na boevom postu: Kniga o voinakh Gruppy sovetskikh voisk v Germanii (Moscow, 1975), pp. 10, 59. Osvoboditel'naia missiia sovetskikh vooruzhennykh sil v evrope vo vtoroi mirovoi voine: Dokumenty i materialy (Moscow, 1985), pp. 512-517.

7. Liberation Mission of the Soviet Armed Forces in the Second World War, Ed. Marshal of the Soviet Union A. A. Grechko, Trans. David Fidlon (Moscow, 1975), p. 358.

8. Za antifashistskuiu demokraticheskuiu Germaniiu: Sbornik dokumentov 1945-1949 gg. (Moscow, 1969), p. 67.

9. Bokow, Fruhjar des Sieges, p. 427.

10. I. I. Spiridonow, "Als Kommandant in Dresden," Kampfgefahrten - Weggenossen: Erinnerungen deutscher und sowjetischer Genossen an die ersten Jahre der antifascistisch-demokratischer Umwalzung in Dresden, Eds. Helfried Wehner and A. B. Waks (Berlin, DDR, 1975), p. 164.

11. Na boevom postu, p. 70.

12. On issues of fraternization, see especially Materials for the Project on the Soviet Social System (Soviet Refugee Interview and Questionnaire Data, 1950-1953, for Air Force Contract No. 33 (038)-12909), Cambridge, Mass. Among the many cases that provide insights into fraternization are no. 346, pp. 46-47; no. 446, pp. 56-58; no. 527, pp. 15-17.

13. See Jan Gross's interesting discussion of this phenomenon in a forthcoming book on the Soviet occupation of Poland, 1939-41 (manuscript version, p. 125).

14. 50 let vooruzhennykh sil SSSR (Moscow, 1968), p. 477. See also Vladimir Rudolph, "The Agencies of Control," in Slusser, ed., Soviet Economic Policy, p. 30.

15. Bokow, Fruhjahr des Sieges, p. 427; Rudolph, "The Agencies of Control," in Slusser, ed., Soviet Economic Policy, pp. 22, 31; Berg, "Dva goda," Pamiat', pp. 7, 28. See also Horst Duhnke, Stalinismus in Deutschland: Die Geschichte der sowjetischer Besatzungszone (Cologne, 1955), p. 143.

16. Moraw, Die Parole der "Einheit", p. 204.

17. Wolfgang Leonhard, Child of the Revolution, Trans. C. M. Woodhouse (Chicago, 1958), p. 436.

18. According to Shishkov, "Sovetskaia voennaia administratsiia," p. 19, the structure of the military government initially consisted of a central administration (SVAG); the administrations (SVA) of the states and provinces; the kommandantura of Berlin; 18 regional kommandanturas (with 14 kommandanturas responsible to them); 127 district and 733 local kommandanturas. The kommandanturas of the large cities (Leipzig, Dresden, Halle) were subordinated to a kommandantura section of SVAG rather than to the state and provincial authorities. See also Sergei Iwanowitsch Tjulpanow, Elfriede Rehbein, Gerhard Rehbein, "Die Bedeutung der SMAD fur den Aufbau des ersten deutschen Arbeiter und Bauern - Staates," DDR Verkehr, (Berlin, GDR, 1975), p. 321. Bokov writes that there were a total of 644 military kommandanturas in the SBZ with a military staff of 32,000. Bokow, Fruhjahr des Sieges, p. 419.

19. N. A. Antipenko, "Tyl v Berlinskoi operatsii," 9 Maia 1945 goda, Ed. A. M. Samsonov (Moscow, 1970), pp. 736-737. Stefan Dernberg (Doernberg), "O deiatel'nosti Sovetskoi voennoi administratsii v Germanii (1945-1949 gg.)," Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal, no. 8 (1966): 10.

20. See Weber, "Die Sowjetische Militaradministration," p. 1066.

21. The best study of the reparations question is still J. P. Nettl, The Eastern Zone and Soviet Policy in Germany 1945-50 (London, 1951).

22. For the programs of the KPD in the 1930s and 1940s see Horst Laschitza, Kampferische Demokratie gegen Faschismus. Die Programmatische Vorbereitung auf die antifaschistisch-demokratische Umwalzung in Deutschland durch die Parteifuhrung der KPD (Berlin, GDR, 1969).

23. Manfred Wille, "Studien zur Zusammenarbeit der von der KPD gefuhrten deutschen Antifaschisten mit dem Sowjetischen Besatzungsmacht in der Provinz Sachsen (April bis Dezember 1945)," Doctoral Disseration, Central Institute for History, Academy of Sciences, (Berlin, GDR), 1978, p. 201. Ernst "X", "Chronik," unpublished memoirs, Dresden, 1975-1980, p. 1 NK.

24. Gunter Benser, Die KPD im Jahre der Befreiung: Vorbereitung und Aufbau der legalen kommunistischen Massenpartei (Berlin, GDR, 1985), pp. 189-190. Benser's is by far the most useful study of "sectarianism" in the East zone. Some of the Soviet commandants fell into this category as well. As a result, they were ordered by the political organs of SVAG to carry out policy strictly though the German administrations (and not with local committees or parties). Shishkov, "Sovetskaia voennaia administratsiia," p. 21.

25. Benser, Die KPD im Jahre der Befreiung, p. 363, n. 432.

26. Laschitza, Kampferische Demokratie, p. 199.

27. Zhukov ordered inspections of the local kommandanturas in order to raise the standards of their compliance with SVAG instructions. See Bokow, Fruhjahr des Sieges, p. 420; Benser, Die KPD im Jahre der Befreiung, pp. 80-81.

28. Benser, Die KPD im Jahre der Befreiung, pp. 80-81.

29. Ibid., p. 78.

30. Gregory W. Sandford, From Hitler to Ulbricht: The Communist Reconstruction of East Germany 1945-46 (Princeton, 1983), p. 73.

31. Ibid., pp. 75-76.

32. Moraw, Die Parole der "Einheit", pp. 113-117.

33. Wille, "Studium zur Zusammenarbeit," p. 33.

34. Benser, Die KPD im Jahre der Befreiung, pp. 68, 87.

35. Ibid., p. 113. Wille, "Studium zur Zusammenarbeit," p. 76.

36. For a fictional account with a decidedly political message, see Stefan Heym, Schwarzenberg (Frankfurt, 1984).

37. Helfried Wehner, "Proletarischer Internationalismus und Sozialistische Besatzungspolitik: Ein Beitrag zur Antifaschistisch - Demokratischer Entwicklung im Ehemaligen Land Sachsen unter besonderer Berucksichtigung der Sozialistischen Besatzungspolitik," Habilitation Thesis, Martin Luther University (Halle/Wittenburg), 1969, p. 137.

38. Ibid., p. 146.

39. Ibid., p. 150.

40. Ibid., p. 147.

41. Benser, Die KPD im Jahre der Befreiung, p. 106.

42. Wehner, "Proletarischer Internationalismus," pp. 158, 160-162.

43. Ibid., p. 155. Benser, Die KPD im Jahre der Befreiung, pp. 106-107.

44. Arthur Pieck to Wilhelm Pieck, Berlin, May 1945, cited in Benser, Die KPD im Jahre der Befreiung, p. 96.

45. Siegfried Thomas, "Der Wiederbeginn des politischen Lebens in Berlin und die Aktionseinheit der Arbeiterparteien (Mai-Juli 1945)," Zeitschrift fur Geschichtswissenschaft, vol. 8, no. 6 (1960): 320, 323-324.

46. Cited in Moraw, Die Parole der "Einheit", p. 93.

47. Leonhard, Child of the Revolution, p. 401.

48. See Benser, Die KPD im Jahre der Befreiung, p. 87. Wallrab von Buttlar, Ziele und Zielkonflikte der sowjetischen Deutschlandpolitik 1945-1947 (Stuttgart, 1980), pp. 40-41.

49. See Sandford, From Hitler to Ulbricht, pp. 157-161.

50. Wille, "Studien zur Zusammenarbeit," pp. 201, 224-227.

51. See Moraw, Parole der "Einheit", pp. 113-116.

52. For example, see: Bernt von Kugelgen, Die Nacht der Entscheidung: Autobiografie (Berlin, GDR, 1983); Max Steenbeck, Impulse und Wirkungen: Schritte aus meinem Lebensweg (Berlin, GDR, 1978); or Hans Rodenberg, Protokoll eines Lebens: Erinnerungen und Bekenntnis (Berlin, GDR, 1980).

53. "Vozzvanie TsK SP partii Germanii" (June 15, 1945), in Za antifashistskuiu demokraticheskuiu Germaniiu, pp. 79-80.

54. Wille, "Studien zur Zusammenarbeit," p. 202.

55. See Anton Ackerman, "Gibt es einen besonderen deutschen Weg zum Sozialismus?" Einheit, no. 1 (1946): 23-32. Hermann Weber, Geschichte der DDR (Munich, 1985), p. 116.

56. Ibid., p. 117. Krisch, German Politics under Soviet Occupation, p. 103.

57. Weber, Geschichte der DDR, pp. 118-119.

58. Moraw, Die Parole der "Einheit", pp. 94-98.

59. Leonhard, Child of the Revolution, p. 462; Gniffke, Jahre mit Ulbricht, pp. 189-191. For two predictably opposite views by contemporaries of the behavior of Soviet soldiers, see Krasnaia zvezda of June 8, 1945, "in the camps of the heroes of the Battle of Berlin," or of June 13, 1945, describing "the perfect order" among Soviet soldiers, and the emigre journal Za svobodu Rossii, edited by S. P. Mel'gunov, which describes, for example (no. 10, 1948: 44), Russian troops running amuck and characterized by "drunkenness, depravity and venereal disease."

60. Gniffke, Jahre mit Ulbricht, pp. 193-196. Sandford, From Hitler to Ulbricht, pp. 40-43.

61. The best account in English is still Krisch, German Politics under Soviet Occupation, pp. 101-171.

62. Weber, Geschichte der DDR, p. 119.

63. See Krisch, German Politics under Soviet Occupation, p. 33.

64. "Vozzvanie Tsk KPG k nemetskomu narodu o stroitel'stve antif. dem. Germ.," (June 11, 1945), in Za antifashistkuiu demokraticheskuiu Germaniiu, pp. 69-76.

65. Weber, Geschichte der DDR, pp. 125-126. Gniffke, Jahre mit Ulbricht, pp. 119-126.

66. Gniffke, Jahre mit Ulbricht, pp. 85-87.

67. Moraw, Die Parole der "Einheit", p. 143.

68. Weber, "Die Sowjetische Militaradministration," pp. 1068-1069.

69. Cited in Moraw, Die Parole der "Einheit", p. 147.

70. "Materialien Wilhelm Piecks zum Entwurf der 'Grundsatze und Ziele der SED'," Beitrage zur Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung," vol. 23, no. 2 (1981), p. 249.

71. On this point, see especially Dietrich Staritz, Die Grundung der DDR: Von der sowjetischen Besatzungsherrschaft zum sozialistischen Staat (Munich, 1984), pp. 121-123.

72. "An die Partei neuen Typus," (October 28, 1948), Appendix to Gniffke, Jahre mit Ulbricht, p. 365. See also Moraw, Die Parole der "Einheit", p. 220.

73. Gavriel Ra'anan draws heavily on Gniffke's Jahre mit Ulbricht to support the argument that Tiul'panov was a "Leningrader" and a protege of Zhdanov's (along with other key officers in SVAG). In this context, Tiul'panov favored a "radical" solution to the German problem, that is the creation of a Sovietized Eastern zone. Zhdanov -- CPSU Central Committee Secretary for Foreign Communist Parties -- was convinced, as was Tiul'panov, that Ulbricht was the right man to Stalinize the East

German party for this purpose. As a result, Zhdanov, Tiul'panov and Ulbricht opposed the removal of industry from the SBZ as firmly as they could. On the other hand, Zhukov, his political adviser Semenev (from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and, perhaps, Zhdanov's opponents Malenkov and Beria, were more committed to a neutralized, democratic, and united Germany. This position on the German question complemented their desire to seize and remove German assets from the Russian zone while it was still possible. In this regard, Zhukov and Semenev were initially much less enthusiastic about the formation of the SED, which everyone understood as a major obstacle to German unity given the firm opposition of the SPD in the West. For the complex and problematic Kremlinology of the period and its relation to the German question, see, among others: Ra'anan, International Policy Formation, pp. 85-100; McCagg, Stalin Embattled, pp. 175-177, 217-237; Boris Meissner, Russland, die Westmachte und Deutschland: Die sowjetische Deutschland Politik 1943-1953 (Hamburg, 1953), pp. 54-60; Jerry F. Hough, "Debates about the Postwar World," The Impact of World War II on the Soviet Union, Ed. Susan J. Linz (Totowa, N.J., 1985), pp. 266-274; Werner Hahn, Postwar Soviet Politics: The Fall of Zhdanov and the Defeat of Moderation 1946-1953 (Ithaca, N.Y., 1982), pp. 9-13, 34-44; and Martin McCauley, The German Democratic Republic Since 1945 (New York, 1983), p. 41.

74. Among other considerations, one might speculate that Zhukov's removal on April 10 was not unrelated to his opposition to Tiul'panov and Ulbricht (and thus Zhdanov). For Zhukov's interview with Grotewohl, see Moraw, Die Parole der "Einheit", p. 150.

75. The East German biography of Grotewohl is uninterested in this question. See Heinz Vosske, Otto Grotewohl (Leipzig, 1979), pp. 50-56.

76. Gniffke, Jahre mit Ulbricht, p. 138; Krisch, German Politics under Soviet Occupation, pp. 166-169; Moraw, Die Parole der "Einheit", pp. 151, 220. Staritz even claims that the Western SPD left their SBZ comrades "in the lurch." Staritz, Die Grundung der DDR, p. 119.

77. Moraw, Die Parole der "Einheit", p. 152, n. 293.

78. Gniffke, Jahre mit Ulbricht, p. 170.

79. For the vote, see Krisch, German Politics under Soviet Occupation, pp. 171-172, and Staritz, Die Grundung der DDR, p. 120.

80. Weber, Geschichte der DDR, pp. 129-130.

81. Protokoll des Vereinigungsparteitags der SPD und KPD am 21. und 22. April 1946 (Berlin, 1946), pp. 172-180.

82. See Gniffke, Jahre mit Ulbricht, p. 365. Weber, Geschichte der DDR, pp. 130-131.

83. "Gesprach Wilhelm Piecks mit Boris A. Kagan uber die Zukunft Deutschlands vom 3. September 1946," (Appendix 4), in Staritz, Die Grundung der DDR, p. 205. For Tiul'panov's speech, see Tagliche Rundschau, Sept. 21, 1943, p. 3.

84. Protokoll der Verhandlungen des II. Parteitages der SED, 20-24 Sept. 1947 (Berlin, 1947), p. 292.

85. See the selection from Fritz Schenk, Im Vorzimmer der Diktatur (Cologne, Berlin, 1962), pp. 20 ff., in Hermann Weber, Kleine Geschichte der DDR (Cologne, 1980), p. 42.

86. See Leonhard's account of a meeting with Mischa Wolf that describes Tiul'panov's role. Leonhard, Child of the Revolution, p. 459. Tiul'panov also warned Gniffke during a June 1948 meeting not to undermine these changes in the SED: "A second talk like this won't take place. Remember -- I am a Bolshevik, I am a revolutionary." Gniffke, Jahre mit Ulbricht, p. 310.

87. Moraw, Die Parole der "Einheit", p. 203. Gniffke, Jahre mit Ulbricht, p. 325.

88. George F. Kennan, "From Containment to Self-Containment," (interview) in George Urban, Stalinism: Its Impact on Russia and the World (New York, 1982), p. 407.

89. Tagliche Rundschau, June 24, 1947, p. 2.

90. Appendix 4 in Staritz, Die Grundung der DDR, p. 205.