

“German Forest and Farm Landscapes and the Onset of the Cold War, 1945–1949:
Evidence from the Soviet Zone Countryside”

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The origins of the cold war remain contentious despite John Lewis Gaddis’ revelations of Soviet strategy in the immediate postwar period drawn from once secret Soviet archives in his recent book, *We now know: rethinking cold war history*.¹ There are other sources for Soviet intentions in 1945-1949: in the eastern European farm and forest landscapes’ structure, change and populations. Reading ecosystem qualities reveals secrets hidden in closed archives such as in the former Soviet Union. Cold war landscapes offer particularly valuable information. For Stalin’s “war on the countryside,” waged through land reform and reparations, took precedence over his other goals.² Destruction of the Soviets’ traditional foes in the countryside, the “backward peasant” and the rural aristocracy, and reduction of rural community and ecological structures lay at the core of the Soviets’ strategy to exert its power and preempt U.S. and British influence throughout Europe. We can read the signs of Stalin’s intent and design in unambiguous ecological data and in the narratives of rural communities and stories of farmers and foresters.

Land reform, Stalin’s first political initiative in the Soviet zone, prepared Germany for Soviet rule as a part of the “parliamentary road to democracy.” This initially popular initiative brought great pressure to bear on the Britain and America to enact simi-

¹ John Lewis Gaddis, *We now know: rethinking cold war history* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). Professor Gaddis draws a realist picture of complex causality, a narrative which fortifies the post-revisionist school’s estimation of the central importance of Stalin’s opportunism and the Soviets’ hegemonic aims in Central Europe.

² After Germany’s potential security threat to the Soviet Union had been satisfactorily eradicated.

lar economic and political programs and to adopt central control with Soviet participation in their zones, while it also created chaos and shortages throughout Germany which favored Soviet propaganda. Reparations, traditionally seen as an industrial policy, wreaked its greatest havoc and filled Soviets coffers most abundantly through its focus on timber reparations. Reparations for both industrial and forest products were manifestly harsh and unpopular. They served, however, similar goals as land reform and also lay at the core of Soviet policy: to destroy rural communities and ecosystems hostile to Soviet power and Marxism-Leninism, to foment chaos which favored central planning and collectivization, and to seize resources and land which otherwise might fall to the West. Everyone anticipated prompt reunification in the immediate postwar period and Stalin wanted to prepare his dominions to maximize Soviet advantages and power when that happened.

But prompt reunification, and a peace treaty, did not follow promptly after the war ended in May 1945, and British and American cautious hope for a postwar partnership with the Soviet Union in a new world order soon faded. Western leaders' mistrust, fueled by popular outrage in Britain and America at the near-famine conditions throughout Germany which Soviet policy created blossomed into open hostility by September 1946, when U.S. Secretary of State James Byrnes made his seminal statement of U.S. policy at Stuttgart, declaring America's determination to protect German independence and even to recover Germany's eastern provinces lost across the Oder-Neiße line to Stalin's "border adjustments." Not only would U.S. forces remain indefinitely in Europe but the U.S. ex-

publicly challenged the legitimacy of postwar borders and Stalin's assertion in April 1945 that "Everyone imposes his own system as far as his armies can reach".³

Stalin's "war on the countryside" leveled the complex structures of the rural landscape, imposing simple economic, social and ecological monocultures of "factories on the land," farmers and peasants reconstituted in the mold of the iconic worker and stagnant farms and forests. Land reform's effects on the Soviet zone's rural communities complemented reparations' disproportionate damage to rural communities and landscapes, accelerating population flight to the West and alienating Western leaders and popular opinion through indiscriminate terror and destruction of eastern Germany's critical surplus food production.⁴ The destruction of Soviet zone rural communities--the integrated whole of humans, ecosystems, and society that define them--came first on Stalin's agenda and presaged a comparable reduction and radical simplification throughout the Soviet zone. Yet collateral damage from Stalin's "war on the countryside" inadvertently denied Stalin his ultimate prize: U.S. withdrawal from Europe and Soviet hegemony. It alerted Western policymakers to Soviet intentions and made manifest to the British and American peoples the destructiveness and violence behind Stalin's policies.

³ Stalin in conversation with Milovan Djilas. Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1962)

⁴ The Soviet zone historically produced reliable food surpluses, despite the relative poverty of its soils and dry climate. Soviet land reform so damaged the farm economy that the Soviets could not deliver food to the west as decided at the Potsdam Conference (17 July – 2 August 1945) as a part of the general agreement on reparations.

Even though eastern German farms and forests emerged near economic and ecological collapse in the early 1950s, its forest and farmland were in good condition in 1945.⁵

Soviet zone farms and forests emerged from the war relatively unscathed not only by battle damage, but by predation from Nazi planners. German farmers, despite wartime shortages, continued to feed the German people at the same level as the British population until the end of the war, yielding daily rations of about 2,500 calories. The Nazi Production Minister Albert Speer made “an independent decision of his own that the war was lost and the next year’s crop should be protected,” shifting nitrogen stocks from weapons to fertilizer production in the last months of the war.⁶ The Nazi’s war harvest only exceeded annual growth, a measure of sustained yield, “by not more than thirty per cent,” leading a surprised U.S. forester to remark that the German forest was “not badly

⁵ These reports are: G. D. Kitchingnam, “The 1945 census of woodlands in the British zone of Germany,” *Empire Forestry Review* 26:2 (1947): 224–27; G. B. Ryle, “Germany: Military Government, C.C.G., North German Timber Control (NGTC),” *Empire Forestry Review* 26:2 (1947): 212–23; E. H. B. Boulton, “The forests of Germany: What they can supply on reparations account for the U. K.,” *Timber Trade Journal* 173 (1945): 7–8; A. C. Cline, “A brief view of forest conditions in Europe,” *Journal of Forestry* 43 (1945): 627–28; Joseph C. Kircher, “The forests of the U.S. zone of Germany,” *Journal of Forestry* 45:4 (1947): 249–52; Office of the Military Government for Germany (U.S.) (OMGUS), *Special report of the Military Governor: The German forest resource survey* 17 (1 October 1948), (Office of the Military Government for Germany [U.S.], 1948).

⁶ Falling to 2,000 calories per day from 2,500 calories during most of the war. Werner Klatt, “Food and farming in Germany: I. Food and nutrition” *International Affairs* 26:1 (January 1950): 45, 47. United States Strategic Bombing Survey, 1947 “The Attack on German Cities” *Final reports of the United States strategic bombing survey, 1945-1947* (inclusive) “Summary report” 10, 14 and Chapter VII, “Civilian supply. Food supply” 132.

overcut.”⁷ Nazi forest and farm policy remained “green” throughout the war despite Goebbels’ riveting cry for “total war” in his 18 February 1943 speech at Berlin’s Sportpalast.⁸ Environmentalism suffused Nazi ideology. The Nazis managed the farms and forests in their conquered eastern lands ecologically, with care for long-term values

⁷ Office of the Military Government for Germany (U.S.), *Special report of the Military Governor: The German forest resource survey (1 October 1948)*, vol. 17 (Office of the Military Government for Germany [U.S.], 1948) 7.

Stocking in 1945, the volume of wood in the forest, was down only 10 percent from 1930 levels, leading the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to comment: “German forests were well husbanded throughout the war years and now are in excellent condition. It is safe to say that not more than the increment of the next two to five years has been cut, and in northern Europe the growing stocks remain practically unimpaired.” Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, *Forestry and forest products: World situation, 1937–1946* (Stockholm: Stockholms Bokindustri Aktiebolag, 1946): 9, 15.

A U.S. forester who toured Soviet zone forests reported that war damage was limited to 2 to 3 percent and that “the forests are in an excellent state.” Joseph C. Kircher, “The forests of the U.S. Zone of Germany,” *Journal of Forestry* 45:4 (1947): 249–52.

S. H. Spurr, “Post-war forestry in Western Europe. Part II,” *Journal of Forestry* 51:6 (1953): 415–21. Stephen Spurr, a young forest ecologist and future dean of the Yale School of Forestry, observed that “the visitor cannot but be impressed with the overall good condition of the German forest. Coming from Scotland, where perhaps seventy percent of the merchantable forest was clearcut during the war, the small acreage of clear-cut areas in Germany seems insignificant.”

⁸ Joseph Goebbels, “Nun, Volk steh auf, und Sturm brich los! Rede im Berliner Sportpalast,” *Der steile Aufstieg; reden und aufsätze aus den jahren 1942/43* (München: F. Eher nachfolger, 1944);

and preservation of the natural landscape.⁹ Even Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler, head of the S.S. and Gestapo and warden of the death camps--and an agronomist by training--preached environmentalism in his late-war decree "On the Treatment of Land in the Eastern Territories": "The peasant of our racial stock has always worked steadily to increase the natural powers of the soil, plants, and wildlife, and to conserve the balance of the whole of nature. If, therefore, the new *Lebensräume* [living spaces in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union] are to become a homeland for our settlers, we must steadfastly manage the landscape as a close-to-nature organism. It is the critical base for fortifying the German *Völk*."¹⁰ As late as 1944 Alfred Heger, a future senior East German forester, still vigorously promoted close-to-nature forest management throughout the Nazi empire de-

⁹ Peter Staudenmaier, "Fascist ideology: The "Green Wing" of the Nazi Party and its historical antecedents." In *Ecofascism: Lessons from the German experience*, ed. Janet Biehl and Peter Staudenmaier (Edinburgh: AK Press, 1995): 16; G. B. Ryle, "Forestry in western Germany, 1948," *Forestry* 22:2 (1948): 158 (Ryle cites Heske, 1958); E. Reichenstein, "Entwicklung von Vorrat und Zuwachs in den vier Besatzungszonen Deutschland seit 1945," *Weltholzwirtschaft* 1:7/8 (1949); E. Reichenstein, "Die forstwirtschaftliche Lage Deutschland vor und nach dem 2. Weltkrieg," *Forstarchiv* 21:1/3 (1950): 30. Ryle expected to find that the National Socialists had "looted and thoroughly and scientifically exploited" the forests of central and eastern Europe. National Socialist forestry was if anything anodyne and constructive in its emphasis on smaller dimension lumber, particularly the younger pine age classes for mine timbers and railroad ties and the younger spruce age classes for pulp.

"Durchführung kriegswirtschaftlicher Maßnahmen in der Forst- und Holzwirtschaft," *Der Deutsche Forstwirt* 21:76/77 (22 September 1939): 909; Fruchtenicht, "Leistungssteigerung im Walde," *Der Deutsche Forstwirt* 22:69/70 (1940). Fruchtenicht reflected the continued importance of ecological considerations again later as the end of the war approached. Michael Charles Kaser, "Interwar policy: The war reconstruction." In *The economic history of Eastern Europe, 1919–1975*, ed. Michael Charles Kaser and Edward Albert Radice (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986): 411, 413; Von Dieterich, "Der Ausbau der Forstwirtschaft" (1941). Von Dieterich showed that National Socialist forestry in the conquered lands remained ecological even as the Holocaust gathered momentum and military crises cascaded.

See also Heinrich Rubner, *Deutsche Forstgeschichte--1933–1945: Forstwissenschaft, Jagd und Umwelt im NS-Staat* (St. Katharinen: Scriptae Mercaturae Verlag, 1985): 173; Karl Hasel, "Forstbeamte im NS-Staat am Beispiel des ehemaligen Landes Baden," *Schriftenreihe, Landesforstverwaltung und Forstwirtschaft Baden-Württemberg*, #62 (1985): 197; and Michael L. Wolf, "The history of German game management," *Forest History*, 14:3 (October 1970): 16.

¹⁰ Heinrich Himmler quoted in: Peter Staudenmaier, "Fascist ideology: The "Green Wing" of the Nazi Party and its historical antecedents." In *Ecofascism: Lessons from the German experience*, ed. Janet Biehl and Peter Staudenmaier (Edinburgh: AK Press, 1995): 16; Heinz Haushofer, *Ideengeschichte der Agrarwirtschaft und Agrarpolitik im deutschen Sprachgebiet*, vol. 2. (Munich, 1985): 107.

spite looming defeat.¹¹ National Socialist farm and forest management never strayed far from ecological principles, even as the Holocaust proceeded and the German nation faced destruction.¹²

So at the war's end in mid-1945, German farms and forests were in good condition and the rural communities healthy, even considering the grievous war losses every family felt. Yet by 1948 the Soviet zone forest neared collapse.¹³ Kurt Hueck, a senior Soviet zone forest scientist, described the forest of the late-1940s as blighted by "huge clear-cuts of unimaginable size, with depressed stocking and thin, poorly tended stands."¹⁴ One-third of the state forest was highgraded, its battered stands stripped of all valuable timber and "without a forestry future." The rest of the forest area was divided between immature stands and vast, unplanted clear-cuts.¹⁵ Imminent ecological and economic collapse faced eastern Germany's farm and forest landscapes equally, the direct result of Stalin's land reform and reparations.

¹¹ A. Heger, "Aufbau und Leistung von naturnahen Wäldern im Osten und ihre forstwirtschaftliche Behandlung," *Forstwissenschaftliches Centralblatt* 1 (1944): 34–35.

¹² Karl Hasel, "Forstbeamte im NS-Staat am Beispiel des ehemaligen Landes Baden." *Schriftenreihe, Landesforstverwaltung und Forstwirtschaft Baden-Württemberg*, #62 (1985): 128; Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, *Forestry and forest products: World situation, 1937–1946*, 18. The Nazi forest minister, Alpers, did extend the Second Four-Year Plan's 150 percent of growth harvests from state forests to private and communal forests. Nevertheless, these targets were rarely met.

¹³ Stephen Haden-Guest, John Wright, and Eileen M. Teclaff, *A world geography of forest resources* (New York: Ronald Press, 1956), 285.

¹⁴ Kurt Hueck, "Aktuelle Aufgaben der Forstwirtschaft," Speech by dean of Forstfakultät Eberswalde at the Agricultural Science Congress, Berlin, 4 February 1947, *Forst- und Holzwirtschaft* 1:1 (1 April 1947): 6. Hueck was the first postwar dean at the Institute for Forest Sciences in Eberswalde.

¹⁵ Sopade, "Die Forstwirtschaft in der Sowjetzone," *Denkschriften, Sopadeinformationsdienst* (Bonn: Vorstand der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, 1955): 29.

No one in the postwar environment of grave shortages and mass population movements welcomed land reform. Walter Ulbricht, the leader of the German communists in their Moscow exile and future Party boss of East Germany, noted that even communists and social democrats only wanted order, stability and guarantees of work, not radical change or state ownership.¹⁶ As Norman Naimark observed, “Virtually every agricultural expert agreed that breaking up the large estates would hurt rather than help productivity. Expropriating the Junkers and their agents meant destroying the basic economic unit of agricultural production”—one that had evolved in concert with the harsh, dry climate of the North German Plain and its people over centuries.¹⁷

Stalin had to force land reform on the German Communist Party leadership (Wilhelm Pieck, Walter Ulbricht, Gustav Sobottka and Anton Ackermann) in a midnight Kremlin meeting on 4 June 1945.¹⁸ Ackermann feared that the radical land reform Stalin demanded would lead to hunger and hurt the Party. Stalin angrily listened as Ackermann, the Party’s leading theorist, timidly advised; “the Party comrades do not recommend an immediate introduction of land reform.”¹⁹ Later that same day they met again with Stalin and senior Soviet officials: Molotov, Malenkov and Kaganovitch. Furious with the Ger-

¹⁶ Jochen Laufer, “‘Genossen, wie ist das Gesamtbild?’: Ackermann, Ulbricht und Sobottka in Moskau im Juni 1945,” *Deutschland Archiv* 29:3 (May-June 1996): 355.

¹⁷ Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: a history of the Soviet zone of occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), 144/5.

¹⁸ H.-G. Merz, “Bodenreform in der SBZ. Ein Bericht aus dem Jahre 1946” *Deutschland Archiv*, 11:24 (1991): 1159-1159.

¹⁹ Carl J. Friedrich and Henry Kissinger, editors, *The Soviet zone of Germany*, HRAF-34 Harvard-1, section 1, (New Haven and Esslingen: Bechtle, 1956) 384.

Ackermann was responsible for the “special German way toward socialism” which fell out of favor after the Tito crisis in the spring of 1948. Ulbricht later “purged Ackermann for his ‘conciliatory attitude’ following the June 1953 workers’ revolt.”

mans for their caution, Stalin lashed out and demanded immediate land reform and liquidation of the Junker class.²⁰

Traditional land reform might have made sense, if only to absorb refugees fleeing Stalin's ethnic cleansing, or for equity, or to rationalize food production at a time of spiraling food shortages and surging refugee and "displaced persons" populations. Yet few were in doubt that land reform would cripple food production. But in Stalin's plan to dominate postwar Europe no branch of German society was as critical to win over as the traditionally hostile rural landscape and the power base of Marxism-Leninism's archetypal foes: the large landowner and backward peasant. Fritz Lange, a member of the German Communist Party Control Commission, recalled; "Land reform for us was above all a political problem, the need to destroy the strongest underpinnings of reaction: the estates and the manors."²¹ The Soviets would never "secure the fruits of victory," a German frontier pushed 525 miles west of the Soviet Union's 1938 borders and hegemony in central Europe, until they eliminated the Junker bogeyman and replaced him with a rural proletariat loyal to the Party and the working class.

The Party's emphasis on political goals deeply disappointed the idealistic Anton Hilbert, who was drawn to Thuringia by the promise of agrarian reform: "Are we not conscious that the elimination of larger farms must eventually be reversed through impo-

²⁰ Wolfgang Zank, "Als Stalin Demokratie befahl," *Die Zeit* 25 (23 June 1995): 75; Ekkehard Schwartz, "Die demokratische Bodenreform, der Beginn grundlegender Veränderungen der Waldeigentums und der Forstwirtschaft im Gebiet der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik," *Sozialistische Forstwirtschaft*, 20:10 (1970): 290.

²¹ Norman M. Naimark cites SAPMO-BA, ZPA, NL 277/4 (Zaisser), b. 214, in Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: a history of the Soviet zone of occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), 144.

sition of pure socialist economic forms? Land reform's rationale is purely political, and has nothing to do with factual arguments."²² The Party's political goal was control of the hostile countryside and collectivization, voluntary if possible. Get the administrative forms, ownership correct, the orthodox Marxist-Leninist cadres were thinking, and success would follow. Ultimate collectivization was never in doubt.

When Ackermann returned to Berlin he carried a draft land reform law in Russian for translation into German, publication, and action.²³ Ulbricht declared upon his return from Moscow that Soviet communism was his model and the "highest form of democracy," declaring: "What we (the communists) do must appear democratic, so long as we

²² Anton Hilbert, "Denkschrift über die ostdeutschen Bodenreform" Gräflich Douglas'sches Archiv Schloß Langenstein (1946) (Anm. 18) cited in H.-G. Merz "Bodenreform in der SBZ. Ein Bericht aus dem Jahre 1946" *Deutschland Archiv*, 11:24 (1991). Hilbert was a land reform administrator in Thuringia from fall 1945 through spring 1946.

²³ Wolfgang Leonhard, director of the Party School, was responsible for drafting the first land reform legislation and edicts.
Wolfgang Leonhard, *Die Revolution entlasst ihre Kinder* (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1955). Also cited in H.-G. Merz "Bodenreform in der SBZ. Ein Bericht aus dem Jahre 1946" *Deutschland Archiv*, 11:24 (1991): 1162.

keep everything in our own hands,” Stalin’s ‘parliamentary road to democracy.’²⁴ Soviet experience, Honecker proudly declared later, particularly Stalin’s forced collectivization

²⁴ Wolfgang Leonhard, “Es muß demokratisch aussehen,” *Die Zeit* (7 May 1965): 3 cited in Mark Kramer, “The Soviet Union and the founding of the German Democratic Republic: 50 years later—A review,” *Europe-Asia Studies*, 51:6 (September 1999): 1093; Wolfgang Leonhard, “Iron Curtain. Episode 2” Interview, (4 October 1998) The National Security Archive, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/coldwar/interviews/episode-2/leonhard2.html> (Accessed 2003 March 08); Wolfgang Leonhard, *Die Revolution Entlässt Ihre Kinder* (Cologne: Verlag Kiepenhauer & Witsch, 1955), 348-358, 389-390. Leonhard reported;

The next task first was of course the local administration, then the Berlin administration, and everything changed on the 4th of June. On the 4th of June 1945 suddenly Ulbricht disappeared, and you didn’t know where and what. Only years later we heard that he went to Moscow and in Moscow on the same day was invited to the Soviet Politburo and Stalin personally. And Stalin gave him a new order. The order was immediately set up the Communist Party. Immediately set up a Communist Party and help to create a Social Democratic Party, a Catholic Party and a Liberal Party and set up then an anti-fascist Democratic United Front, and also fulfill this summer already, make all the preparations, maybe autumn, land reform. The confiscation of the feudal landowners and the division of the land in the hands of the peasants. So Ulbricht was there, Ackermann, much more intelligent, more capable, he wrote the programme. You needed a programmatic statement. And on the 9th of May ‘45, the group returned and literally in a few hours we got a newspaper, I was one of the three to prepare the first issue of the Party newspaper, and immediately everything was prepared for constituting the Communist Party. And on the 10th you had the famous Marshal Zhukov order stating that anti-fascist democratic parties are permitted, and literally six hours later the radio announced that the Communist Party is - the first one is organising. And so after the organisation of the Communist Party we had to go in all the different districts and make foundation conferences, of the future Communist Party. And I was at that time very optimistic because in the official statement it was said the Communist Party has no intention to introduce the Soviet system of the Soviet Union in Germany. No intention whatsoever. And the Communist Party is in favour of a parliamentary democratic republic with all rights and freedoms for the population. And I must admit, sadly but true, I believed it. I believed that, and I was really hoping that an anti-fascist democratic period would start in Germany. This was the biggest mistake of my life, to believe that. And I can only say I was not the only one. There were millions of other people who also believed that.

In addition, Communists were installed as heads of education and the police in each district. Ulbricht stated: “It is crystal clear: It must appear democratic, but we must have all the strings in our hands.”

and breaking of the *kulaks*' power (1929-1933), was of "overwhelming significance."²⁵ Ideological and administrative forms mattered: the peasant and worker classes must be unified to fulfill Lenin's "Alliance Doctrine", the *Bündnisdoktrin*.²⁶ So even medium farms over 100 hectares had to come under land reform's knife. With Stalin's impetus and the Soviet model the German Communist Party leadership prepared their land reform campaign.

One week after the German Communist Party leadership took their instructions from Stalin, they published the Party's demand for the "Liquidation of the large estates of the Junkers, dukes and princes, and the expropriation of their entire property and land."²⁷ Seven days later Wilhelm Pieck announced the Communist Party's land reform program under the slogan "*Junkerland in Bauernhand!*"—"Junker Land into the Peasants'

²⁵ Erich Honecker, "Bündnis war, ist und bleibt Eckpfeiler unserer Politik," *Neues Deutschland*, (6–7 September 1975): 3. Also discussed in Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: a history of the Soviet zone of occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), 155, 163.

Lenin's (1870–1924) agricultural policy of 1917-1928 was also valued by the Party leadership for its "overwhelming significance." In 1917 the Bolsheviks purged the largest landowners, the "*pomeshchiki*," a class very roughly similar to the Junkers, yet they allowed large farmers, the *kulaks* (similar to the German *Großbauern*), to remain to supply food to the cities during Lenin's New Economic Program until Lenin's death in 1924. Edgar Tümmler, Konrad Merkel, and Georg Blohm, *Die Agrarpolitik im Mitteldeutschland und ihre Auswirkung auf Produktion und Verbrauch landwirtschaftliche Erzeugnisse* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1969); Theo Stammen, "Zur Verfassungsentwicklung," in *DDR: Das politische, wirtschaftliche und soziale System*, ed. Heinz Rausch and Theo Stammen, 4th ed. (Munich: Verlag C. H. Beck, 1978), 196; Karl Willy Hardach, *The political economy of Germany in the twentieth century*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980): 119; Hans Herbert Götz, "Als der Klassenkampf in der DDR begann. Die Bodenreform vor 40 Jahren," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 206 (6 September 1985): 13.

²⁶ At the II World Congress of Comintern (19 July-7 August 1920).

For more on the *Bündnisdoktrin*, and the influence of Lenin's economic theories on land reform, see Arnd Bauerkamper, "'Loyale Kader'? Neue Eliten und die SED-Gesellschaftspolitik auf dem Lande von 1945 bis zu den frühen 1960er Jahren," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 39 (1999): 270, 273.

²⁷ The demand was published on 11 June 1945. Ekkehard Schwartz, "Die demokratische Bodenreform, der Beginn grundlegender Veränderungen der Waldeigentums und der Forstwirtschaft im Gebiet der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik," *Sozialistische Forstwirtschaft*, 20:10 (1970): 290; Joachim Piskol, "Junkerland in Bauernhand": Wie deutsche Antifaschisten die demokratische Bodenreform 1945 vorbereiteten," *Neues Deutschland*, 198 (204 August 1985):13.

Hands!”²⁸ Land reform was a key weapon to win the allegiance of rural voters traditionally hostile to communism. Perhaps because of suspicion of Marx’s and Engels’ disdain for “backward peasants” and the “idiocy of rural life,” as well as a visceral dislike of socialism, the Party’s position was “particularly precarious in the agricultural economy and rural society.”²⁹ Land reform was a key plank in Stalin’s “parliamentary road to democracy.”

Land reform was the perfect strategy to expand Party membership beyond its traditional urban base into the countryside.³⁰ It recalled traditional themes of German political life and would “anchor” small farmers, Lenin’s favored class, to the Party.³¹ The Party allowed in its first, rare, free election to win popular support through calling upon land reform’s broad-based appeal. Voters chose 52,000 delegates to the Land Reform

²⁸ Erich Honecker, “Bündnis war, ist und bleibt Eckpfeiler unserer Politik,” *Neues Deutschland*, (6–7 September 1975): 3. Also discussed in Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: a history of the Soviet zone of occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), 163 and Ernst Goldenbaum, “Demokratische Bodenreform hat unseren Bauern eine gesicherte Zukunft eröffnet,” *Neues Deutschland*, 204 (28 August 1975): 3.

In German, the “*Liquidierung des Großgrundbesitzes*.” The first edition of the communist *Deutscher Volkszeitung* formally set out the Communist Party platform on 13 June 1945, including land reform and the “liquidation of large estates”. Wolfgang Zank, “Als Stalin Demokratie befahl,” *Die Zeit* 25 (23 June 1995): 75; Joachim Piskol, “Junkerland in Bauernhand’: Wie deutsche Antifaschisten die demokratische Bodenreform 1945 vorbereiteten,” *Neues Deutschland*, 198 (204 August 1985):13.

²⁹ Arnd Bauerkamper, “‘Loyale Kader’? Neue Eliten und die SED-Gesellschaftspolitik auf dem Lande von 1945 bis zu den frühen 1960er Jahren,” *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 39 (1999): 265-298.

Arnd Bauerkamper, “Zwangsmo­dernisierung und Krisenzyklen: Die Bodenreform und Kollektivierung in Brandenburg 1945-1960/61,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft: Zeitschrift für Historische Sozialwissenschaft*, 25:4 (1999): 556-588.

³⁰ Arnd Bauerkamper, “‘Loyale Kader’? Neue Eliten und die SED-Gesellschaftspolitik auf dem Lande von 1945 bis zu den frühen 1960er Jahren,” *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 39 (1999): 273.

³¹ Arnd Bauerkamper, “‘Loyale Kader’? Neue Eliten und die SED-Gesellschaftspolitik auf dem Lande von 1945 bis zu den frühen 1960er Jahren,” *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 39 (1999): 270.

Commission to oversee land reform legislation and protect citizens' rights.³² Over half the delegates were independents: land reform's "target," in Walter Ulbricht's words, for conversion to communism.³³ This strategy worked well at first; following land reform Party membership in rural Mecklenburg soared from 3,200 in July 1945, about as many as before the war, to 19,500 members in October 1945, three months after Pieck announced the land reform at a Peasants' Assembly. Party membership swelled to 32,000 by August 1946 despite the near-famine conditions it had created. Wilhelm Pieck, East Germany's first president, commented; "I want to emphasize that land reform created a great number of supporters in the villages, 300,000-400,000 people. The Soviet Occupying Power and the Party of the Working Class gave German peasants their land, a good preparation for the alliance of workers and peasants [the *Bündnisdoktrin*]. It's also good for German-Soviet friendship, since 300,000-400,000 of our supporters got their farm-

³² The 20 October 1946 *Landtag* elections were the last free elections in the Soviet zone. The official "Socialist Unity Party" won only 47.5 percent of the votes despite pressure and intimidation. Stefan Kreuzberger, "The Soviet Military Administration and East German elections, autumn 1946, *Australian Journal of Politics & History* 45:1 (March 1999): 89-98.

³³ Walter Ulbricht, *Zur Geschichte der neuesten Zeit*. v. 1. (Berlin: 1955). 57% were independents.

Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: a history of the Soviet zone of occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), 156, also discusses the SED's political motivations in land reform, in particular their competition with the CDU for the support of former Nazi farmers.

Sopade, "Die Forstwirtschaft in der Sowjetzone," *Denkschriften, Sopadeinformationsdienst*, (Bonn: Vorstand der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, 1955): 8.

Erich Honecker declared on land reform's 40th anniversary in 1985: "The democratic land reform accomplished what generations of peasants had dreamed of and fought for since the day of Thomas Münzer. The days of castles and crofts are over forever. Junker land came into the peasants' hands!" Honecker repeated the themes of traditional German political discourse as late as the mid-1980s, of equity in rural society and of breaking up concentrations of ownership, even though all of East German agriculture had long been reconsolidated on a larger and more inefficient scale than ever seen before. Hans Herbert Götz, "Als der Klassenkampf in der DDR begann. Die Bodenreform vor 40 Jahren," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 206 (6 September 1985): 13.

land from us.”³⁴ In a later telephone conversation with the Russian adviser to the Soviet Commander in Chief, Pieck noted land reform’s importance to “neutralizing the bourgeois parties” and asked the Soviets to hurry up the division of the forest to shore up peasant loyalty to the Soviet Union and the Party.³⁵ The Party leadership had moved beyond their early concern for the people’s welfare to appreciate how land reform’s chaos and shortages hobbled western Germany (by halting normal food shipments to western Germany) and secure their political power.

Three months passed as the Party leadership prepared the land reform and marshaled support from the bloc parties, particularly the Social Democrats. Pieck finally announced the full land reform program on 4 September 1945.³⁶ The first Directive stated: “Land reform must liquidate the feudal Junker large estates and bring an end to Junker and large estate owner rule in the villages which has always been a bastion of reaction and fascism in our land and a main source of aggression and wars of conquest against other peoples.”³⁷ Identical Directives for the other four states were complete by 10 September 1945 calling for expropriation without compensation of all farms over 100 hec-

³⁴ Wilhelm Pieck, in a speech given at the end of August 1947 before the Second Party Congress. Undated speech manuscript quoted in Rolf Badstübner and Wilfried Loth, editors, *Wilhelm Pieck--Aufzeichnungen zur Deutschland Politik 1945-1953*, (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1994)

³⁵ Wilhelm Pieck, notes on telephone conversation with V. S. Semenov, (4 October 1946). ZPA NL 36/734, Bl. 213-215 cited in Rolf Badstübner and Wilfried Loth, editors, *Wilhelm Pieck--Aufzeichnungen zur Deutschland Politik 1945-1953*, (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1994), 83.

³⁶ The Peasants’ Assembly was held in Kyritz.

³⁷ Hans Lemmel, “Der deutsche Wald in der Bodenreform,” *Allgemeine Forst- und Jagdzeitung* 125:3 (1954): 89.
The “*Provinzalverordnung über die Bodenreform*,” issued on 3 September 1945 for Saxony-Anhalt was essentially in the same form as Pieck’s 4 September 1945 announcement at a *pro forma* peasants’ assemblies in Kyritz.

tares. The bloc parties (Christian Democrats, Social Democrats and Liberals) issued a joint declaration in support on 13 September 1945 reflecting land reform's broad-based appeal. Only the Liberal Party chairman, Waldemar Koch, and the conservative (CDU) leaders Andreas Hermes and Walther Schreiber, criticized the failure to compensate landowners or warned of looming collectivization.³⁸ Ulbricht quickly dismissed them from their leadership positions, recalling later, "The workers struck them down and they had to flee to the power regime of monopoly capital and estate owners [West Germany]."³⁹ Hermes was a "fascist" because of his criticism of land reform's brutality; yet the Nazis had condemned Hermes to death for his role as a member of the Karl Goerdeler (1884-1945) circle in the 20 July plot against Hitler. Only the end of the war spared Hermes from execution.

Soviet propaganda claimed land would be seized only from Nazis and war criminals or from Junkers and absentee landlords. Yet war criminals and Nazis only owned 4.3 percent of all agricultural and forest land in eastern Germany and expropriation, as an East German forest historian noted in the 1970s, had "very little to do with who was a Nazi and who was not."⁴⁰ A senior land reform official in Thuringia reported; "The only way to escape being labeled as a war criminal or Nazi is to have been in a concentration

³⁸. The Christian Democrats alone asked, in vain, for compensation for landowners. Piskol, "'Junkerland in Bauernhand!'" *Wie deutsche Antifaschisten vorbereiteten*," 13.

³⁹ Walter Ulbricht, "Die demokratische Bodenreform—ein rühmreiches Blatt in den deutschen Geschichte," *Einheit*, 10 (1955): 849.

⁴⁰. Ekkehard Schwartz, "Die demokratische Bodenreform, der Beginn grundlegender Veränderungen der Waldeigentums und der Forstwirtschaft im Gebiet der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik," *Sozialistische Forstwirtschaft*, 20:10 (1970): 291.

Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: a history of the Soviet zone of occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), 156.

camp or a Hitler prison—those who protest against the madness, in today’s food crisis, of experimentation with soil and land are arrested.”⁴¹ Political enemies--Social Democrats, Christian youth leaders, conservatives, and apolitical forest scientists and agronomists--were labeled Nazis if they tried to keep the land reform democratic and focused on strengthening the rural economy rather than on advancing the Party’s political interests.

If Nazis and war criminals were not land reform’s targets, then neither were the medium and large farm and forest owners of the eastern German squirearchy, the totemic Junkers. Junkers made up less than thirty percent of land reform victims, and farms and forests in the Soviet zone were very different in size and character from the large, often near-bankrupt estates of East Prussia lost to Poland and the Soviet Union behind the Oder-Neiße line. Despite the rhetoric, ninety percent of expropriated farms were less than five hundred hectares, a moderate size given northern German ecological conditions.⁴² The average farm expropriated was two hundred hectares, an efficient size given the region’s dry, sandy soils--hardly the mammoth estates ruled by autocratic, absentee landlords pilloried in the Soviet zone press. Only sixty-six farms in the Soviet zone were

⁴¹ Anton Hilbert, “Denkschrift über die ostdeutschen Bodenreform” Gräflich Douglas'sches Archiv Schloß Langenstein (1946) (Anm. 18) cited in H.-G. Merz “Bodenreform in der SBZ. Ein Bericht aus dem Jahre 1946” *Deutschland Archiv*, 11:24 (1991): 1167.

⁴² Klaus Peter Krause, “Begriffsbewirrungen über die ‘Bodenreform’ zwischen 1945 und 1949,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (2 September 1994): 8. Only sixty-six expropriated farms in the Soviet zone were larger than one thousand hectares.

larger than one thousand hectares.⁴³ There were, in fact, few Junkers in the Soviet zone after Soviet ethnic cleansing and seizure of the core of Prussia east of the Oder-Neiße line; Stalin had already broken Junker power months before land reform, taking 2.4 million hectares of farm and forest land east of the Oder-Neiße line—11,000 estates over 100 hectares—months before the Soviet land reform. “Junker land into Soviet and Polish hands!” would have been a more accurate slogan than “Junker land into peasants’ hands!”

The land reform regulations and procedures drawn up by the Land Reform Commission promised “the most democratic principles” and that land reform victims, even though their farms and forest were seized without payment, would be treated fairly and humanely.⁴⁴ Yet farmers were arbitrarily cast off their land and out of their homes, under-

⁴³ S. Duschek, “Wirtschaftspolitische Betrachtungen des deutschen Großgrundbesitzes,” *Zeitschrift für Weltforstwirtschaft* 2 (1935): 477. Statistisches Bundesamt, “Bevölkerung und Wirtschaft, 1872–1972,” (1973): 152; 200 ha was also the upper end of the size class toward which eastern German farms were equilibrating in the interwar period. The increase in 20–100 ha parcels (*Großbauerlichen Betriebe*) was greatest in East Prussia and Pomerania, the core of agrarian Prussia.

Klaus Peter Krause, “Begriffsbewirrungen über die ‘Bodenreform’ zwischen 1945 und 1949,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (2 September 1994): 8.

⁴⁴ Edwin Hörnle, “Ein Jahr nach der Bodenreform, Materialzusammenstellung für einen Bericht an die Sowjetische Militäradministration” (9 December 1946), Archives of the DDR Agricultural Ministry, quoted by Ulrich Kluge, historian at the Technische Universität Dresden (the TUD) in a letter to the editor, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (13 September 1994): 15; Wolfgang Hassel, “‘Junkerland in Bauernhand’ war damals die Kampflosung. Dokumente des Staatsarchivs Magdeburg über die Bodenreform,” *Neues Deutschland*, 255 (27 October 1984): 13. The land reform laws gave the elected Land Reform Commission authority to monitor the land reform processes and responsibility to notify farmers to be expropriated well in advance of any action, to treat expropriated farmers humanely and to divide expropriated farm inventories and equipment fairly. The expropriation of farms under 100 hectares in area was prohibited, but done where ‘class enemies’--former local government officials and political opponents of the German communists--owned farm and forest land of any area.

scoring the “class antagonism” Marxist-Leninists felt for farm and forest owners.⁴⁵

Popular opposition surged as Red Army soldiers brutalized the rural population and Party functionaries flouted land reform regulations. Evictions, as Naimark commented, “were not infrequently accompanied by rampages by Soviet soldiers, first when they entered the local agricultural regions in April and May of 1945, then again in September 1945 when the Soviets took the initiative--along with German authorities--in carrying out far-reaching land reforms.”⁴⁶ This meant suppressing landowners who defended their farms and forest and the liquidation of traditional ecological and social structures in the countryside.

High-ranking land reform administrators and even local communists joined with officials from village to state level to protest land reform’s brutality, some resigning in frustration.⁴⁷ The most effective protesters, such as Thuringia’s vice president, Dr. Kolter, were arrested, sent to former Nazi concentration camps, or murdered. Anton Hilbert, a socialist who left western Germany to support agrarian reform in the Soviet zone, wit-

⁴⁵ Wolfgang Hassel, “‘Junkerland in Bauernhand’ war damals die Kampflösung. Dokumente des Staatsarchivs Magdeburg über die Bodenreform,” *Neues Deutschland*, 255 (27 October 1984): 13.

Gerhard Grüneberg, “30 Jahre Marxistisch-Leninistische Agrarpolitik--30 Jahre Bündnis der Arbeiterklasse mit den Bauern,” *Neues Deutschland*, 188 (9 August 1975): 3. Gerhard Grüneberg, Erich Honecker’s deputy in building the Berlin Wall in 1961 and hard-line minister of agriculture and forestry in the 1970s, declared: “Implementation and securing of the democratic land reform took hard class warfare. The presence of our Soviet class brothers in the uniform of the Red Army prevented counter-reaction from escalating to open violence.”

Gerhard Grüneberg, champion of Industrial Production Methods for farming and forestry, promoted land reform as a spontaneous “anti-imperialist, democratic agrarian revolution, the largest and most comprehensive mass action, a victorious revolution in German history undertaken by the collective action of the workers and peasants. It was wholly carried out by the workers themselves.”

⁴⁶ Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A history of the Soviet zone of occupation, 1945–1949* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), 85–86.

⁴⁷ Anton Hilbert, “Denkschrift über die ostdeutschen Bodenreform” Gräflich Douglas'sches Archiv Schloß Langenstein (1946) (Anm. 18) cited in H.-G. Merz “Bodenreform in der SBZ. Ein Bericht aus dem Jahre 1946” *Deutschland Archiv*, 11:24 (1991): 1168.

nessed what he described as crimes similar to the Nazis' *Krystallnacht* pogrom against German Jews in November 1938, "so that one could almost believe they were conceived in the same brain."⁴⁸ Dr. Hans Schlange-Schöningen, the former Commissioner for Eastern Relief (the *Osthilfe*) and chief of British farm and forest administration, visited Hilbert in Thuringia in May 1946 to observe Soviet land reform first hand. He wrote: "A new style of Nazi power rules in communist clothing. It's not a question of land reform but liquidation of the intelligentsia, just as in Russia. In two years' time, today's Russian zone showcase will be a land of absolute hunger." Indeed, soon after land reform the Soviet zone population suffered near-starvation.⁴⁹

Land reform expropriations moved quickly. By the end of November 1945 the Soviets had expropriated without compensation over one-third of the Soviet zone's agricultural and forestland, 3.3 million hectares.⁵⁰ The Party leadership kept over one million hectares as *Volkseigenengüter* (VEG), or "The People's Own Estates," distributing the balance to farm workers, industrial workers and refugees, "landpoor peasants," tenant farmers and unemployed urban workers to make a new class loyal to the Party. When the Foreign Ministers of the Four Powers met on 14 April 1947 to discuss joint land reform

⁴⁸ Anton Hilbert, "Denkschrift über die ostdeutschen Bodenreform" Gräflich Douglas'sches Archiv Schloß Langenstein (1946) (Anm. 18) cited in H.-G. Merz "Bodenreform in der SBZ. Ein Bericht aus dem Jahre 1946" *Deutschland Archiv*, 11:24 (1991): 1168. Soon after Dr. Kolter's arrest, he "died under mysterious circumstances."

⁴⁹ *Wirtschaft und Arbeit* (Essen) (17 May 1947) cited in Sopade (Executive Committee, Social Democratic Party, Germany), "Die Agrarsituation in der Ostzone," 3 (June 1948): 17.

⁵⁰ H. O. Spielke, G. Breithaupt, H. Bruggel, and H. Stand, *Ökonomik der sozialistischen Forstwirtschaft* (Berlin: VEB Deutsche Landwirtschaftsverlag, 1964).

policy, the Western Allies found to their dismay that the Soviet zone land reform was already a year-and-a-half old and irreversible.⁵¹

The Soviets and German land reform functionaries doled out small allotments averaging seven to eight hectares, too small for survival on the light soils of the North German Plain: in the words of a new peasant: “too large to die on and too small to live on.”⁵² Newly enfranchised owners were expected to join socialist cooperatives once, inevitably, the impossibility of independent management on their pitifully small allotments became clear to them.⁵³ New peasants paid roughly 200–290 marks per hectare for their land (\$430 in current value), based on the price of one to one-and-a-half tons of rye, or one year’s harvest.⁵⁴ Later East German historians qualified this price as a recovery of overhead and transfer costs: to legitimize final forced collectivization in April 1960 (the “Socialist Spring in the Countryside”) and to defend against potential future claims to actual

⁵¹. Hans Lemmel, “Der deutsche Wald in der Bodenreform,” *Allgemeine Forst- und Jagdzeitung* 125:3 (1954): 102; Ralf Neubauer, “Rückkehr der Junker?” *Die Zeit* 36 (9 September 1994): 10.

⁵². Horst Kohl, ed., *Ökonomische Geographie der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, 3rd ed. (Gotha and Leipzig: VEB Hermann Haack, 1976), 354; Konrad Merkel, *Die Agrarwirtschaft in Mitteldeutschland. 'Sozialialisierung' und Produktionsergebnisse*, (Bonn: Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen, 1963); Gerhard Seidel, Kurt Meiner, Bruno Rausch and Alfonso Thoms, *Die Landwirtschaft in der Deutsche Demokratische Republik*, (Leipzig: VEB Edition. 1962); Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (BGF), *SBZ von A-Z*. 1st edition. (Bonn: Deutscher Bundesverlag, 1953); Gerd Friedrich, et al., *Die Volkswirtschaft der DDR* Akademie für Gesellschaftswissenschaften beim ZK der SED (Berlin: Verlag die Wirtschaft, 1979); Werner Klatt, “Food and farming in Germany. II. Farming and land reform,” *International Affairs* 26:2 (April 1950): 202; Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: a history of the Soviet zone of occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), 157; Ralf Neubauer, “Rückkehr der Junker?” *Die Zeit* 36 (9 September 1994): 10.

⁵³. Ekkehard Schwartz, “Die demokratische Bodenreform, der Beginn grundlegender Veränderungen der Waldeigentums und der Forstwirtschaft im Gebiet der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik,” *Sozialistische Forstwirtschaft* 20:10 (1970): 289-293.

⁵⁴ Ten percent of the price was due by the end of 1945, the balance in goods, services, or cash within ten to twenty years. Gerhard Seidel, Kurt Meiner, Bruno Rausch and Alfonso Thoms, *Die Landwirtschaft in der Deutsche Demokratische Republik*, (Leipzig: VEB Edition. 1962), 31; Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (BGF), *SBZ von A-Z*. 1st edition. (Bonn: Deutscher Bundesverlag, 1953), 29.

ownership. Title and property rights were murky. The new land reform farms were classified as personal property and inheritable. Yet the farms were classified as “work-property” and could not be sold, leased, mortgaged, or pledged as security. The only transfer permitted, apart from inheritance, was a return to the land account, the *Bodenfonds*.⁵⁵ The new peasants’ farms and forest had neither the quality of a capital asset nor of personal property. But nor were they yet the People’s property, *Volkseigentü-mer*. Collectivization loomed to correct this. In the meantime farms, and particularly the forest, were thrown into a punishing commons.

Most new peasants got only bare land without barns, tractors and machinery, much less seed, fertilizer, or fuel. Only 16,000 of the 209,000 new peasants got houses, and only 58,000 had even primitive living quarters; the rest endured in unheated stables and outbuildings.⁵⁶ The new peasants were not only inexperienced but often strangers in their districts resented by old farmers. “New peasants,” worried Schwerin’s vice president, were “cast into an hostile social environment without any economic foundation.”⁵⁷

⁵⁵ The Soviet land reform regulations were similar to conditions in National Socialist agricultural policy and to the Nazi Farm Inheritance law. Gerd Friedrich, et al., *Die Volkswirtschaft der DDR*, Akademie für Gesellschaftswissenschaften beim ZK der SED (Berlin: Verlag die Wirtschaft, 1979): 156; Gerhard Seidel, Kurt Meiner, Bruno Rausch and Alfonso Thoms, *Die Landwirtschaft in der Deutsche Demokratische Republik*, (Leipzig: VEB Edition. 1962), 31; Arnd Bauerkamper, ““Loyale Kader”?: Neue Eliten und die SED-Gesellschaftspolitik auf dem Lande von 1945 bis zu den frühen 1960er Jahren,” *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 39 (1999): 275; Panorama DDR, *Agriculture in the German Democratic Republic: Some information about the life and work of the cooperative farmers* (Berlin: Panorama DDR, 1979).

⁵⁶ Dorothea Faber, “Entwicklung und Lage der Wohnungswirtschaft in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone, 1945–1953,” *Wirtschaftsarchiv* 8:17 (5 September 1953): 5943.

⁵⁷ Edwin Hörnle, “Ein Jahr nach der Bodenreform, Materialzusammenstellung für einen Bericht an die Sowjetische Militäradministration” (9 December 1946), Archives of the DDR Agricultural Ministry, quoted by Ulrich Kluge, historian at the Technische Universität Dresden (the TUD) in a letter to the editor, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (13 September 1994): 9, 15. Schwerin’s vice-president was Herr Möller.

Older, experienced farmers who normally would have helped their neighbors shunned the new peasants whose very presence smelled of expropriation. Any farm expropriation naturally worried farmers, as did the Party's class warfare rhetoric and demonizing of modest farmers as "kulaks." Land reform had already deeply disturbed the balance of the Soviet zone's rural communities. New and old farmers alike read *kolkhoz*, socialist farm collective, in the chaos.

As agricultural and forest experts predicted, farm production crashed with the fall 1945 harvest. Farmers brought in the 1945 harvest with short and with great difficulty. Grain and sugar beet yields plummeted 30 percent and potato production slid 22 percent in 1946, the first full year after land reform.⁵⁸ Within a year of land reform the Soviet zone population suffered from near-famine; East Germany was the only European country still rationing food in 1954, even though the population had fallen markedly since 1945.⁵⁹ Food shortages and episodic rationing lasted until May 1958, and meat and butter

⁵⁸ *Wirtschaft und Arbeit*, (Essen) (17 May 1947) cited in Sopade, "Die Agrarsituation in der Ostzone," *Querschnitt durch Politik und Wirtschaft*, (Hannover: Vorstand der Sozialdemokratischen Partei, 1948) 3 (June 1948): 17.

Soviet Zone 1946 Harvests as a Percentage of 1938 and World War Two Yields

YEAR	MAIZE % 1946 HARVEST	POTATOES % 1946 HARVEST	SUGAR BEETS % 1946 HAR- VEST	MUSTARD SEED % 1946 HARVEST
1938	56.8%	66.3%	56.2%	23.4%
1944	69.1%	82.6%	67.4%	44.6%
1940/4	63.5%	74.6%	69.5%	41.0%

⁵⁹ Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: a history of the Soviet zone of occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), 161; Heinz Kuhrig, "Demokratische Bodenreform legte den Grundstein für stetig steigende Agrarproduktion," *Neues Deutschland*, 198 (21 August 1975): 33; Wolfgang Zank, "'Junkerland in Bauernhand!' 3.3 Millionen Hektar Land wurden 1945-49 während der Bodenreform in der Sowjetzone beschlagnahmt," *Die Zeit* 42 (12 October 1990): 49-50.

rationing returned in 1961.⁶⁰ Even so, East Germany's constant regime of fixed prices, central control over the food supply, and persistent shortages were food rationing in all but name. The East German people were never truly free of rationing until the Wall fell in November 1989.

Work on land reform plots had stalled as new peasants and smaller old farmers began streaming into traditional cooperatives or quit their farms and fled west, a harbinger of population flight, the *Republikflucht* which would drain the East German Republic, threaten the state's collapse and lead to construction of the Berlin Wall in August 1961.⁶¹ With collectivization on farmers' minds, few either bothered or knew enough to prepare their fields for winter sowings of oil seed or winter wheat.⁶² There were no fall cover crops to enrich the soil and there would be no spring harvest. Worse lay in store, as Soviet soldiers spread throughout the countryside; free of Western observation, they requisitioned food, seized equipment, and drove off the few surviving farm animals.⁶³ Reparations withdrawals independent of land reform made the hunger crisis far worse in all four zones.

⁶⁰ Carl J. Friedrich and Henry Kissinger, eds., *The Soviet zone of Germany*, (New Haven: Bechtle, 1956), 466; Economic Commission for Europe, *Economic Survey of Europe in 1954* (Geneva, 1955): 49, cited in Joint Session of the Economic Reports, "Trends in economic growth, a comparison of the Western powers and the Soviet bloc" (Washington, D.C., 1955): 292. "The per capita consumption of meat, meat products, and milk remained well below pre-war levels as late as the second half of 1953.

⁶¹ Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: a history of the Soviet zone of occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), 155. The communists deeply distrusted the traditional cooperatives, the "Raffeißen cooperatives," named after a nineteenth-century agrarian policy innovator.

⁶² Anton Hilbert, "Denkschrift über die ostdeutschen Bodenreform" Gräflich Douglas'sches Archiv Schloß Langenstein (1946) (Anm. 18) cited in H.-G. Merz "Bodenreform in der SBZ. Ein Bericht aus dem Jahre 1946" *Deutschland Archiv*, 11:24 (1991): 1169.

⁶³ Werner Klatt, "Food and farming in Germany. II. Farming and land reform," *International Affairs* 26:2 (April 1950): 195.

As new peasants fled their meager plots, communist farm administrators by mid-1946 began commandeering established farmers' carefully husbanded seed, fertilizer, and fuel, and expropriating draft animals, plows, and harrows, to give to the new peasants and keep them from fleeing to the Western Allies' zones.⁶⁴ This penalized the most efficient and experienced farmers at the expense of the Soviet zone's food supply. Yet, despite pressure to collectivize, reparations withdrawals, and Party requisitions of their assets and labor, old farmers and traditional cooperatives thrived even as the socialist collectives struggled. This political embarrassment quickened the communists' resolve to push forward collectivization and abandon Stalin's "parliamentary road to socialism." In late 1947 the Social Democratic Party's news service reported: "Now that the land reform project is widely acknowledged as collapsed, old established farmers must ever more follow the same path as new peasants--*Kolchoz!* [socialist collective]. That's the prospect for farmers." (emphasis in original)⁶⁵ Memories of Stalin's forced collectivization between 1929 and 1933, and the murder of millions of Ukrainian peasants, must have heightened eastern German farmers' anxiety; every successful independent farmer in the Soviet zone had to fear that someday the Party might brand him or her as *kulak* or Junker, no matter how modest their farm or birth.

Food shortages brought land reform's discontent from the countryside to the city. As Carl J. Friedrich and Henry Kissinger observed, "Perhaps no single other factor con-

⁶⁴ Anton Hilbert, "Denkschrift über die ostdeutschen Bodenreform" Gräflich Douglas'sches Archiv Schloß Langenstein (1946) (Anm. 18) cited in H.-G. Merz "Bodenreform in der SBZ. Ein Bericht aus dem Jahre 1946" *Deutschland Archiv*, 11:24 (1991): 1169.

⁶⁵ Sopade, "Farmers in Saxony," (August 1947): 5. Reporting on farming in Saxony; Sopade, 7 (October 1947): 21.

tributed so much to the Soviet zone population's discontent with the régime as this failure to provide adequate food."⁶⁶ The Party leadership fed East Berlin during the Berlin Crisis of 1948-1949 only by requisitioning food from the countryside, reducing even the rich Magdeburg Börde farm region (with its fertile loess soils) to hard rationing and bread shortages.⁶⁷ A British correspondent reported: "The raiding and robbing of the fields for food is a regular occurrence. Some of the resources of the district are being directed to maintaining the supplies the Russians are sending to Berlin. Resentment is rising. It expressed itself at the weekend in a strike of the workers of the Schäffers and Budenberg machine works as a protest against the lack of meat and fats. Thirty arrests are stated to have been made. The Russians are searching the baggage of all travelers to Berlin and confiscating food and other goods."⁶⁸

The Soviet zone's farm economy had fallen into a wasteland after the first, meager postwar harvest of 1945-1946. People living in this once productive farmland now faced near-starvation.⁶⁹ At first, Western observers did not see the significance of Soviet destruction of eastern German farm and forest communities, perhaps blinded by the twin shibboleths of the "Junker" and "Prussia." American correspondents touring the Soviet zone countryside in late-1945 under the close scrutiny of Soviet chaperones witnessed

⁶⁶ Carl J. Friedrich and Henry Kissinger, eds., *The Soviet zone of Germany*, (New Haven: Bechtle, 1956), 3.

⁶⁷ Our Diplomatic Correspondent, "Dearth of food in Soviet zone: Demonstrations and arrests: Stocks reduced by requisitioning for Berlin," *The Times* (4 August 1948); Our Diplomatic Correspondent, "Western powers and the Moscow talks: Dearth of food," *The Times* (11 August 1948).

⁶⁸ Our Diplomatic Correspondent, "Western powers and the Moscow talks: Dearth of food," *The Times* (11 August 1948).

⁶⁹ *Wirtschaft und Arbeit* (Essen) (17 May 1947) cited in Sopade (Executive Committee, Social Democratic Party, Germany), "Die Agrarsituation in der Ostzone," 3 (June 1948): 17.

“much doubt and complaint,” although the new peasants they saw seemed content.⁷⁰ But this contentment did not survive the first harvest year, and Marxism-Leninism did not catch on in the countryside. British and American journals suddenly filled in mid-1947 with stories of food riots in the Soviet zone, of arrests of farmers and young men and women, usually leaders in socialist and conservative political and Christian youth groups, of police dogs driving gleaners from early-winter stubble-fields, and of guards shooting children scavenging for fuel for their families’ stoves in rail yard coalbunkers. Few Germans, either in the West or the East, cared for ideology after Hitler and the war. By the end of the first postwar winter of hardship, shortages, and Soviet reparations, most farmers, new and old, were increasingly critical of the Party.⁷¹ Only the most active Party cadres and followers felt loyalty to the Party--probably not more than 10 percent of the total population.⁷² The strategy of using land reform to win the rural population over to the Party might have worked if the new farms had been supported, and if the new peasants had, in fact, owned the farms.

As with reparations, land reform’s effect on the forested landscape was disproportionately harsher than on the farm landscape. The Party had seized all former Reich forest even before land reform, taking 1,600,000 hectares of the best quality and best-

⁷⁰ “Life in the Soviet zone,” *The Times* (27 December 1945): 5.

⁷¹ Erwin Kienitz, *Denkschrift über forstwirtschaftlichorganisatorischen Reformen, insbesondere des Bauernwäldes der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik: Eine Beitrag zur sozialistischen Umgestaltung der Forstwirtschaft* (Tharandt: Institut für forstliche Wirtschaftslehre, 1958). Erwin Kienitz reported in depth to the Party leadership in 1958 on the growing alienation of the rural population.

⁷² Carl J. Friedrich and Henry Kissinger, eds., *The Soviet zone of Germany*, (New Haven: Bechtle, 1956), 237.

stocked forestland by September 1945.⁷³ Soviet land reform expropriations then brought a further 1,000,000 hectares of forest, bringing a third of all forest land under the Party's control. The Party leadership distributed to new peasants less than half the forest expropriated in average parcels of one hectare, an even more unsustainable structure than farmland, and held onto even more forest proportionally than they did of farmland.⁷⁴ The forest and personal property of 12,000 forest owners were "dissolved and divided without compensation" declared the authors of the 7 October 1949 Constitution.⁷⁵ This also paradoxically (for a land reform program) cut private forest ownership from 45 to 32 percent. The Party controlled over two-thirds of the Soviet zone's forest by April 1946 while farm ownership remained perched between the commons and the collective. This control was essential to deliver the almost limitless volumes of Soviet timber reparations quotas, de-

⁷³ Ekkehard Schwartz, "Die demokratische Bodenreform, der Beginn grundlegender Veränderungen der Waldeigentums und der Forstwirtschaft im Gebiet der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik," *Sozialistische Forstwirtschaft*, 20:10 (1970): 292; E. Reichenstein, "Die forstwirtschaftliche Lage Deutschland vor und nach dem 2. Weltkrieg," *Forstarchiv* 21:1/3 (1950). In contrast, the British and American zonal governments handed management of former Reich forest, only 30 percent of the western zones' forest area, back to the individual states, the *Länder*. Both Soviet and Western zone governments, however, abolished forestry's separate ministry and brought forestry back within the Agriculture Ministry's suzerainty, a reversal of National Socialist reforms that signaled the importance of production and cash flow over capital asset growth and close-to-nature forest management throughout Germany.

⁷⁴ W. Schindler, "30 Jahre staatliche Forstwirtschaftsbetriebe--30 Jahre sozialistische Entwicklung in der Forstwirtschaft. Staatliche Forstwirtschaftsbetrieb Löbau, Löbau, D.D.R.," *Sozialistische Forstwirtschaft* 32:11 (1982): 321–23; H. O. Spielke, G. Breithaupt, H. Bruggel, and H. Stand, *Ökonomik der sozialistischen Forstwirtschaft* (Berlin: VEB Deutsche Landwirtschaftsverlag, 1964), 60. The Party distributed 500,000 hectares of forest land to new peasants.

J. Säglitz, "Die Forstwirtschaft in Ostdeutschland--Stand, Probleme, Ziele," *Forstarchiv* 61:6 (November-December 1990): 226. The Party kept 56 percent (585,000 hectares) of farm and forest land expropriated under the land reform.

⁷⁵ Edgar Tümmeler, Konrad Merkel, and Georg Blohm, *Die Agrarpolitik im Mitteldeutschland und ihre Auswirkung auf Produktion und Verbrauch landwirtschaftliche Erzeugnisse* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1969), 26; Hans Lemmel, "Der deutsche Wald in der Bodenreform," *Allgemeine Forst- und Jagdzeitung* 125:3 (1954): 139. Privately owned land over 100 ha provided 76 percent of *Bodenfonds*. Land taken from 8,000 forest owners of more than 100 hectares and 4,200 owners of less than 100 hectares. The provision of the 1949 constitutions was Article 24, Section 5. By 1 January 1950 1,050,000 ha forest had been taken, 31 percent of *Bodenfonds*. 76% was former private forest, 21% former state and local, 3% *Körperschaft* forest. Privately owned land over 100 ha provided 76 percent of *Bodenfonds*.

mands constrained only by the capacity of forced labor and impressed peasants to cut and haul the unprecedented volumes harvested.

Kurt Mantel, a leading West German forest historian and policy scholar, warned of the historical dangers of land reform for forestry: highgrading, irretrievable loss of forest and abandonment.⁷⁶ Forest destruction followed the *Osthilfe* land reforms of the early-1930s when a District Forester warned; “The many different forms of forest ownership must be preserved, principally forms of private ownership, and all available resources and planning must be directed to prevent partitioning of forests.”⁷⁷ A Soviet zone land reform administrator cited land reform’s threat to forestry: “Of particular importance, forests must be removed from expropriation. Divided peasant forests have always been the problem child of rational forest economics, and forests also have broader ecological functions which small forest management harms. Peasants came together in the previous centuries in private forest cooperatives in recognition that small peasant forest holdings can’t be managed correctly.” The private forest cooperatives traditional in Germany, however, competed with the Party’s own socialist collectives, and competed too well, drawing in many new peasants and smaller farmers as the socialist collectives languished.

Central European foresters and ecologists generally recognize 100 hectares as the absolute lower boundary for forest management—the land reform forest allotments were made small (one to one-and-a-half hectares) intentionally, to force all farmers into social-

⁷⁶ Kurt Mantel, “Forstgeschichte.” Schriftenreihe des AID (Land- und Hauswirtschaftlicher Auswertungs- und Informationsdienst) Bad Godesberg. In “Stand und Ergebnisse der forstlichen Forschung seit 1945.” Schriftenreihe des AID (1952) 144-153.

⁷⁷ Hämmerle, “Das Osthilfegesetz und seine Auswirkungen auf die Forstwirtschaft,” *Der Deutsche Forstwirt* 14 (1932): 119.

ist collectives.⁷⁸ From the first postwar days, Norman Naimark commented, “collectivization was on everyone’s mind.”⁷⁹ Hans Lemmel, Alfred Möller’s (the most influential forest ecologist of the 20th century and founder of the *Dauerwald*, “permanent forest,” school of silviculture) successor at the Forest Research Institute at Eberswalde, forecast land reform’s failure and ultimate collectivization: “It remains to be seen how long the artificial, mostly too small, capital poor and especially extremely poorly equipped new landowners can survive and the consequences the reform will have on the people’s food supply.”⁸⁰ The authors of an authoritative Social Democratic survey of Soviet zone forest management reported: “None of the small farmers could have survived on the small parcels they were given.”⁸¹ New forest owners were typically inexperienced. They stripped their allotments of valuable timber, leaving only worthless trees and inferior phenotypes behind, in destructive waves of “highgrading”: razing and then abandoning their forestland. They fell upon the forest for fuel, food and cash, prodded by their insecure sense of ownership, shortages, and hunger following land reform.

⁷⁸ Hans Lemmel, “Der deutsche Wald in der Bodenreform,” *Allgemeine Forst- und Jagdzeitung* 125:3 (1954): 107.

⁷⁹ Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: a history of the Soviet zone of occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), 162–63.

⁸⁰ Hans Lemmel, “Der deutsche Wald in der Bodenreform,” *Allgemeine Forst- und Jagdzeitung* 125:3 (1954): 3.

⁸¹ Sopade, “Die Forstwirtschaft in der Sowjetzone,” *Denkschriften, Sopadeinformationsdienst*, (Bonn: Vorstand der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, 1955): 4, 10.

The Party campaigned from the start to move farmers into socialist collectives.⁸² Land reform began as a fiction of popular will, and indeed, all farms over 100 hectare in size were seized and the land distributed to “land poor peasants,” refugees and the unemployed. The Party’s goal, however, was to allow a brief period during which new peasants would first learn loyalty to the Party, then realize that they could not survive on their own without the Party’s help, and finally, voluntarily, enter socialist collectives and mutate into workers. Propaganda promised technical training to overcome the “backwardness of peasant life” through education “in the greatest school of all, the socialist collective, while the Party leadership withheld extension help at the same time and refused credit to independent farmers to steer them into the socialist collectives.”⁸³ Social Democratic forest scientists concluded: “The granting of land reform forests deceived the peasants into believing that the Party would support the new peasants.” Yet the Party forbade foresters to instruct the peasants in management, just as Soviet “experts” set over German foresters forbade them to intervene in peasant destruction.⁸⁴

Angry at the new peasants’ refusal to accept voluntary collectivization, the Party leadership intensified its struggle against “enemy elements sabotaging land reform.” In a five-hour speech to senior Party cadres on 14 April 1948, Ulbricht demanded that farm

⁸² Ekkehard Schwartz, “Die demokratische Bodenreform, der Beginn grundlegender Veränderungen der Waldeigentums und der Forstwirtschaft im Gebiet der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik,” *Sozialistische Forstwirtschaft*, 20:10 (1970): 289–93.

⁸³ *Wirtschaft und Arbeit*, (Essen) (17 May 1947) cited in Sopade, “Die Agrarsituation in der Ostzone,” *Querschnitt durch Politik und Wirtschaft*, (Hannover: Vorstand der Sozialdemokratischen Partei, 1948) 3 (June 1948): 17.

⁸⁴ Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (BGF), *SBZ von A-Z*. 1st edition. (Bonn: Deutscher Bundesverlag, 1953), 48.

production increase to “industrial levels,” foreshadowing Industrial Production Methods of the 1970s and 1980s and the remaking of farm and forest as “factories on the land.”⁸⁵ At the September 1948 Party conference Ulbricht, the Soviet zone Party boss, introduced his “New Course,” demanding intensified “class warfare tactics” in the countryside and faster collectivization of private farmland while ominously branding reluctant farmers as “rich peasants and *kulaks*.”⁸⁶

The Party raised the delivery quotas of larger farmers even above those set for comparable farmers in Russia to drive them into socialist collectives languishing from the lack of experienced farmers.⁸⁷ These quotas were intended to break farmers holding more than twenty hectares, particularly medium-sized farmers holding over fifty hectares, now “*Großbauern*” or “*Kulaks*.” Delivery failures meant losing one’s land or arrest and sentencing to prison.⁸⁸ Because the Party could not distinguish between “saboteurs and profiteers” and honest farmers, the Party punished uniformly for short deliveries.⁸⁹ Fear of collectivization, arrest, and the concentration camps led farmers to advertise in newspa-

⁸⁵ Wilma Merkel and Stephanie Wahl, *Das geplünderte Deutschland. Die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung im östlichen Teil Deutschlands von 1949–1989*, 2nd ed. (Bonn: Institut für Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft, 1991), 29; Mike Dennis, *German Democratic Republic: Politics, economics and society* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1991), 23. Ulbricht made his speech to the Party’s Hochschule élites.

⁸⁶ Wilma Merkel, and Stephanie Wahl, *Das geplünderte Deutschland. Die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung im östlichen Teil Deutschlands von 1949–1989*, 2nd ed. (Bonn: Institut für Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft, 1991), 29. Ulbricht made his speech at the 16 September 1948 Party Conference.

⁸⁷ *Wirtschaft und Arbeit*, (Essen) (17 May 1947) cited in “Die Agrarsituation in der Ostzone,” *Querschnitt durch Politik und Wirtschaft*, (Hannover: Vorstand der Sozialdemokratischen Partei, 1948) 3 (June 1948): 17. “Large farmers” meant independent farmers with twenty to one hundred hectares.

⁸⁸ Edwin Hörnle, “Ein Jahr nach der Bodenreform, Materialzusammenstellung für einen Bericht an die Sowjetische Militäradministration” (9 December 1946), Archives of the DDR Agricultural Ministry, quoted by Ulrich Kluge, historian at the Technische Universität Dresden (the TUD) in a letter to the editor, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (13 September 1994): 15; Sopade, “KZs in der Ostzone”⁵ (August 1947): 66.

⁸⁹ Paul Merker, editorial, *Neues Deutschland*, (19 December 1946).

pers for seed and produce to fill their quotas.⁹⁰ And it fueled desertion and flight to the west, deepening the historic population deficit east of the Elbe River and ultimately threatening the survival of the East German state.

The Party also reversed forest enclosure, reopening the forest to livestock grazing, fallen wood gathering and litter raking, artifacts of the medieval low forest and a major cause of forest decline.⁹¹ The withdrawal of forest guards made the effects of illegal cutting for firewood, poaching and grazing of livestock even worse.⁹² Thus no one could expect peasants to follow sound management practices. Dire need drove refugees, new peasants and small farmers to exploit their forests to survive.⁹³ Once land reform smashed apart the large forest management units, the small, isolated allotments degenerated into an unregulated commons which the new owners despoiled. New peasants reasonably feared imminent collectivization, so they took their value while they could.⁹⁴ As a result, most of the forestland doled out in the Soviet land reform was under “socialist manage-

⁹⁰ *Wirtschaft und Arbeit*, (Essen) (17 May 1947) cited in Sopade, “Die Agrarsituation in der Ostzone,” *Querschnitt durch Politik und Wirtschaft*, (Hannover: Vorstand der Sozialdemokratischen Partei, 1948) 3 (June 1948): 17. The Party formally allowed peasants to sell surplus produce on the free market “after fulfillment of their delivery obligations,” but the Party increased quotas once they were met, constantly absorbing surpluses and killing farmers’ incentives to produce more food.

⁹¹ Sopade, “Die Forstwirtschaft in der Sowjetzone,” *Denkschriften, Sopadeinformationsdienst*, (Bonn: Vorstand der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, 1955): 29.

⁹² Sopade, “Die Forstwirtschaft in der Sowjetzone,” *Denkschriften, Sopadeinformationsdienst*, (Bonn: Vorstand der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, 1955): 29.

⁹³ Sopade, “Die Forstwirtschaft in der Sowjetzone,” *Denkschriften, Sopadeinformationsdienst*, (Bonn: Vorstand der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, 1955): 10.

⁹⁴ Erwin Kienitz, *Denkschrift über forstwirtschaftlichorganisatorischen Reformen, insbesondere des Bauernwäldes der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik: Eine Beitrag zur sozialistischen Umgestaltung der Forstwirtschaft* (Tharandt: Institut für Forstliche Wirtschaftslehre, 1958). Farmers’ fear of collectivization permeates this confidential study of farmers’ attitudes in the mid-1950s.

ment,” either in state forests or in socialist collectives by 1949, or high graded by new peasant owners with Soviet encouragement.⁹⁵

Land reform created a socialist tabula rasa in the countryside. As the Soviets expropriated farm and forest, they systematically destroyed property registers, maps, and estate records, liquidating the institutional memory of traditional rural society under a decree “providing for the complete destruction of all records of previous land ownership.”⁹⁶ The editors of *Neues Deutschland*, the Party’s “official organ,” reported in August 1946: “Old land registers, titles deeds, and other documents of those large Junker estates that land reform divided up were recently destroyed as the last evidence of the power of the old feudal overlords. The unencumbered transfer of the large Junker estates to new peasants has now ushered in a new age.”⁹⁷ As surveyors ran transects for the new, fractured farm and forest landscape, they obliterated existing boundary markers, cultural symbols that had sparked the German conservation movement a century before. Tractors tore apart hedgerows dividing ancient fields while axes felled alleys of pleached linden and poplar. Destruction of legal and cultural records made land reform irreversible in the event of the German reunification that many assumed was imminent; it also cleared the

⁹⁵ Sopade, “Die Forstwirtschaft in der Sowjetzone,” *Denkschriften, Sopadeinformationsdienst*, (Bonn: Vorstand der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, 1955): 8, 9, 10.

⁹⁶ Beate Ruhm von Oppen, *Documents on Germany under occupation, 1945–1954* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), 148; Ekkehard Schwartz, “Die demokratische Bodenreform, der Beginn grundlegender Veränderungen der Waldeigentums und der Forstwirtschaft im Gebiet der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik,” *Sozialistische Forstwirtschaft* 20:10 (1970): 292.

⁹⁷ Beate Ruhm von Oppen, *Documents on Germany under occupation, 1945–1954* (London: Oxford University Press, 1955), 148.

landscape for simple, flat social and ecological structures which conformed to Marxist-Leninist precepts.

The Soviets destroyed architecture, landscape, and memorials to liquidate memory, custom, and culture. More than 10,000 old manor houses, barns, and stables were leveled in 1947 as “symbols of a feudal age.”⁹⁸ The Party forbade new peasants to share management within traditional cooperatives, or to join cooperatively on the foundations of the former estate, perhaps with the former owner as manager. Not only the physical structure of traditional architecture was abhorrent to the Soviet and German communists, but the idea of traditional cooperatives competing with socialist collectives—competing all too successfully—was more than infuriating; it was “sabotage.” The Party leadership ruled: “any attempt at collective or communal management is sabotage of land reform!”⁹⁹ And they were right. The Party leadership could not permit the form of the old estates to survive nor could they allow the rhythms and patterns of the old landscape and communities to endure. The traditional cooperatives (in which many smaller farmers sought shelter) not only subverted Lenin’s *Bündnispolitik*, but also looked suspiciously like old wine in new bottles. So a thriving Thuringian cooperative was told abruptly in spring 1946 that its members would get no seed, a stratagem to force successful farm cooperative members into a socialist collective.¹⁰⁰ The communists would not allow any challenge to

⁹⁸ Carl J. Friedrich and Henry Kissinger, eds., *The Soviet zone of Germany*, (New Haven: Bechtle, 1956), 445.

⁹⁹ Wolfgang Zank, “‘Junkerland in Bauernhand!’ 3.3 Millionen Hektar Land wurden 1945–49 während der Bodenreform in der Sowjetzone beschlagnahmt,” *Die Zeit* 42 (12 October 1990): 49.

¹⁰⁰ *Wirtschaft und Arbeit*, (Essen) (17 May 1947) cited in Sopade, “Die Agrarsituation in der Ostzone,” *Querschnitt durch Politik und Wirtschaft*, (Hannover: Vorstand der Sozialdemokratischen Partei, 1948) 3 (June 1948): 17.

their political power or allow the cooperatives' successes to thwart the destruction of their class enemies. Land reform's goal was the reordering of rural communities--people, the economy, and ecosystems--to fit Marxist-Leninist norms, not efficiency or equity.

Human rights abuses infused the Soviet land reform. The Party branded farmers who resisted collectivization as "reactionary peasants," enemies of progress hobbled by a feudal attachment to "non-democratic, old production relations."¹⁰¹ In fall 1945 a Soviet judge condemned a new peasant and Party member charged with "sabotage of land reform" to three years' imprisonment in a former Nazi concentration camp.¹⁰² Special Soviet courts condemned seventeen and eighteen-year-old sons of recalcitrant farmers to forced labor camps in the Soviet Union, often on the pretext that the boys were former Hitler Youth.¹⁰³ Army and Party police routinely picked up students, often youth leaders in one of the "bourgeois bloc parties" or the church, off the street or arrested them at home in front of their parents.¹⁰⁴ Soviet judges condemned these young men and women to prison for "political reeducation" or to forced labor camps in the Soviet Union. The Berlin newspaper *Telegraf* reported the Party's harassment of farmers in Kreis Niederbaranim who petitioned local administrators to stop conscription for forced labor, often to

¹⁰¹ "Bauern sichern die Ernährung: Antifascisten aufs Dorf," *Neues Deutschland*, (1 June 1946).

¹⁰² The Mühleberg concentration camp.

¹⁰³ SOPADE, "KZs in der Ostzone," *Querschnitt durch Politik und Wirtschaft* #5 (August 1947): 77.

¹⁰⁴ Our Special Correspondent, "Arrests of German children: Protest by parents," *The Times* (25 June 1946): 4; Our Special Correspondent "Arrests in the Russian zone: German parents' complaints, re-education motive," *The Times* (19 August 1946): 3; Our Own Correspondent, "Youth group arrests in eastern Berlin: 'Subversive propaganda,'" *The Times* (16 June 1949): 3; Our Own Correspondent, "Arrests by Russians in Germany: Christian youth leaders," *The Times* (24 March 1947): 5; Our Own Correspondent, "Soviet arrests in Berlin: 'Fascist activities' alleged," *The Times* (29 March 1947).

harvest timber to fill Soviet reparations quotas.¹⁰⁵ “A young man, known in the district as a good communist, told the Party officials boldly, ‘I’ll decide who comes on my land [*auf meinem Grund und Boden*].’ The mayor retorted, ‘*Mein Lieber*, you [using the intimate, and in this context condescending, “*du*” form] are only a *Kolchose*. We decide what you must do and what is permitted. You have your fields to farm, and you will plant and harvest what we tell you to.’”¹⁰⁶ Ownership may have been murky in September 1945, but by 1946 the conundrum was resolved: the Party controlled all farm and forest land.

Edwin Hörnle, the first head of Soviet zone Department of Agriculture and Forestry and President of the German Central Organization for Agriculture and Forestry, made a secret report to the Soviet Military Government at the end of 1946 on land reform problems. He cited pervasive crisis: the failure to plan systematically for settlement and support of new farmers, the small, non-sustainable size of land reform farms and the “incorrect” partitioning of forestland. As he reported, Red Army and Party functionaries ignored the land reform statutes and regulations, laws mandating that the democratically elected Land Reform Commission oversee land reform, the impartial division of expropriated farm inventories and equipment, and humane treatment and fair notification to expropriated farmers. Land reform functionaries also regularly seized farms under the

¹⁰⁵ Managers of the collectives continued to commandeer farmers’ labor to help harvest wood for reparations into the early 1950s. The efficiency of using farm labor to help with forestry operations pleased management but was a constant source of irritation to farmers and local managers operating within the narrow constraints of the Plan. See also: Edwin Hörnle, *Volksstimme*, (Chemnitz) (3 July 1947) cited in Sopade, “Landwirtschaft in der Ostzone,” *Querschnitt durch Politik und Wirtschaft*, (Hannover: Vorstand der Sozialdemokratischen Partei, 1947) (December 1947): 9.

¹⁰⁶ Telegraf, “Bloß ein Kolchose” *Telegraf*, (Berlin) (8 October 1947) cited in Sopade, “Landwirtschaft in der Ostzone” *Querschnitt durch Politik und Wirtschaft*, (Hannover: Vorstand der Sozialdemokratischen Partei, 1948) (February 1948): 40.

official low water mark of 100 hectares, one of a long list of charges.¹⁰⁷ Soviet officials did not dispute Hörnle's grim record. They ordered an immediate halt to further discussion, warning Hörnle to silence and forbidding public discussion.

British and American early occupation and food policies was hardly more enlightened than the Soviets'. Western Germans suffered from near-famine and disease worse even than in the notorious years after the First World War due to the constraints forced on the rural economy and German recovery by the U.S. policy directive JCS 1067.¹⁰⁸ JCS 1067's authors sought to maximize farm production within the constraints of a Germany that could not produce even pre-Hitler levels of tractors or fertilizer, nor import machinery, seed or fertilizer, nor export surpluses, all with the intent of reducing the U.S. zone to its post-Versailles Treaty, relatively primitive, condition, and its people to a grim, "middle

¹⁰⁷ Edwin Hörnle, "Ein Jahr nach der Bodenreform, Materialzusammenstellung für einen Bericht an die sowjetische Militäradministration," (9 December 1946), Archives of the DDR Agricultural Ministry, quoted by Ulrich Kluge, historian at the Technische Universität Dresden, in a letter to the editor, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (13 September 1994): 15.

¹⁰⁸ Michael L. Hoffman, "The harvest in Europe is hunger once more," *The New York Times* (21 September 1947). Hofmann quotes the head of the Food and Agricultural Organization, Sir John Boyd Orr, "Next winter and spring many in Europe will be worse fed than they were during the war."

U.S. Department of State, "Directive to Commander-in-Chief of United States Forces of Occupation Regarding the Military Government of Germany; April 1945 (JCS 1067)," paragraphs 16, 18, Department of State: Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945, vol. 3, European Advisory Commission; Austria; Germany, p. 484. <http://usa.usembassy.de/etexts/ga3-450426.pdf> (accessed 2005.08.21)

European” standard of living--“pastoralizing” the German economy.¹⁰⁹ Oddly, Soviet land reform was radically materialistic, designed to recreate farms and forest as “factories on the land,” while early postwar U.S. policy was determined to drive the western Germans back almost to the Pleistocene--yet the result of Soviet and U.S. policies were the same: near-starvation. However, U.S. authors of JCS 1067 anticipated that surplus Soviet zone food production would support civilians in the American zone, so their shortsighted policies of slashing fertilizer and tractor production seems more misguided than malevolent.

The radical and destructive qualities of Soviet land reform and Soviet persecution of farmers, together with the near-collapse of all Germany’s food supply with the halt of normal shipments from East Germany’s traditional food surplus to the west, posed a direct threat to Allied interests and alerted Western policymakers to the looming Soviet threat to their security. Faced with growing U.S. popular concern at the suffering in Germany and the growing threat from a Soviet Union eager to take advantage of the crisis in the British and American zones, President Truman sent 73 year-old former President Herbert Hoover to survey Europe’s food needs and report on the emerging humanitarian catastrophe in the Western zones in the wake of JCS 1067. Hoover was a brilliant

¹⁰⁹ U.S. Department of State, “Directive to Commander-in-Chief of United States Forces of Occupation Regarding the Military Government of Germany; April 1945 (JCS 1067),” paragraphs 21-22, 27, Department of State: Foreign Relations of the United States, 1945, vol. 3, European Advisory Commission; Austria; Germany, p. 484. <http://usa.usembassy.de/etexts/ga3-450426.pdf> (accessed 2005.08.21). JCS 1067 prescribed for the U.S. zone commanders, even as it slashed German production of farm machinery and particularly fertilizer:

27. You will require the Germans to use all means at their disposal to maximize agricultural output and to establish as rapidly as possible effective machinery for the collection and distribution of agricultural output.
28. You will direct the German authorities to utilize large-landed estates and public lands in a manner which will facilitate the accommodation and settlement of Germans and others or increase agricultural output.

choice: a man of exceptional integrity and competence with unparalleled experience, credibility and success in international relief work as head of the Committee for Relief in Belgium after World War One and of the American Relief Administration (1921-1923), where he organized relief for Europe and the Soviet Union with equal success. General Lucius Clay, who effectively ran the U.S. zone as Eisenhower's deputy military governor until he assumed the full title and command of U.S. forces in Europe on 15 March 1947, recalled Hoover's pivotal role in engaging U.S. resources to reverse the near-famine and epidemic conditions in the western zones and in fixing U.S. bipartisan resolve to confront Soviet force; "Hoover came back with the recommendations that we supply food for Western Europe, including West Germany, and Mr. Truman backed him completely. If it hadn't been for this we would have had mass starvation."¹¹⁰

Hoover reported in February 1947 that German conditions were "the worst modern civilization has seen, the (people living at) lowest level known in a 100 years of human history."¹¹¹ The western German civilian population was near starvation, disease and mortality were below third world levels. The German people were in despair and

¹¹⁰ Richard D. McKinzie, ed., "Oral history interview with Lucius D. Clay," New York, New York, 16 July 1974 (Independence, Missouri: Harry S. Truman Library, 1979) <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/clayl.htm> (accessed 2005.08.21). General Clay commented on problems with JCS 1067, and how U.S. commanders circumvented it;

JCS-1067 would have been extremely difficult to operate under. If you followed it literally you couldn't have done anything to restore the German economy. If you couldn't restore the German economy you could never hope to get paid for the food that they had to have. By virtue of these sort of things it was modified constantly; not officially, but by allowing this deviation and that deviation, et cetera. We began to slowly wipe out JCS-1067. When we were ordered to put in a currency reform this was in direct contravention of a provision of JCS-1067 that prohibited us from doing anything to improve the German economy. It was an unworkable policy and it wasn't changed just without any discussion or anything by those of us who were in Germany. It was done by gradual changes in its provision and changes of cablegrams, conferences, and so on.

¹¹¹ Herbert Hoover, "Text of Hoover mission's findings on the food requirements of Germany," *The New York Times* (28 February 1947).

many British and American policymakers saw that the chaos and near-famine in the western zones fueled Soviet propaganda and demands for central planning: a direct Soviet role in the western German economy and politics. Hoover carried the core of the Republican Party with him in his campaign for massive American aid to halt the deepening humanitarian crisis in western Germany, paving the way to bipartisan support for Secretary of State George C. Marshall's call for U.S. support for European reconstruction, including Germany, the Marshall Plan, in an address at Harvard University on 5 June 1947.¹¹²

Yet communist propagandists still used the example of Soviet zone land reform to court western opinion and attack the British and Americans. When the British Military Government was forced to reduce rations in July 1946 (a consequence of Soviet stoppages of food shipments to the West despite their Potsdam commitments) the Party press attacked the British as "*Volksfremde*" ("enemies of the people"), asserting; "starvation of the Germans is a deliberate Anglo-American policy."¹¹³ Western administrators and politicians, meanwhile, struggled to sustain even near-starvation diets in their zones—resources that should have flowed from surplus food production in the Soviet zone, or been paid for by German exports. The editors of *Neues Deutschland* stated late in 1946 that only through Soviet-style land reform and "socialist production relations" could the western population be fed; "The hunger crisis in the West is due principally to the fact that, with the exception of the German Communist Party, western German parties, politicians

¹¹² President Harry S. Truman signed the European Recovery Program into law on 3 April 1948.

¹¹³ *Neues Deutschland's* (28 July 1946) editors' comments on an *Hamburger Volkszeitung* (17 July 1946) article on British zone ration level reductions, Despite the great agricultural and fisheries wealth of the British zone, reported the *Neues Deutschland* writer, "hunger is turning into starvation." Intentional starvation was a frequent charge against the British and American in *Neues Deutschland*. Our Own Correspondent, "£40,750,000 Spent on Western Zone," *The Times* (26 May 1947).

and bureaucrats have failed to demand the thoroughgoing measures [Soviet land reform] we have here in the East. The Western press admits that the care of the peoples' daily bread remains in the hands of the bourgeoisie—more precisely said, in the hands of Junkers, corrupt markets, Nazi farm administrators and reactionary bureaucrats. The security of the workers daily bread is in the first instance a political question.” (emphasis in original)¹¹⁴ The Soviets could not permit a unified Germany within its 1937 borders as long as independent farm and forest land persisted in the western zones; they demanded an ecological and economic revolution in the western German countryside matching the destruction in the Soviet zone--and the liquidation of the Party's political enemies in the western German countryside. Furthermore, Germany would recover the Oder-Neiße territories only “when in all Germany, West and East, internal political conditions are unmistakably democratic, antifascist, and anti-chauvinist”--when Germany was unified under Soviet control.¹¹⁵

One of the “reactionary bureaucrats” targeted was Dr. Hans Schlange-Schöningen (1886–1960), former commissioner for the *Osthilfe* in the late-Weimar era. The Nazis had attacked him as an “agrarian Bolshevik” for breaking up bankrupt large estates and distributing land to poor farmers and the unemployed: radical conservative and Nazi op-

¹¹⁴ “Nur Demokratie kann die Hungerkrise im Westen überwinden,” *Neues Deutschland*, (26 Nov 1946).

¹¹⁵ “Die SED zur Grenzfrage,” *Neues Deutschland* (19 September 1946): 3; “Nur Demokratie kann die Hungerkrise im Westen überwinden,” *Neues Deutschland* (26 November 1946); Max Fechner, “Klarheit in der Ostfrage!” *Neues Deutschland* (14 September 1946): 1.

position to the *Osthilfe* had sparked the fall of the Brüning government, the last democratically elected government before Hitler.¹¹⁶

Schlange-Schöningen survived the war and Nazi prisons to become a key farm reformer and critic of Soviet zone land reform, aided by his experience as the Reichskommissar for the *Osthilfe* and his impeccable anti-Nazi credentials. Schlange-Schöningen's demand for an independent, mixed farm economy in the Soviet zone as well as in the western zones threatened the Party's legitimacy. So the *Neues Deutschland's* editors attacked him with broadsides such as "Schlange-Schöningen Must Go!" deploying rhetoric similar to the Nazis' and militarists'. No longer an "agrarian Bolshevik," Schlange-Schöningen now emerged in the Soviet zone press as an "agrarian monopolist."¹¹⁷

Farm and forest owners fled to the West in reaction to Soviet control and harassment. By mid-1947, 1,166 new peasants in Brandenburg had abandoned their farms and forest. Two-and-a-half years later over twenty-two percent of land reform farmers had fled to western Germany to escape the inflexible delivery quotas and their heavy debt to

¹¹⁶ General Kurt von Schleicher (1882–1934), an army major general and political intriguer, manipulated Germany's aging president, Paul von Hindenburg (1847–1934), into dismissing Chancellor Heinrich Brüning (1885–1970) on 30 May 1932, ending the Weimar Republic. Six months later, on 30 January 1933, Hitler outmaneuvered and seized the chancellorship from von Schleicher in the Nazi *Machtergreifung*. S.S. assassins murdered von Schleicher on 30 January 1934, the "Night of the Long Knives."

¹¹⁷ *Neues Deutschland* filled in the years between 1945 and 1947 with attacks on Schlange-Schöningen's politics, on his aristocratic heritage, and his protection of "Junker interests." Following are typical: "Herr Schlange will den Spuren verwischen," *Neues Deutschland* (24 October 1946); "Nur Demokratie kann die Hungerkrise im Westen überwinden," *Neues Deutschland* (26 November 1946); "Schlange-Schöningen muß gehen!" *Neues Deutschland* (30 November 1946); "Der Weg Schlange-Schöningen: Zweierlei Maß für Umsiedler," *Neues Deutschland* (29 December 1946).

the state.¹¹⁸ By 1950, the State had taken back 20 percent of the new farms. A further thirty percent of all land reform recipients, 60,000 farmers, had abandoned their farms by March 1952.¹¹⁹ Fear of collectivization and “a fundamental distrust of the Party” drove abandonment, as a secret internal report advised the State Planning Commission in 1958.¹²⁰ Acknowledging the serious threat *Republikflucht* and abandonment posed to the Party’s support, in 1946 the Party called a Land Reform Conference in Berlin to introduce urgent “*Aktion*” to settle politically reliable, “active antifascists in the most reactionary districts.” The Party evicted farm families from their houses and farms, and forced them to hand over everything they owned to these loyal “*Aktivists*.”¹²¹ The “active antifascists,” however, were even less successful at farming than the new peasants. Soon even these politically reliable activists were also fleeing the Republic.

The Party leadership responded to *Republikflucht* just as it reacted to the crisis in the rural economy: it decreed that women must have more than two children. Premier

¹¹⁸ Hans Herbert Götz, “Als der Klassenkampf in der DDR begann. Die Bodenreform vor 40 Jahren,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 206 (6 September 1985): 13. Erwin Kienitz, in *Denkschrift über forstwirtschaftlichorganisatorischen Reformen, insbesondere des Bauernwäldes der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik: Eine Beitrag zur sozialistischen Umgestaltung der Forstwirtschaft* (Tharandt: Institut für Forstliche Wirtschaftslehre, 1958), also reflected the great practical difficulties facing small farmers and forest owners in the 1940s and 1950s.

¹¹⁹ Arnd Bauerkamper, “‘Loyale Kader’? Neue Eliten und die SED-Gesellschaftspolitik auf dem Lande von 1945 bis zu den frühen 1960er Jahren,” *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte*, 39 (1999) 265-298, p. 284
Norman M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: a history of the Soviet zone of occupation, 1945-1949* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1995), 155. “Some 10,000 new peasants, according to Soviet reports, abandoned the land altogether. In the worst case, Mecklenburg, nearly 20 percent of the new peasants left their settlements between 1945 and 1949.”

¹²⁰ Erwin Kienitz, *Denkschrift über forstwirtschaftlichorganisatorischen Reformen, insbesondere des Bauernwäldes der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik: Eine Beitrag zur sozialistischen Umgestaltung der Forstwirtschaft* (Tharandt: Institut für Forstliche Wirtschaftslehre, 1958).

¹²¹ “Bauern sichern die Ernährung: Antifascisten aufs Dorf,” *Neues Deutschland*, (1 June 1946). The Land Reform Conference was held on 21–22 February 1946 in Berlin.

Otto Grotewohl presented the “Law for the Protection of Mothers and Children and for Women’s Rights” (27 September 1950) to the People’s Chamber (the *Volkskammer*), declaring; “The two-children habit is the practice of a dying population.” The law proclaimed “the duty of the progressive Soviet zone family to bear enough offspring to provide adequate manpower” for the state.¹²² Not only farms and forests were to be remade as “factories on the land”--human reproduction itself would be steered as part of the Party’s uniform template for all economic and biological activity.

Soviet reparations, although naked in their purpose and lacking the democratic aura which land reform enjoyed at first, worked in concert with land reform to smash traditional social, political and ecological structures in the countryside and secure political power for the Soviets--as well as near-cash resources. Farm reparations were as onerous as industrial reparations. Yet, as in land reform, the Party singled out the forest landscape for disproportionate damage. Part of this is due to timber’s near-cash, hard currency status in a global market short particularly in forest products. The most damaging form of reparations are cash reparations, a lesson learned from the Versailles Treaty; timber reparations were undoubtedly the most lucrative reparations the Soviets seized, as well as most damaging to the forest.

Red Army officers charged with meeting the reparations deliveries were in no doubt as to Soviet priorities. When timber reparations deliveries faltered in the first six months of 1948, the Soviet military administration issued an edict holding key Soviet officers personally responsible. Reparations, the edict declared, had the “top priority” of all

¹²² Carl J. Friedrich and Henry Kissinger, editors, *The Soviet zone of Germany*, HRAF-34 Harvard-1, section 1, (New Haven and Esslingen: Bechtle, 1956) 384.

Soviet policy in Germany. Timber reparations yielded the maximum cash value of all withdrawals and the Soviets would not be denied.¹²³ Land reform, with its historic place in German political discourse, was of course far more popular than reparations at first, until their similar results became clear.

The Soviet focus on reparations withdrawals, and their indifference to hunger in their zone, puzzled Western leaders. The London *Times*' Berlin correspondent marveled at the central role reparations played in Soviet policy and the opportunism that limited Soviet long-term strategic interests, writing: "The only discernable policy of the Soviet occupation--namely, that the Russian zone should be exploited for Russia's benefit, regardless of German interests and of what on a longer view might have seemed to be Russian interests also--has been carried farther than had been thought probable or profitable."¹²⁴ Bruno Gleitze also marked the opportunism in Soviet policy: "Any policy seemed correct (to the Soviets) as long as it revived the German economy and made possible the withdrawal of reparations."¹²⁵ Stalin designed reparations to compensate the So-

¹²³ Edward R. Morrow, "Reparations lag in East Germany: Russian officials are warned to let nothing interfere with deliveries to Soviet," *The New York Times* (17 October 1948).

Undated speech by a senior Soviet zone official, possibly Colonel Sergei Tulpanov, between the end of August and the beginning of September 1947. ZPA NL 36/734 Bl 347–362 quoted in Rolf Badstubner and Wilfried Loth, eds., *Wilhelm Pieck--Aufzeichnungen zur Deutschland Politik, 1945–1953* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1994), 162. An unidentified senior Soviet zone official, possibly Tulpanov, declared in an internal memorandum that reparations withdrawals were the Soviets' primary policy in Germany, followed by the creation of Soviet Joint Stock Companies, the notorious *Sowjetische Aktiengesellschaften*, or "SAGs," which ran eastern German factories to produce exclusively for the Soviet economy. "Without resolution of these two issues [reparations and the SAG]," the author concluded: "there can be no democratization of eastern Germany. But how can we explain to the German worker the significance of the SAGs?"

¹²⁴ Our Berlin Correspondent, "In the Russian Zone," *The Times* (25 September 1947): 5.

¹²⁵ Bruno Gleitze, "Zielsetzung und Mittel der sowjetzonalen Wirtschaftspolitik bis zur gegenwärtigen Krisensituation," Speech to the Working Group of German Economists Research Institute. Cited in Sopade, "Die sowjetzonale Wirtschaftspolitik," #937, (September 1953): 41.

viet Union for its grievous war losses, to pay for reconstruction in the Soviet Union, to reduce Germany's "war potential," but mostly to advance Soviet power at the British and Americans' expense. Yet in the final analysis the material benefits of reparations were swamped by the counter-reaction his harsh policies sparked in his former Allies and the German people.

The Allies agreed at Potsdam to consider Soviet reparations demands of \$10 billion, \$100 billion in 2002 terms, by taking only fixed assets from each zone. But the Potsdam limits to reparations, never formally ratified, were irrelevant to Soviet withdrawals, which were "as severe as could be devised and tolerated" and more than gross investment in the economy between 1945 and 1954.¹²⁶ The British and Americans recalled the disastrous consequences of the Versailles Treaty's cash reparations of 132 billion gold marks (\$34 billion in 1947 value) and wanted to limit reparations to fixed assets and to make them "short and sharp." Although the three principal Allies (Russia, Britain, and the United States) agreed at Yalta to bring Germany down to a "middle-European standard for some time," echoing the Morgenthau Plan and the goals of JCS 1067, the

¹²⁶ Wolfgang F. Stolper and Karl W. Roskamp, *The structure of the East German economy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1960), 5; Stephen F. Frowen, "The economy of the German Democratic Republic," in *Honecker's Germany*, ed. David Childs (London; Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1985), 36; Jörg Roesler, "The rise and fall of the planned economy in the German Democratic Republic, 1945–1989," *German History* 9:1 (February 1991): 46; Wilma Merkel and Stephanie Wahl, *Das geplünderte Deutschland. Die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung im östlichen Teil Deutschlands von 1949–1989*, 2nd ed. (Bonn: Institut für Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft, 1991), 16; Bundesminister für innerdeutsche Beziehungen, ed., *D.D.R.-Handbuch*, table 1, "Reparations and other expenses in the Soviet zone and East Germany between 1945 and 1953," vol. 2, M-Z (Cologne, 1985). Estimates of total reparations cost through 1953 run between DM66 billion (US\$119 billion in 2002) and DM120 billion (US\$216 billion in 2002), overwhelming for an economy with a 1950 gross industrial product of only DM75 billion.

Americans and British argued that the Allies could not risk the political chaos that followed from Versailles' punitive cash reparations.¹²⁷

The western Allies feared that cash reparations, such as timber reparations (the form Molotov and Stalin favored) not only would slow global economic recovery by suffocating the German economy, but create suffering and economic hardship that could only favor the communists. The Soviets, as they did with the Potsdam agreements about coordinating land reform and forest management, ignored British and American cautions and Potsdam's limits. The Soviets did not see a difference between cash and fixed asset reparations, except that cash reparations were far more valuable and efficient than shipping German plants and factories to the Soviet Union: much better to take the goods, not the plant and equipment.¹²⁸ And the chaos which followed in the trail of the Red Army reparations teams roving across western Germany could only advance Soviet political influence and popular demand for central planning.

Cash reparations, also known as "reparations from current production," were the Soviets preferred form of reparations. Most of the fixed asset reparations taken-- factories, machinery and machine tools, locomotives and tractors, railroad rails--were often wasted, left to rust in vast yards along the Urals. The Soviets also took many thousands of German civilians to the Gulag after the war, as well as holding onto at least 890,000 former German POWs in Soviet forced labor camps, a portion of the two to three

¹²⁷ Our Diplomatic Correspondent, "Fixing the German reparation," *The Times* (19 June 1945).

¹²⁸ The Soviet Stock Companies, *Sowjetische Aktiengesellschaften* (SAG), were formed on 30 October 1945 through the Soviet military government's (SMAD) Orders 124 and 126 of 31 October 1945. The Soviets took more than one-quarter of German industrial production for export to the Soviet Union.

million German POWs unaccounted for in May 1945: slavery in all but name, but also a vicious form of cash reparations.¹²⁹ Yet no material form of cash reparations was as valuable to the Soviets as German timber, sold into a surging global market of rising prices, accounted for in low, 1939 fixed mark prices, and, best of all, paid ex-dock in U.S. dollars as agreed at Potsdam. Forest reparations combined the worst features of fixed asset and cash reparations, stripping production out of the local economy without payment and slashing capital asset values, as timber is both real property as well as a critical raw material.¹³⁰

Timber markets, and markets for most other basic commodities, exploded in the postwar economic environment of released demand and shortages. The global economy until early 1948 was desperately short of everything, particularly basic raw materials-- food, coal, steel, and timber. Population problems and perceptions of uncontrolled population growth fueled a Malthusian gloom as demand seemed to grow faster than food production. After food, basic raw materials were in greatest demand. Timber was next to brown coal and scrap metal in importance, and the Soviets “took everything from the forest which could be turned into hard currency or other value.”¹³¹ The Germans desperately needed pit props to rebuild coal mines, and railroad ties, “sleepers,” to mend the

¹²⁹ Vyacheslav Mikhaylovich Molotov, quoted in the Sozialdemokratische Pressedienst (Hannover) (21 August 1947).

¹³⁰ Roland Barth, interview by author, Eberswalde, 20 March 1991. Dr. Roland Barth, East Germany’s senior forest statistician, estimated that the cut for reparations and fuelwood was as high as 25 million cubic meters each year.

¹³¹ “Report on reparations,” *Telegraf*, (Berlin) (7 March 1949) cited in Sopade, “Raubbau an den Ostzonen-Wäldern,” (Hannover: Vorstand der Sozialdemokratischen Partei, 1949) (April 1949): 10; Sopade, “Die Forstwirtschaft in der Sowjetzone,” *Denkschriften, Sopadeinformationsdienst*, (Bonn: Vorstand der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, 1955): 15.

broken rail lines.¹³² The economy needed timbers, planks, and beams to rebuild bridges, workshops, farmsteads, and homes. Pressure on the forest was far heavier in the postwar years than it ever had been under the Nazis, but particularly in the French and Soviet zones.

Reparations demands crowded out all other tasks in the countryside. Red Army teams spread through the countryside, taking food for support of Soviet troops or for shipment to the Soviet Union along with anything of value which could be moved: machinery, tractors, livestock and farmers' personal possessions. Soviet requisitions of farm livestock cut the Soviet zone horse and cattle population between 65 and 70 percent. Sheep counts fell 40 percent and pigs 20 percent, and only because they were not as easily driven as cattle and horses.¹³³ Soviet reparations officers impressed farmers to cut timber for reparations, taking them from providing food for the increasingly famished population. Hörnle complained, "The worst aspect of the shortage of work horses is that all horses are completely overworked skidding wood."¹³⁴ Timber reparations, and the massive task of cutting and hauling the unprecedented volumes needed to fill Soviet reparations quotas, consumed most of the available sources of labor, material and planning. Soviet military officials were so nervous about short deliveries that they over-harvested

¹³² A senior German forester reported in 1949: "delivery of pit props to the pits and mines continues to be forestry's critical economic task." Julius Speer, "Die Forstwirtschaft im Wirtschaftsgeschehen des Jahres 1948," *Allgemeine Forstzeitschrift* 4:1 (5 January 1949): 1.

¹³³ Werner Klatt, "Food and Farming in Germany: II. Farming and Land Reform," *International Affairs*, 26:2 (April 1950): 195.

¹³⁴ Edwin Hörnle, *Volksstimme*, (Chemnitz) (3 July 1947) cited in Sopade, "Landwirtschaft in der Ostzone," *Querschnitt durch Politik und Wirtschaft*, (Hannover: Vorstand der Sozialdemokratischen Partei, 1947) (December 1947): 9.

to ensure complete fulfillment of their quotas. They even delivered high quality veneer logs to fill low-grade timber reparations quotas rather than fail to meet their targets.¹³⁵

Between 1947 and 1952 the Soviets even broke down German houses, taking more than three million cubic meters of first-quality timber.¹³⁶

The Soviets cut down over thirteen years of growth as reparations in the four years between 1945 and 1949, and continued their withdrawals until reparations formally ended in 1954.¹³⁷ An East German forester in 1965 looked back on the waste and damage, describing Soviet harvests as “reaching shocking dimensions.”¹³⁸ Although industrial reparations claimed more than 25 percent of total eastern German production, timber reparations took almost 100 percent of the eastern German postwar harvest: most of the 44,000,000 cubic meters officially harvested between 1945 and 1953.¹³⁹ And these harvests came from forest muscle and sinew, its best quality, oldest timber and capital, destroying stand structure and forest health. The Soviets also failed to replant their clearcuts, the most basic charge of plantation forestry, turning productive forestland into a

¹³⁵ Sopade, “Die Forstwirtschaft in der Sowjetzone,” *Denkschriften, Sopadeinformationsdienst*, (Bonn: Vorstand der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, 1955): 15.

¹³⁶ Sopade, “Die Forstwirtschaft in der Sowjetzone,” *Denkschriften, Sopadeinformationsdienst*, (Bonn: Vorstand der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, 1955): 2.

¹³⁷ E. Reichenstein, “Die forstwirtschaftliche Lage Deutschland vor und nach dem 2. Weltkrieg,” *Forstarchiv* 21:1/3 (1950): 30; Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen (BGF), *SBZ von A-Z*. 1st ed., (Bonn: Deutscher Bundesverlag, 1953), 48.

¹³⁸ G. Schröder, “Zu einigen Problemen der Forstwissenschaft und -praxis in Prozeß der wissenschaftlich-technischen Revolution,” *Sozialistische Forstwirtschaft*, 15:11 (1965): 323.

¹³⁹ Fuelwood harvests, which equaled reparations’ harvests in intensity, are not included in official harvest figures.

wasteland. Never in European history has any ecosystem seen the levels of destruction and purposeful waste as that which defined Soviet reparations harvests.

The Soviets kept the catastrophic results of their reparations harvests a state secret until reparations ended in 1954, another feature of Soviet policy that alienated Western opinion.¹⁴⁰ The Soviets banned Western observers and refused to conduct joint forest surveys or share data as agreed at Potsdam.¹⁴¹ The cause of the ecological catastrophe revealed with the first forest inventories in the early 1950s was laid at the feet of “fascist looting” and “capitalist production relations.” Soviet reparations policy flowed from Stalin’s opportunism--better to take everything possible now, before a peace treaty was signed and the opportunity lost and cover up the economic and ecological catastrophes which followed in its wake. The Soviets ordered eastern German foresters to deny the intensity and scale of the reparations harvests and hide plummeting growth and health data from their western colleagues while learning as much as possible about western forest conditions. As the editors of *Die Neue Zeitung* pointed out in 1949; “The eastern zone’s most fearfully guarded secrets are the mortality data--only reparations come close in secrecy.”¹⁴² The Soviets never published an accounting for what they took. As Bruno

¹⁴⁰ Sopade, “Die Forstwirtschaft in der Sowjetzone,” 26.

¹⁴¹ C. Wiebecke, “Zum Stand der deutschen Forststatistik,” *Forstarchiv* 26:1 (15 January 1955): 1, 2; G. Hildebrandt, “Die Forsteinrichtung in der D.D.R. 1950 bis 1965. Ein Beitrag zur jüngeren deutschen Forsteinrichtungsgeschichte aus Anlaß des 80. Geburtstages von Albert Richter in Eberswalde,” *Allgemeine Forst- und Jagdzeitung* 160:6 (1989): 123; H. Eberts, “Forstwirtschaft in Ost und West,” *Holz-Zentralblatt* (1949): 942. Eberts perplexedly commented on Soviet refusal to release ownership data or share other data necessary for planning. Potsdam forest management was to be carried out by the Quadripartite Forestry Subcommittee of the Quadripartite Directorate of Economics. As a palliative to Western requests for information, the Soviets commissioned the superficial *Waldfondserhebung* forest inventory followed by the unsatisfactory 1949 *Forsterhebung* and 1952 inventories.

¹⁴² “Report on Soviet Zone Mortality,” *Die Neue Zeitung* (Berlin) (13 March 1949) cited in Sopade, *Querschnitt durch Politik und Wirtschaft*, (Hannover: Vorstand der Sozialdemokratischen Partei, 1949) (May 1949): 44.

Gleitze observed, the period of direct Soviet reparations from 1945 to 1954 was the “period of improvisation and covering up.”¹⁴³ The perfunctory forest inventories the Soviets did supply the Allies were useless, so “primitive and incompetently manned as to be unacceptable.” Social Democratic forestry experts concluded: “One glance at Soviet forest inventories and practice shows at once that everything is intentional camouflage--a wordy paper swindle.”¹⁴⁴ However, the inherently adversarial stance of Soviet foreign policy which underlay Soviet reparations was impossible to disguise.

Soviet failure to replant the vast clearcuts was even more destructive than the years of growth they ripped out, unprecedented though these volumes were for European forestry. The area of unplanted clearcuts in the Soviet zone almost doubled between 1945 and 1949, a staggering economic loss to the eastern German economy that persisted into the late-1960s as foresters struggled to clear the huge overhang of unplanted forest from Soviet reparations.¹⁴⁵ This deficit linked the destructive force of reparations with the chaos left in the wake of land reform: “Efforts to replant these clear-cuts have been so ineffective that it will take one hundred years to clear away the damage. All the Soviet zone power’s policies, particularly land reform, end up with the disappearance of the for-

¹⁴³ Bruno Gleitze, “Zielsetzung und Mittel der sowjetzonalen Wirtschaftspolitik bis zur gegenwärtigen Krisensituation,” speech to the Working Group of German Economists Research Institute. Cited in Sopade, “Die sowjetzonale Wirtschaftspolitik,” #937 (September 1953): 41.

¹⁴⁴ Sopade, “Die Forstwirtschaft in der Sowjetzone,” 11.

¹⁴⁵ E. Reichenstein, “Die forstwirtschaftliche Lage Deutschland vor und nach dem 2. Weltkrieg,” *Forstarchiv* 21:1/3 (1950): 30; Statisches Amt für die sowjetischen Zone, cited in: Sopade, “Die Forstwirtschaft in der Sowjetzone,” *Denkschriften, Sopadeinformationsdienst*, (Bonn: Vorstand der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, 1955): 26; “Report on forestry in eastern Germany,” *Darmstädter Echo* (20 January 1949). The total area of bare clear-cuts in 1950 was 400,000 hectares. Unplanted clear-cuts meant an annual loss to the Soviet zone’s economy of DM90 million from foregone growth alone, roughly \$21 million, or almost \$170 million in annual lost production in 2002 value.

est into the machinery and schemes of the monopolistic command economy.”¹⁴⁶ Forest stocking in 1948, a critical measure of the capital invested in standing timber in the forest, plunged 33 per cent from 1933 levels.¹⁴⁷ Reparations harvests claimed the older, more valuable trees, leaving many stands over-lit (the best trees torn out, leaving great gaps in the canopy that let sunlight in on the forest floor) and stagnant. East Germany struggled well into the 1960s to eliminate the huge overhang of unplanted forest inherited from Soviet occupation.¹⁴⁸ The German people knew, viscerally, that what the Soviets were doing in the forested landscape prefigured their designs for their society: leveled diversity, flattened and reduced structures, high levels of uncertainty, and shortages.

From the British and American perspective land reform’s and reparations’ effects were indistinguishable in their demonstration of Soviet opportunism and disregard for their treaty obligations to resume the normal flow of surplus food from eastern Germany to the west. General Clay recalled how Soviet failure to ship food West (land reform and Soviet requisitions took care of that) scuttled the Allies’ overall reparations agreements, and with it the wartime alliance and chances for a peace treaty;

¹⁴⁶ Sopade, “Die Forstwirtschaft in der Sowjetzone,” *Denkschriften, Sopadeinformationsdienst*, (Bonn: Vorstand der Sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, 1955): 10.

Another expert observed, “The damage is so severe that it won’t be overcome in a man’s lifetime.” “Walddraubbau-Holzexport,” *Neuer Vorwärts*, (Hannover) (8 January 1949) cited in Sopade, “Raubbau an den Ostzonen-Wäldern,” (Hannover: Vorstand der Sozialdemokratischen Partei, 1949) (February 1949): 16.

¹⁴⁷ Stocking fell to 78 m³ per hectare, well below normal stocking levels of 120 m³ per hectare. Forest stocking in 1948 was one-third below the 1933 level of 113 m³ per hectare. The Soviet zone 1946 informal inventory showed a stocking density of 96.81 Vfm/ha and an unplanted area of only 2 percent calculated on an area of only 2.6 million hectares. “Working Paper,” Forstprojektion Potsdam, Archives, Handwritten and undated, said to be 1949.

¹⁴⁸ 1948/49 Clearcut and Unplanted Forest Area, Four Zones (E. Reichenstein, “Die forstwirtschaftliche Lage Deutschland vor und nach dem 2. Weltkrieg,” *Forstarchiv* 21:1/3 (1950): 30.).

I learned that [taking a strong stand against the Soviets] from the way they were removing equipment, without any kind of accounting, from East Germany where they were in occupation, and still putting in their claims for reparations from West Germany. They were not abiding by the general rules that all of this would be done by the Reparations Commission, representing all of the countries that had suffered damage from Germany. This was the beginning of my concern.

We tried very hard to get East-West trade going. The initial effort was to get a common utilization of the food supplies, because East Germany was a surplus food production area. When we couldn't get any food out of East Germany, it was quite obvious that there was nothing else to divide. I mean that we would have been foolish to open up trade in the things that they wanted when we couldn't get out of them the food that we had to have. We couldn't get any willingness on their part to share in the food production of East Germany. I think this was another one of the fundamentals which led us to believe that we couldn't possibly get together.¹⁴⁹

The traditional agricultural wealth and food surpluses east of Elbe River had vanished into chaos and Soviet reparations. Even had the Soviets wanted to honor their Potsdam commitments, land reform made it impossible. Reports of forced labor camps, of the arrest of the communists' political enemies and imprisonment in former Nazi concentration camps, of near-famine and food riots, and of the suffering of former German prisoners of war in Soviet camps, bolstered by harsh Soviet propaganda and reparations,

¹⁴⁹ Richard D. McKinzie, ed., "Oral history interview with Lucius D. Clay," New York, New York, 16 July 1974 (Independence, Missouri: Harry S. Truman Library, 1979)
<http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/clay1.htm> (accessed 2005.08.21).

united emerging Western opinion in a new determination to stop Soviet power at the Elbe River.¹⁵⁰

Soviet harshness and extremism solved a core problem for Western leaders who needed to mobilize Western public opinion against the Soviets: difficult given the years of wartime propaganda that painted the Red Armies and Soviet peoples as heroic and sweetened Stalin as “Uncle Joe.” General Clay reflected; “How, overnight, could we turn around and convince people that they [the Soviets] were a threat to our national security? It was a very difficult thing to do. If the Russians hadn't taken the steps they did, I don't know that we would have done it at all. If they had been more subtle they might indeed have gained Western Europe before we realized what was happening. If they had done it over a two or three year period, I don't think we would have realized it was happening until it was too late.”¹⁵¹ Thanks to Stalin's opportunism and indifference to the starvation of civilians in all four zones and his near-destruction of east Elbian farms and forests, Western leaders and the public were able to grasp in time the true nature of the Soviet threat.

¹⁵⁰ Herbert Hoover, “Text of Hoover mission's findings on the food requirements of Germany,” *The New York Times* (28 February 1947); Tania Long, “German war prisoners present complex issue. 3,680,000 still held,” *The New York Times* (9 March 1947); “Captives of Soviets found in hunger,” *The New York Times* (1 October 1947); Heinz Rusalle, “Buchenwald concentration camp,” *Echo der Woche* (23 January 1948) cited in Kathleen McLaughlin, “Buchenwald held a camp of misery,” *The New York Times* (25 January 1948); Edwin L. James, “Concentration Camps are made an issue by the US,” *The New York Times* (28 March 1948); C. L. Sulzberger, “Soviet forced labor held economic asset in study,” *The New York Times* (30 June 1948); Our Own Correspondent, “Dearth of food in the Soviet zone,” *The Times* (5 August 1948): 4A; Kathleen McLaughlin, “German food lack in East Zone told,” *The New York Times* (28 October 1949); “Captive of Soviets held starving,” *The New York Times* (25 November 1948); Kathleen McLaughlin, “Hope dwindles in Germany for the return of 1,000,000 missing, mostly in Russia,” (22 Dec 1948); “US accuses Soviets of breach of faith,” *The New York Times* (5 Jan 1949); “80,000 camp deaths cited,” *The New York Times* (27 March 1949).

¹⁵¹ Richard D. McKinzie, ed., “Oral history interview with Lucius D. Clay,” New York, New York, 16 July 1974 (Independence, Missouri: Harry S. Truman Library, 1979) <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/clayl.htm> (accessed 2005.08.21)

Recovery of global food supplies and shipping capacity in 1948 provided great relief to the near-destitute peoples of the Western zones, and to British and American taxpayers who had to make up the food deficits from the Soviet zone. Political decisions were crucial, particularly Secretary of State Byrnes 6 September 1946 Stuttgart speech defending German independence, self-determination and German interests east of the Oder-Neiße line. The United States would not retreat from Europe as it had after the First World War nor would it allow Central Europe and Germany to fall under Soviet hegemony.¹⁵² The western German economy could not start to rebuild until the British and Americans merged their zones (29 May 1947), relaxed central controls and introduced a liberal market economy.¹⁵³ Why, however, was the German population patient until Allied liberal economic policies, all with long lead times, bore fruit, why did they accept intolerable conditions long after the end of the war? Fear of Soviet aggression, revealed in Stalin's ethnic cleansing and theft of Germany's eastern provinces, in Soviet predatory reparations policies and abuses of human rights, and their war against nature,

¹⁵² U.S. Secretary of State James Francis Byrnes (1879–1972).

¹⁵³ They launched a thoroughgoing currency reform, introducing the deutsche mark on 20 June 1948, accepted Ludwig Erhard's announcement a few days later ending price controls, and lowered tax rates, all central to the German *Wirtschaftswunder* and German recovery. Full recovery, however, did not come until the Allies brought Germany into the Marshall Plan, the European Recovery Program (1948–1952).

Walter W. Heller, "The role of fiscal-monetary policy in German economic recovery," (in *Economic policy in occupied Germany*) *The American Economic Review*, 40:2, Papers and Proceedings of the Sixty-second Annual Meeting of the American Economic Association. (May, 1950): 531
<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0002-8282%28195005%2940%3A2%3C531%3ATROFPI%3E2.0.CO%3B2-6> (Accessed 2003.04.14)

—————, "Tax and monetary reform in occupied Germany," *National Tax Journal* 2:3 (1949): 215.

Daniel Yergin and Joseph Stanislaw, *The commanding heights. The battle between government and the marketplace that is remaking the modern world*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998), 35/6.

David R. Henderson, "German Economic 'Miracle'," *The Concise Encyclopedia of Economics*
<http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/GermanEconomicMiracle.html> (Accessed 2003.04.08).

turned German anger against the Soviets, giving the British and Americans time to correct JCS 1067's authors' shortsighted policies.

If land reform signaled Stalin's designs for hegemony, and reparations his opportunism, then his forcing of Marxist-Leninist norms on the Soviet zone farm and forest landscapes revealed the central importance of ideology to Soviet and East German leaders. Marxism-Leninism was the principal source of Soviet and German communists' legitimacy, and particularly crucial once memories of the Terror faded and the central planners had managed to alleviate the worst shortages. Land reform and collectivization asserted the Party's control, but also forged an alliance between worker and peasant, erasing the distinction between rural and industrial labor, part of Lenin's *Bündnisdoktrin*. Edwin Hörnle, head of the Soviet zone Department of Agriculture and Forestry, laid out the two-stage process of communist land reform clearly: "Land reform has changed the village's social structure. Now the socialist collectives will change the village's spiritual structure."¹⁵⁴ Liquidating large landowners through class warfare changed the social structure of villages; the spiritual structure would change when the peasant entered socialist collectives, voluntarily liquidating themselves as the peasant class to become rural analogues of industrial workers and thus advance in the Marxist-Leninist class structure. For ideology was the very foundation for East German élites', as Adam Ulam observed, "for the societal *solidarity* and for the *legitimacy* of their rule." (emphasis in original)¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ Edwin Hörnle, "Wie kann die deutsche Landwirtschaft ihre Aufgabe erfüllen?" *Neues Deutschland*, (16 May 1946).

¹⁵⁵ Adam Bruno Ulam, *Unfinished revolution: an essay on the sources of influence of Marxism and communism* (New York: Random House, 1960); Thomas Arthur Baylis, "Economic reform as ideology: East Germany's New Economic System," *Comparative Politics* 3:2 (January 1971): 212.

Soviet farm and forest policies, key elements of Stalin's "war on the countryside," halted the equilibration of central Germany's population, ecosystems and economy to their geographic and global economic environments, locking the landscape and population into a downward spiral that did not stop until the dissolution of the East German Republic in November 1989. The economic and ecological adjustments long underway in the German landscape and the gradual equilibration of Soviet zone farms into medium-sized, flexible units suddenly reversed with land reform, reparations and the imposition of Marxist-Leninist "economic science." The monotonal rural community of worker and peasant, industrial collectives, and forest-as-factory--and low productivity and decline--became telltales of the East German state's entropic trajectory and ultimate dissolution.¹⁵⁶ Soviet remaking of the rural communities was near perfect: an economic, ecological and social revolution that will endure for generations despite eastern Germany's recovery of democracy, liberal markets and ecological farm and forest management.

After reunification in 1990 no other aspect of Soviet or East German communist policy endures as strongly or influences more powerfully the modern, united German state than the Marxist-Leninist war on the countryside.¹⁵⁷ Today's depressed rural population, inefficient collective farms and stagnant forest are fixed legacies of Soviet land reform and reparations and of Stalin's opportunism. Thus, the farm and forest landscapes were poised precariously between the commons and collectivization between 1945 and

¹⁵⁶ See Charles Maier, *Dissolution: The crisis of communism and the end of East Germany*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997) for the best history of the fall of East Germany, the only Soviet bloc state to disappear without a trace.

¹⁵⁷ The Unification Treaty of 3 October 1990 avoided either reversing or affirming Soviet land reform. The treaty left land reform's fate to the new, all-German parliament which legalized Soviet land reform expropriations in Article 142 of Germany's new constitution.

1949. Although the Party leadership tried over the next forty years to recover productivity in the rural economy, the natural landscape never escaped from the original burdens of Soviet occupation or from the imposition of Marxist-Leninist ideology. The five new states of the former East German Republic may never recover the complex social structures of diverse communities lost in the Soviet land reform. Reparations' destruction of forest structure complemented land reform's reduction of ecological, social and community structure, damaging the forest's economic resilience even more than its ecological health. Land reform succeeded as no other communist initiative, emerging after 1989 as the only significant structural holdover from the East German state. In an odd shifting of roles, Chancellor Kohl's Conservative government ratified Soviet land reform expropriations without compensation, ignoring the example of eastern German Christian Democrats in 1945 who asked for equity, taking sides with the Marxist-Leninists against the now shared enemy, the "Junker class."

Marxist-Leninist principles were essential to the communists' legitimacy and infused all Soviet zone policy. Based on absolute truth and a radical materialism, the ecological and economic reductionism and the control fetish basic to Soviet policy followed inevitably. Thus land reform and reparations created, through political, economic, and ecological innovations, impoverished rural populations, farms and forests of greatly reduced diversity and complexity with highly restricted flows and inherently unstable ecological and economic structures. The damage was so deep, and the initial conditions so determinant, that neither the East German polity, nor the East German landscape, ever recovered. Western policymakers and the German people read the signs of the East Ger-

man Republic's entropic path into chaos emerging from Stalin's war on the countryside. Although most Western policymakers and analysts came to ignore telltales in the rural landscape, seeing the East German state as strong, disciplined and permanent, the East German people read directly their own peril in forest death. They joined after the 1970s in the anti-materialist "church-environmental" movement first to study environmental and forest destruction, and then, in the 1980s, to resist and then overthrow the Party leadership weeks after they celebrated the Republic's 40th anniversary in October 1989. The Wall fell in November 1989 with even greater speed than it went up in August 1961.

How will history judge East Germany's forty-year span? Stefan Heym, the East German writer and socialist apologist, commented wanly in a television interview at the Palace of the Republic after the stunning Christian Democratic victory in the 14 October 1990 elections returned Chancellor Kohl's conservative government to power, the first free general election in all of Germany since the Reichstag elections of July 1932, "There will be no more East Germany. It will be but a footnote in world history."¹⁵⁸ More and more, the post-war division of Germany which once seemed so absolute appears to have been temporary, even a footnote, as

¹⁵⁸. Timothy Garton Ash, "East Germany: The solution," *New York Review of Books* 37:7 (26 April 1990): 14; and Tony Judt, "New Germany, Old NATO," *New York Review of Books* (29 May 1997): n. 12. Professor Judt comments, although more than half of the East German people voted for the conservative CDU coalition in the 18 March 1990 elections, the first free, all-German election since 1932, that East German "Intellectuals were slower to notice. Three weeks after the fall of the Wall, Christa Wolf, Stefan Heym, and other leading figures of the East German literary scene published an appeal "For Our Country," in which they beseeched their fellow East Germans to save the socialist German state. Bärbel Bohley, a leader of New Forum, deplored the "premature" elections—the voters were not "ready," she averred. Many months later she was still bemoaning the outcome—in her own self-revealing words, "We wanted justice and we got the Rechtsstaat." Little wonder that New Forum won just over 2 percent of the vote in the GDR's first and last free election."

Heym mourned. Forest decline and the destruction of East Germany's diverse and flexible rural economy, and most of all the medium-term damage their forty year reign of control and fear wreaked on the eastern German people's psyches, not political ideas and structures, are Marxism-Leninism's legacies. Polluted rivers, dying forests, and exhausted, nitrate-poisoned agricultural commons are lethal political pen-
timenti of authoritarian irrationalism, outward and visible signs of the twisted idealism and arrogance which underlay the "First Workers' and Peasants' State on German Soil."



Figure 1. Allied Occupation Zones, 1945.



Figure 2 – Emergence of the German nation, 1937-1990