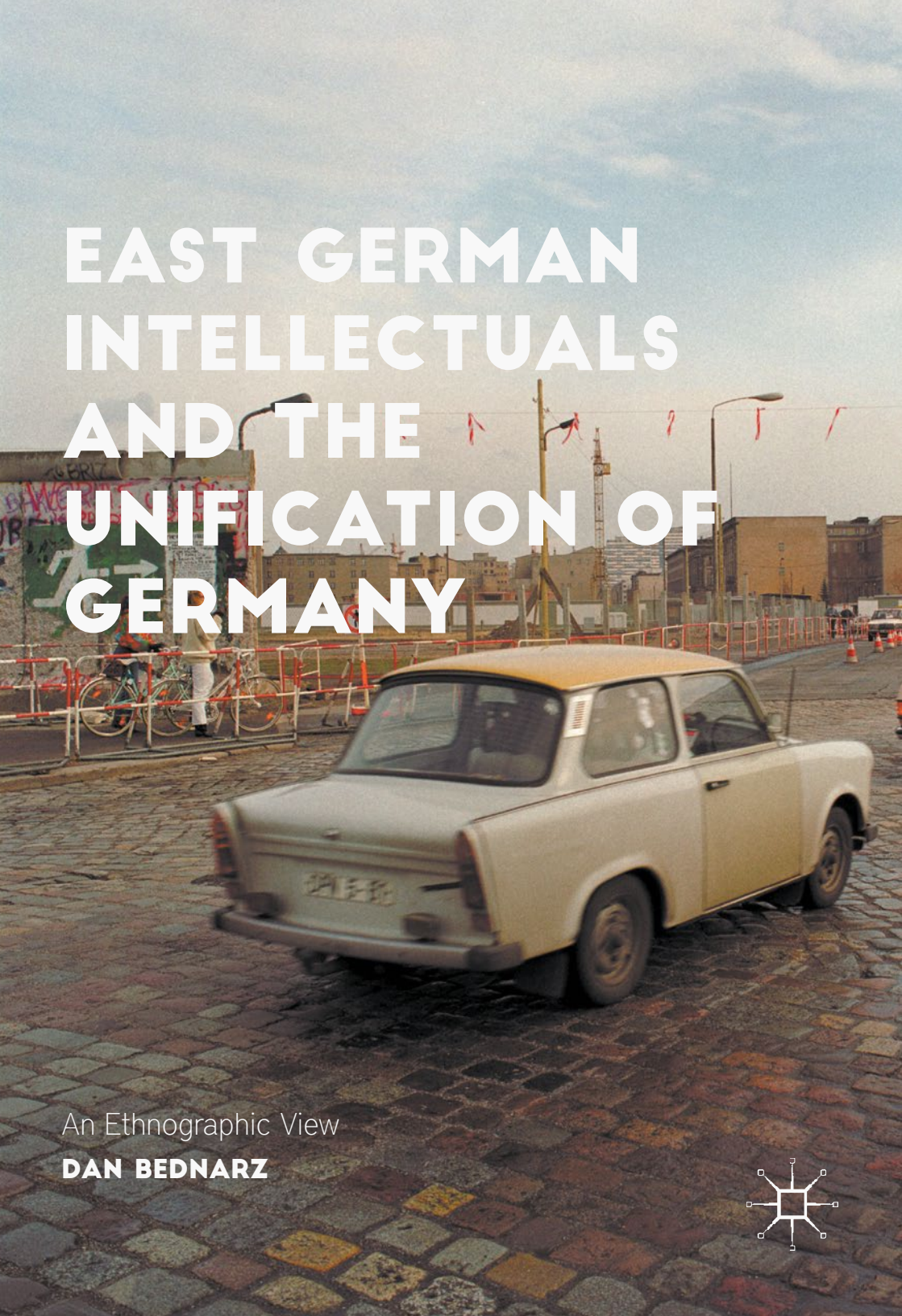
EAST GERMAN INTELLECTUALS AND THE UNIFICATION OF GERMANY



An Ethnographic View

DAN BEDNARZ

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For Leonard Lieberman, October 25, 1925–February 6, 2007

Preface

When East Germany (the GDR, German Democratic Republic) ceased to exist after its October 3, 1990, unification with West Germany (the FRG, Federal Republic of Germany), almost all East German intelligentsia felt like the flotsam of history.

In the West, most were typified as ill-, un-, or mis-educated apologists for the Socialist Unity Party (the Party) that had controlled the GDR during its four-and-a-half-decade history. According to this view, few were genuine intellectuals or artists because they were not devoted to the honest study, use, or expression of ideas and emotions. Instead, they were, in the West, presumed apparatchiks of the Socialist Party that ruled the GDR. That is, in West Germany, they were regarded, with few exceptions, as either feral children or propagandists, not scientists and scholars. Concomitantly, an unknown number of them were suspected of spying on their colleagues, friends, and even family members at the behest of the Stasi, the East German state security apparatus.

Their status in East Germany had been complicated and tortuous. Workers tended to envy them as a privileged elite insulated from the harsh demands and economic conditions of East German life. Socialist Party officials typically treated them as compliant attendants to the nation's "real" heroes: the abstractions of "The Workers" led admirably by nurturing vanguard Party officials.

I began to meet East German intelligentsia five weeks before unification, in the late summer of 1990, when they were absorbed in speculation and worry about what role and career opportunities, if any, they would have in

unified Germany. Various West German review bodies were then making decisions about the future employment chances for most of them. The *Wissenschaftsrat* (science advisory council), primarily composed of West German scientists, was evaluating all central institutes, and their subinstitutes, of the GDR Academy of Sciences.

The Academy was modeled on the academy of sciences in the Soviet Union and also traced its roots back to Leibniz. Humboldt University, presumed by many in West Germany to be rancid with Socialist Party apparatchiks, was trying to reorganize from within, through the efforts of East German faculty and administrators at the university, and simultaneously being prepared for an ideological and academic vetting of its faculty by the (West) Berlin *Senat*. Other East German universities would come under similar review. *Berliner Rundfunk*, state-supported radio in the GDR, and East German television were also being reviewed by West German officials considering whether to close them down or integrate them or some of their employees into FRG media. Newspapers, magazines, and journals published in the GDR, the content of all had been controlled by the state, were either struggling to survive with a revamped point of view or being purchased by Western companies.

Here is a typical editorial statement offered by an East German publication, (GDR Review Editors 1990, p. 64):

> Dear Readers, we request you not to regard the viewpoints of our writers as "official." They represent the manifold opinions which have already existed in our editorial office but which, up to now, have scarcely been discernable in the magazine.

In addition to fretting about their careers in the fall of 1990, East German intelligentsia were grappling with the cognitive dissonance, guilt, and anger created by the contradictions and inconsistencies inherent in intellectual life in a police state. Many of them readily acknowledged—as if to expiate guilt—that they had been at times compromised and controlled. The Party/government might have at any time for any seemingly arbitrary reason interfered directly in their work. They confessed frequently that an unknown number of them were used, by virtue of threat, fear, patriotism, or personal gain, as internal spies.

In related fashion, they were trying to make sense, in rational and spiritual terms, of who they were, given their GDR past and the tumultuous changes that had taken place in the nine-and-a-half months *nach der Wende*

(after the Turn), the metaphor for the November 1989 opening of the Berlin Wall that led to the "Turn" from socialism to capitalism and the end of the GDR as a sovereign state. This is the issue of national—or collective—identity that Germans historically at times have found perplexing.

With rare exceptions, they saw unification with the FRG as a takeover they had tried in vain to prevent, or at least postpone for several years until the GDR could attain economic and political parity with the FRG. They thought of themselves and their country as the losers in the struggle against capitalism and the *Wessis*, West Germans. In the main, they deeply regretted both their inability to reform the GDR into a socialist democracy and their overall lack of participation in the protests in East Germany during the fall of 1989, which culminated in the opening of the Berlin Wall and the entire East German border. Add to this their belief that their West German kin were treating them with the condescension and haughtiness befitting colonialists who act victorious and inherently possessed of superior competence, moral rectitude, and ingenuity.

A March 1990 East German referendum on unification with West Germany approved by the citizens of the GDR was, in all practical senses, a political capitulation of economically bankrupt East Germany to economically robust West Germany. Rapid changes in East German life had begun in the days after the Wall opened and gathered momentum in the succeeding weeks as consumer goods flooded into the GDR and various East German political parties and ad hoc groups participated in "roundtables" to decide—they erroneously believed—the future of the GDR.

Unification introduced wholesale legal and institutional changes from closing down the GDR government and replacement of its legal system with the West German legal system to a currency conversion that was simultaneously extravagantly beneficial to East German citizens and disastrous to East German industries trying to compete in capitalist markets. Further, large-scale change occurred in the requirement of East Germans to take on responsibilities previously seen to by the state, such as purchasing automobile insurance and finding employment.

This is the sociopolitical and cultural context in which I began to meet East Germans in the late summer of 1990.

My appreciation goes to those who, in various ways, assisted and befriended me while I conducted the original fieldwork for this book. For many historical insights, referrals to other interviewees, and revelations about life in the East Germany scientific community, my thanks go to the always-gracious Gunther Kohl. Likewise, I thank Lothar Sprung for his

openness, good humor, and keen interest regarding my project. To those who provided invaluable help as translators, I thank Antje Rapmund, David Antal, Birgit Gast, Josefine Raasch, Martina Dannecker, Julia Nentwich, and Laura Papachristos. I offer thanks to my students, Gabriel Hazeldine and Shelley Whalen, for their first-rate assistance in various aspects of manuscript preparation. I thank Meinhof Dierkes, of the *Berlin Social Science Center* (WZB), for the initial support he provided for this research. Thanks also to Werner Rammert for several thoughtful and enlightening conversations and his supportive stance toward this project. I offer special thanks to Erica Hoerning for her encouragement and for unreservedly sharing with me her wealth of knowledge, contacts, and insight. Gratitude goes to those more than 100 East Germans I formally interviewed and the dozens more with whom I had informal conversations. Overall, my sincerest thanks is extended to all those I came to know and spend time with in East Germany. I appreciate them for their patience in explaining their folkways, mores, and worldview to an American, and their stoicism and frank admissions of confusion, shame, guilt, resolve, and hope as their life chances, collective identity, and worldview were—in their view—"*Abgewickelt.*"[1] Also, thanks to Lucy and Ian Rawson, and to David and Ariane Antal for their kindnesses and support along the way. Finally, I offer my deepest love to Janet, Jake, and Sam.

North Easton, MA Dan Bednarz

Note

1. *Abgewickelt* is the past tense form derived from the noun *Abwicklung*, which in formal translation refers to the completion of a business transaction. The connotations East Germans gave to the terms "*Abgewickelt*" and "*Abwicklung*" is that of termination, liquidation, closing down, phasing out, "winding down," or dismantling.

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Introduction

This project began serendipitously[1] in the late summer of 1990, six weeks before unification of the two Cold War–spawned rival German states, East Germany, the GDR, and West Germany, the FRG. After the initial phase was completed in the summer of 1991, there was a hiatus[2] until July 2014, when I returned to Germany and re-interviewed two dozen of the 106 East Germans I had spoken with a quarter century earlier. In addition, in 2014, I spoke with several East German intellectuals who were not members of the original 1990–91 cohort.

In August 1990, I arrived in Berlin to study how the introduction of personal computers was altering complex organizations along a number of dimensions: power relations, communications and the efficiency and efficacy of information flows, and, overall, organizational culture. Unexpectedly, three days after arriving in Berlin, I found myself addressing an English language class of East German scholars at an Academy of Sciences building in what at that moment, late August 1990, was East Berlin, capital of the GDR.

This chance meeting occurred when a friend, an American who lived in West Berlin, asked me to fill in for him as a guest native speaker at the Academy's English language class.[3]

My talk went well and I agreed to participate in two upcoming fall classes, which were scheduled to convene once a week, as a native speaker of English (most of those in the classes had never met a Westerner and were eager for conversation and practice in English).

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At first I was curious about who the East Germans were; also, I found them reminiscent of the adults from Eastern Europe I had known growing up in the Polish section of Detroit. I became intrigued by their frequent mentions of "*nach der Wende*" (after the Turn), a reference to the flood of changes—especially the sudden end of the GDR as a nation-state after the opening of the Berlin Wall.

Throughout September 1990 I was also meeting West German academic and research colleagues and came to see that the intelligentsia of the GDR had no positive status in the FRG or the Western world.[4] Perhaps a few were highly regarded for work in their respective fields, but as a class, they were stigmatized and characterized as unessential—a problem or an embarrassment, actually—now that the GDR was coming to an end. The attitude expressed by historian Hans-Ulrich Wehler (2008, p. 361) that the "short-lived GDR was only 'a footnote in world history,'"[5] typified a plurality of the West German intellectuals I was encountering. For example, I recall a West German social scientist, whose areas of study were culture and social change, derisively asking me, "Why do you want to study them? There's really nothing left to study, is there? They are finished."

In my journal notes from late August and early September 1990, I cataloged my futile search of West Berlin universities and research institutes for scholars who I thought "must be studying the East German intellectuals for their reactions to the Turn, in particular how it will affect their careers, their national and cultural identity and their commitment to socialism."[6]

Several West German colleagues, who told me they could not have open and frank discussions with East German intellectuals about the Turn, informed me they knew of no one pursuing these questions.

The two German states created after World War II had produced separate national identities, one dominated by the Americans, the other by the Soviets; and this left them estranged from one another after the euphoria of the opening of the GDR border had passed. Consequently, there was a chasm of misunderstanding, ethnocentrism, ideological chauvinism, and distrust separating most East and West German intellectuals. There also was a vast political power differential, a virtual zero-sum difference, in favor of West Germans after the vote-ratifying unification.

The levels of significance of this power differential are rarely examined in the literature on East Germany's absorption into West Germany. Typically, the early post-Turn GDR studies literature, from the mid- to late 1990s, examines East Germans along a range of dimensions cataloging the damage done to them, such as how the GDR state warped their collective identity,

made them fearful of government and one another, and denuded their ability to function as independent human beings. For a brief review of this literature and the objections to it, see Pence and Betts (2008).

My position as an outsider, with no emotional or political stake in the Turn, unification, and, overall, German politics, complemented my status as an ethnographic observer. Indeed, several colleagues at the *WZB* began to encourage me to do this study. "You are an outsider," one of them told me, "if the East Germans will talk to you this would be a meaningful way to spend your year in Germany. We West and East Germans need to understand one another, but at the moment this is not possible. We cannot really talk to one another without great awkwardness, confusion, and misunderstanding that often degenerates into incomprehensibility or recriminations."

By mid-October I had abandoned the computers and organizational culture project and committed to doing this study.

This ethnographic view of the intelligentsia of the GDR stands as a counterpoint—and in some instances a rebuttal—to most received views of what took place among East German intelligentsia as the GDR was absorbed by the FRG. For example, here is a Western perspective on the closing of the East German Academy of Sciences that finds no confirmation in my research: " the huge GDR Academy of Sciences was broken up in order to make its institutes compatible with ... [institutes in the] FRG, setting free superfluous people" (Jarausch 2013, p. 10). The Academy was not reorganized or broken up; it was closed at the end of 1991.

This scholar goes on to write of the "housecleaning" at GDR universities as necessary to "the democratic restructuring of the universities ... [This] was achieved at the cost of dismissing many Eastern faculty and hiring Western newcomers" (Jarausch 2013, p. 10).

The realpolitik of German unification was that the FRG had taken over the GDR and then gone about dismantling the latter's institutions. Given this situation, there was every reason—sociologically—for the West Germans to "*abwickeln*" the cultural, artistic, and knowledge-producing institutions of the GDR.

Indeed, not one of the many members of the Academy with whom I spoke uttered anything approximating a sense of being "set free" by the closure of the Academy. Ironically, they did feel "superfluous" to the West Germans scientists and academics who had been sent to evaluate them. In their view, these panels did not evaluate their work and instead functioned as the official basis for the termination of two-thirds of the Academy's employees.

Approximately one-third of the Academy's scientists and scholars were offered positions, typically two-year contracts, at universities or research institutes.

While I do not have any numbers to offer, I have been told of many Academy employees among the 66 percent who were dismissed, who emigrated or took career-related work in private industry, or who found work managing insurance offices or driving taxicabs. In the (former) GDR universities, a tide of underemployed or unemployed West German scholars—the "newcomers" mentioned in the previous quote—were offered approximately two-thirds of the faculty positions formerly held by East Germans.

From the fall of 1990 through the summer of 1991, I conducted formal interviews and had many informal conversations with GDR intellectuals as both their worldview, which was rooted in Marxism, and their national identity, as a citizen of the GDR, were invalidated. These symbolic negations of who they believed they were required them simultaneously to make sense of the end of their self-described "dream" of a socialist world and explain to themselves why the socialist GDR, not the capitalist FRG, had collapsed. This collective self-reassessment was further complicated by the fact that West Germans were not merely ideological rivals, but also people with whom the East Germans shared a language, culture, and history—as well as, in many instances, kinship ties. Finally, fold in the fact that GDR intellectuals faced the pressing issue of earning a living in an alien capitalist system they did not know how to navigate and simultaneously looked upon with deep suspicion, and in some instances revulsion. These interviewees spanned such fields as history, law, sociology, media (radio, TV, print), philosophy, medicine, psychology, computer science, economics, theater and the arts, physics, and biology.

The organization of this ethnography divides into three parts. The first part is emic description of East German intelligentsia's understanding of the Turn, unification, their collective identity, the FRG, and the future of "Germany." In this way readers can assess East German intelligentsia from their accounts as the Turn and unification unfolded.

These challenges were brought on by upheavals such as the end of the GDR as a state and its absorption by the FRG; the total dismantling of East German institutions (health care, finance, the economy, education, and media); the—for lack of better words—strained, confusing, and often hostile and suspicious interactions between East and West Germans at that time; and the ubiquitous experience of powerlessness and disorientation as

all this played out. Specifically, the institutions of knowledge and cultural production were being systematically dismantled and the individual fates of those working in these institutions were bound up in these sociological processes.

In the second part of the book, follow-up interviews, conducted in 2014, with approximately one-fourth of those interviewed in 1990–91 are summarized. Following that, the final part of the book presents, first, a theoretical capstone covering a discussion of A.O. Hirschman's use of his exit-voice-loyalty model to interpret why East Germany came to an end.[7] His analysis is then compared with the work of Pierre Bourdieu on power, distinction, and the field/habitus model and of Erving Goffman on identity and stigma. These theoretical positions are connected to understanding disruptions in collective identity during periods of rapid social disintegration and adaptation to a new system—in this case, from the socialism of East Germany to the capitalism of West Germany.

In Appendix A, the methodological choices made to conduct this ethnographic research are presented.

Appendix B contains information on what became of those interviewees presented by name in this book.

Notes

1. Serendipity's classical definition means to find something of value by chance, without seeking it.
2. In 1991 I could not find a publisher interested in the reactions of East German intelligentsia to the Turn. In early 2014, another publisher reviewed the first part of the book and gave me a letter of intent to publish. In the summer of 2015, this publisher sent the completed manuscript to four reviewers. Only one of them recommended not to publish the manuscript, writing it "is one-sided in the extreme" and that I was "naïve" to accept East Germans' perspectives on the Turn and the closing of the Academy of Sciences. This first publisher withdrew the publication offer in late summer 2015.
3. See the methodology discussion in Appendix A for details.
4. This is not to suggest that all West German intellectuals held all East German intellectuals in contempt. I do state directly, however, that most West German intellectuals, and most Western intellectuals I met in Berlin at that time, did hold GDR intelligentsia in either contempt or low regard.

5. This is a quotation from East German writer Stefan Hyam.
6. An exception was Erika Hoerning of the Max Planck Institute for Human Development in Berlin. I acknowledge her help and encouragement of this project in the Preface. We did not meet until January 1991, when my field research was several months underway.
7. Hirschman went to Germany after the unification to test his framework.

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Part I: After the Turn, 1990–91

My first visit to East Berlin was as a guest native speaker in a class studying English at the Academy of Sciences located on a street then called *Otto Nuschke Straße* and now returned to its pre-GDR name of *Jäger Straße*.

The *U-Bahn* pulled up to the *Französische Straße* stop in the cultural district of East Berlin. As I exited the train and walked to the stairs, I noticed that the tiles on the poorly lit platform walls were well-worn white, a contrast to the bright patterned and colorful tiles at the stops in West Berlin. The name of the stop, written in faded black tiles on the walls, was small and in simple pre-WWII vintage script. The platform was empty of people and without billboards or signs. The subway tunnel had an odor slightly different from that of West Berlin, with a hint of oil, yet it was nowhere near as intrusive on the nostrils as the New York City subway.

I later learned that when the Wall was built, the *U-Bahnen* that began in West Berlin and ended in East Berlin were blockaded at the East-West Berlin border; however, those lines that ran from West Berlin into East Berlin and then back into West Berlin had their East Berlin stops sealed at street level, denying access to East Berliners while allowing the *U-Bahnen* from West Berlin to travel through East Berlin—without stopping—and back into West Berlin. The *Französische Straße* stop was on one of the lines, the Alt-Mariendorf/Alt-Tegel U-6 line, which began and ended in West Berlin. This stop had just been reopened after twenty-eight years, thus its dungeon-like appearance. In one of my subsequent trips to this stop after I knew its history, I paused at the entrance above on *Friedrichstraße* as I heard a train pull out below and wondered what East Berliners on the street

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during those twenty eight years might have thought as they heard the West Berlin *U-Bahn* on the tracks beneath their feet.

The Academy building at *Otto Nuschke Straße* 10–11 was a few hundred paces from the *Französische Straße U-Bahn*. Nearly two hours early for my appointment, I walked around the vicinity: on *Unter den Linden* to the Brandenburg Gate, to the *Reichstag*, Karl Marx Library, Humboldt University, past the various opera houses and museums, and through the Plaza of the Academy, now returned to its pre-GDR name of *Gendarmenmarkt*. The areas along and adjacent to *Unter den Linden* were abuzz with well-dressed tourists speaking a variety of languages and taking pictures. Near the Brandenburg Gate, people were renting hammers and chisels from Polish men to chip off souvenir pieces of the sections of the Wall still standing. All sorts of Russian and East German military memorabilia were being sold nearby. I walked to the small cafeteria in Karl Marx Library and had a delicious rye bread and bratwurst lunch.

I left the library and walked down *Unter den Linden*, turned left at *Friedrichstraße*, and noticed the number of people on the street dwindle with every step I took toward the Academy building. When I reached *Otto Nuschke Straße*, two blocks from *Unter den Linden*, few people were about, and the glittery Western storefronts were a block behind me at the corner of *Französische Straße* and *Friedrichstraße*. Right on time, I entered the Academy building and was greeted in the small dimly lit unadorned lobby by Herr Grentz, the man I had spoken to on the telephone two nights earlier when I agreed to speak to him and his classmates. "*Herr Doktor Bednarz*, we are honored that you have come to speak to our class. We are pleased that you have agreed to speak to us about your opinions and outlooks on race relations in America. We are keenly interested in this subject."

There was a receptionist's window to the left where a man stood fidgeting, obviously waiting for me to check in with him. I had been told to carry my passport to the Academy "just in case." The man asked to see my passport and was preparing to ask me questions when my host, Herr Grentz, became embarrassed and said to him, "Oh, come on already. The GDR is coming to an end. This is an American guest, so what?" The receptionist then silently issued a visitor's pass to me—which no one asked to see—and my host Herr Grentz giggled, "We had many rules in the GDR; the old system is gone but the new one is not here yet. A visit from an American in former times was an unusual event closely observed by the Party. I would have needed permission to speak to you."

He turned and introduced me to the class teacher, Lilly Dieckmann, who greeted me in perfectly accented BBC English. She had been standing—unnoticed by me—in a corner of the barely lit hallway, and I could not see her clearly until we were within four feet of each other. She offered another loquacious welcome and, with Herr Grentz, led me up several flights of stairs in the plain gray-walled, linoleum brown-floored building to the classroom. There was a freight elevator in the building's rear that was rarely used. About twenty academics, ranging in age from young to old, sat around four conference tables arranged to form one long table. We stared and smiled at each other as I came in and was introduced by Lilly.

I told them to ask for clarification whenever I uttered a colloquialism or something they did not understand; they nodded politely in agreement but never once stopped me for this reason. Before I started, however, a hand went up, and one of the men asked, "Doctor Bednarz, are you related to Klaus Bednarz, the journalist?" I said, "not that I know of," but it set a tone of acceptance for me among them. They explained that he was one of the few West German correspondents who "understood" them and did not look disparagingly upon them.

I explained that my views were more or less on the left of the political spectrum in America and certainly not typical in a statistical sense. My remarks lasted about thirty minutes and were followed by an open discussion for an hour and a half. They were earnest to the point that I thought them lavishly formal, like a scene from a 1950s educational propaganda movie portraying how ideal students should behave in the classroom. They expressed "solidarity" with African Americans in contrast to a romanticized affection for Native Americans.

At one point, I mentioned that until recent years, Native Americans had been considered wards of the US government and were not allowed to vote. I caught the disbelief in their eyes as hands went up with questions. They asked about the veracity of the book *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* (Brown 1970) and how the US government could treat Native Americans "like children" if the United States is a democracy. They asked about the Indian Wars of the nineteenth century and expressed anger about how cruelly General Custer had behaved.

As we concluded, Lilly thanked me in formal East German fashion for speaking to them and several of the class members came up to ask more questions. Two of them, Ingrid Grund and Renate Tantzscher, wanted to talk again. Frau Grund commented, "I was an economist and there is no need for East German Marxist economists after the Turn (then a concept I

did not understand). Now I am a tour guide at *Schloss Sanssouci* in Potsdam, my hometown. I would like to give you a tour of the grounds and Frederick the Great's Palace. You can also meet my sister and mother; they live very near *Cecelian Hof* and close to where the Wall stood. I live in Potsdam with my son. I will contact you by telephone to make a proper invitation."

She left and then Renate Tantzscher began to speak. She too tendered an invitation: "My mother and I live alone in my small apartment. I shall invite you for tea and dinner. My profession is psychology. Our situation is not good now, as many of us will lose our academic positions. I have much I would like to know about America; to be honest, perhaps I may decide to live there. I will tell you whatever you want to know about the GDR. I have always been—how do you say *freimütig?*"

"You mean you are outspoken?" I asked her.

"Correct, ever since I was a child; my conduct greatly distressed my father, who was a Party member."

All the students were now gone, and Lilly invited me for a late lunch of more delicious wurst. We walked first to her cramped office, which she shared with a colleague, a Greek man who had come to the GDR in the fifties. Then we went down the street to a small lunch cafe that was adjacent to a Russian cultural center around the corner on *Friedrichstraße*.[1] She asked that I call her Lilly despite the German custom of calling only close friends by their first name. As I was an American, she reasoned, she would like to speak as much English to me as I would allow, and it was natural, therefore, to use first names while speaking "American English."

"Dan, would you consider coming next week on Wednesday, when new classes begin for the fall? As you just have seen, the members are eager to learn more English, to know about the world of the West; and hearing a native American-English speaker can help them and me. Perhaps you will learn something about us and maybe come to like us and our East German ways."

I thought for a moment, "That's fine, Lilly, but your English is excellent."

"Not so, Dan; you see English is full of nuances. For example, you know this song by Stevie Wonder, 'I Just Called to Say I Love You'?"

"Sure."

"We in the class had a very involved discussion about the line that goes, 'And I mean it from the bottom of my heart.' The students found this expression, 'from the bottom of my heart,' difficult to grasp. They took it literally and that makes no sense. I corrected them, noting that it was a

common English figure of speech. I had to do research to know this, which is not a problem. However I could not speak with authority and give them other examples of how to use this idiom."

I smiled at her, "It's funny, isn't it, how that works with language. So I will be your expert 'from the bottom of my heart.'"

"Excellent, Dan, the students will be pleased."

"Tell me, Lilly, what was that tall young woman with all the questions talking about when she said things are not good for her and her colleagues?"

"She is Frau Doctor Renate Tantzscher. She is highly regarded in the GDR and has written several books. I do not know more about her. As for the trouble, the West Germans have created a council, the *Wissenschaftsrat* we call it, to evaluate all the members of the GDR Academy of Sciences. There are twenty six thousand member and employees throughout the GDR—and, well, there seems to be little hope for most."

"Twenty six thousand?"

"There was no unemployment in the GDR, Dan; but some are support employees rather than scientists; and not all scientists are official Academy members, very few—a few hundred perhaps—have this distinction of full Academy membership. Nonetheless, there are many scholars and scientists who are likely to lose their jobs."

"You mean after unification the West Germans will decide who among the East German scientists will keep their positions?"

"Yes, and of course, many here in the GDR are worried they will be dismissed either for their lack of qualifications; for having produced nothing of scholarly worth; for spying on other scientists; for being Party members; or because their work is duplicated by West German scientists. I do not know the details; it's what I hear, not what I know directly."

"Will you be dismissed, Lilly?" I asked.

"Things look good for me. Everyone seems to want to learn or improve their English. I may get a job in West Berlin with a book publisher. I would not want to be one of those who chose Russian as their primary language. English was tolerated but not encouraged in the GDR. I studied Russian to conform; I never found it a pleasing language to the ear. I loved listening to the BBC and speaking English. Will you go on the tour with Frau Grund and speak to Frau Doctor Tantzscher?"

"If they call; but those kinds of invitations rarely are followed through on, Lilly."

"Oh, I think they will contact you; you will be the first American most East Germans have met. Do not underestimate how dire their—our—situation is."

"I don't know what I can do other than listen and answer their questions," I replied.

"That would be sufficient for most of them," she answered. "May I ask about your research for the coming year in Berlin?"

I told her I would study how computers were changing communication, power, and hierarchy in organizations in America and in Germany.

"Which Germany?" she inquired, "There is a major difference between East and West Germany. The Party controlled everything here in the GDR."

I told her I had not thought about East German organizations.

"Why should you have thought about us? We are coming to an end and are being taken over by West German attitudes and outlooks. It is only a few weeks until the GDR officially comes to an end. People here are talking about what to do that day when unification is official. Do we celebrate with the West Germans? Or do we lament and mourn the loss of our nation? Most feel torn and uneasy about it and some will go away to a secluded place, like the Baltic Sea or to the countryside. It's so confusing; anyway, mostly we are mourning, I think."

We sat in stillness before I said, "I see, so there is much sadness among the intellectuals about the inglorious end of socialism?"

"I believe there is," she said, "but this, too, is a complicated reaction we are undergoing. It is not socialism I mourn, rather it concerns my feelings and memories as a citizen of the GDR."[3]

"Where do you live in West Berlin, Dan?" Lilly changed the subject.

"In *Rudesheimer Platz*, on *Wiesbadener Straße*. You know it?"

"No, West Berlin is new to us. Let's look at my transportation map." She pulled the map from her purse, spread it on the table, and located the subway line, "Oh, I am told that is a lovely area of the city, not far from the FU, Free University, which I hope to visit soon."

After asking which subway lines I'd taken to the Academy that morning, she said, "I suggest you walk along *Friedrichstraße* to the *Bahnhof* and take the *S-Bahn* to *Zoologischer Garten* and transfer to the *U-Bahn* [she pointed to the map]. You will see more of the city this way."

"Now, Dan, when you get to *Zoo* follow the signs—*Zoologischer Garten* is big, you see. And there are all these amazing types of people with yellow, green and purple hair and flamboyant clothing. I think West Berlin attracts

them. It is glorious to see the diversity of people; but do be careful of some of them."

She watched me for a reaction and when I said, "Will do," she laughed at herself mockingly. "I am so naive. Are you Americans accustomed to seeing people begging and others on drugs? Such scenes shock East Germans. We had never seen such sights until after the Turn. There is something fundamentally immoral with people being hungry and without work. We had many problems in the GDR, but people begging in the street or being forced to sell their bodies to survive were not among them. It is an overwhelming sight for us."

"Regrettably, we are accustomed to it, Lilly. Let me ask you a question. You just mentioned the Turn, like Frau Grund did. Do you mean a turn away from socialism?"

"'After the Turn,' *nach der Wende*, is how we describe all that has taken place in these past ten months since the Wall opened. You will hear this phrase many times in the East."

My curiosity aroused, I asked, "There must be some Western researchers around, you know, studying the East German academics, scientists, and artists, who are the creators of your nation's cultural, ideological, and scientific knowledge after all. Have you met any Western scientists doing research on GDR intellectuals?" She said she had not but she had heard of film teams interviewing some Academy members. I asked her to let me know more if she could remember who they were.

"I'd say we feel, collectively, like a defeated people," she blurted out.

"This is a pivotal time," I answered, "because it is a rare confluence of events. To describe what has taken place as a Turn is intriguing. Normally, people know who they are, but what little I've seen thus far tells me things are anything but normal here in East Germany. Intellectuals are society's main producers of scientific, cultural, and artistic knowledge. However, East German intellectuals are wondering what role they will have in unified Germany. This is what we'd call a natural experiment in culture and identity. That's why I think there must be Western academics around studying how your intelligentsia is reacting."

"Oh, I see what you are driving at, Dan. We East Germans are struggling to determine who we were and who we are now amidst all this confusion."

"Exactly, Lilly."

There was a pause and I told her about passing through *Friedrichstraße* the previous October, three weeks before the Wall opened, when I found

the crush of people going through East German customs frightening. "It is different now," she said, "Before the Turn, *Bahnhof Friedrichstraße* was a main point of passage for foreign travelers. All the fences are removed now, the guards and their big dogs are gone and the *Bahnhof* is being renovated, like much of East Berlin."

The following Wednesday Lilly began the new English classes with about twenty-five participants in each class. The classes ran for approximately two hours with a short break, at which time the students would take turns buying me coffee in the building's austere basement cafeteria. They wanted to talk to an outsider, they explained, because, "We are weary of talking among ourselves and we cannot talk to the *Wessis*, they do not understand us or they condemn us."

Their immediate concern was the ongoing evaluations by the *Wissenschaftsrat*, a process they feared was a method to legitimize the West German closure of the Academy. The larger context, however, was the flood of changes after the Turn.

"Lilly, they have so much to say," I told her after the second week. "They are reacting to it in a remarkably similar fashion, each person weaving his or her biography into political/economic and cultural change. There is a saying among theologians that every person is a singular universe, yet every person carries universal history. I am a bit surprised, though, that they don't seem as suspicious of an American as I would have imagined them to be."

"Yes, Dan, those few who avoid speaking to you are more than suspicious; they think you are a spy for the CIA or the West Germans sent to measure their opposition to unification. I told the others I do not believe you are such an agent. They want to be heard by a neutral listener; nevertheless, they struggle with fears of being spied upon. It is fine with you to listen?"

I replied, "They are interesting; with some exceptions, they show little self-pity and are able to place themselves in the big picture of history; that's one good thing Marxism did for them. In West Berlin I am learning that they are reviled or pitied as outmoded, intellectually and socially clumsy and inept. However, if your side had won, if socialism had prevailed—"

"But our side lost, Dan. The West can claim their society is the better one."

"What I'm trying to say, Lilly, is that you East Germans have lost control of the definition of the situation. By this I mean knowledge of the rules of the new game you must play, so to speak. You are being judged by the West

German's rules. This makes you look awkward and so forth, not because fundamentally you are inept, but because you do not fully grasp the new power relationships and the accompanying rules of interaction and status hierarchies—those kinds of things."

Lilly replied, "Well, I think you are saying that we East Germans are not inherently inferior and stupid, it's more like we are powerless to control our destiny. That makes sense."

"Dan, I have an article I want you to discuss with my classes. In a roundabout way it concerns this topic of winners." She dug through her briefcase, "Here it is; it is by Francis Fukuyama (1989). You know it, yes?"

I said, "It's about the 'The End of History,' the triumph of the West, of capitalism over communism."

Lilly interrupted, "I hoped you would know it. Someone in the class gave it to me; he wants to solicit your views. What will you tell them?"

I replied, "To be cautious about reaching conclusions; and to point out that to assume the West is triumphant now and for the distant future follows historical and psychological patterns of hyperbole and myth-making by those who feel victorious. You know, 'To the victors go the spoils.'"

Lilly said, "They will be surprised to hear what you have to say. You, as an American, do not feel triumphant?"

"I'm dyspeptic," I deadpanned.

"Oh, I'm sorry. I have some stomach mints in my purse. Would you like one?"

"That's not what I mean. I'm given to bouts of skepticism and cynicism."

She smiled, "I see, a metaphorical usage of the word. I told you I would learn about English from a native speaker." She paused to jot in her notebook. "Go on, Dan."

"Here's my view, Lilly. Fukuyama suggests that it is almost certain that from here forward all political/economic issues and social problems will be resolved in a capitalist framework. Anyway, this 'interesting' suggestion is what makes his argument popular, especially in America. But this is a moment in history, not the end of history. He's quite wrong in my view, but extremely popular because he's saying what people in the West want to hear. I wonder what the class members will have to say, how many will defend socialism."

The following week, one of Lilly's classes reacted cautiously to my take on Fukuyama, remaining mostly silent as though they did not have the right to challenge me, one of the victors. Approximately half of them felt socialism had failed because of "Stalinism," which for them was not socialism.

A minority, about 10–15 percent, said socialism itself was not a workable system; the others either were non-committal or felt, in the convoluted reasoning of one of them, "Socialism is an idea humans must evolve into; it is ahead of its time, a beautiful solution that can work in about a hundred years. It is a form of a just society." Another member of the class was provoked by this and countered, "You sound like the Party telling the people that we were not good enough for socialism, not rising to the socialist ideal, not behaving like good socialist citizens."

Tension filled the room as they realized they were airing out an issue that was at once no longer politically current but important nonetheless to their collective identity. A short but intense silence overtook the room to indicate that they did not know how to deal with their sudden awareness that I was observing them. A class wag then recalled the old Bertolt Brecht poem about how the Party, disappointed with the rebellion of 1953 in East Berlin, had come upon the solution of dissolving the people and starting over. We all had a good laugh and the class snapped back to the present.

They began an avid discussion and came to the consensus that they were in no position to be critical of capitalism, but nonetheless, most of them harbored grave doubts and suspicions about living in a capitalist society. "Modern capitalism is the two-thirds society," one of them observed. "One-third of the people are kept in poverty—with their labor exploited—so that the other two-thirds can live reasonably well to outrageously well."

Throughout September, I searched without success for Western social scientists exploring how the Turn was affecting East German intelligentsia.

By the end of September, I had talked informally with many students—a few assiduously avoided me—in Lilly's two English classes. I began to meet with members in their offices, on walking tours of East Berlin, and after class for longer discussions over tea, coffee, or beer.

An East Berlin biologist in one of Lilly's classes, Doctor Dieter Schmidt, a specialist in environmental management, told me on one of these walks, two weeks after unification, "This is officially a reunification of Germany, but it is a 'reunification' of the millstone and the barley." As we walked in what he described as "no longer East Berlin," near the corner of *Friedrichstraße* and *Unter den Linden*, in the sunshine and ephemeral warmth only an autumn day offers, he pointed to a car turning right on a red light.

"In the GDR one could turn right when the traffic light is red, but not in unified Germany—because that is how the *Wessis* do it.[4] Since unification

such a right turn is illegal. If that motorist had made the same turn two weeks ago he would not have broken the law; just now he did."

We had met to discuss waste management and recycling in the GDR, his area of expertise and a topic of interest to me, but our conversation unavoidably funneled into the Turn.

"There is nothing—technological, legal, economic and so on—from the GDR that will be incorporated into unified Germany. All that we accomplished here in the GDR will pass from existence. We had good recycling methods the West Germans will not consider using simply because we East Germans developed them."

I interrupted, "Dieter, I heard from colleagues at the *WZB* that the West German production and consumption rate is much greater than that of the GDR's. Therefore, your recycling methods are not scalable . . ."

"I have heard these arguments, of course," he said, "but they are inaccurate. The West Germans do not think it possible that we could have something of value to offer Germany. We are poor, beggar relatives to them . . . There is a joke about *Ossis* coming to visit their *Wessi* relatives after the Turn. The joke is that when the *Wessis* see their *Ossi* relatives arriving in their noisy, oil burning Trabbi[5] the *Wessi* husband shouts to his wife, 'They are here. Are you sure you have hidden the good China and the bananas?'"[6]

I asked Dieter, who had just taken me on a tour of the Pergamon Museum he prized, "Do you wish the GDR could return?"

He answered before I finished my sentence, "Never. You see that is our dilemma. The past times of the GDR were bad for science, for those who wanted to speak out about what they knew to be true. In my area you had to struggle and take risks to be a real scientist. However, few did because it could cost you everything if you went against the Party. Imagine being at a meeting to discuss environmental pollution, knowing how many toxic dumping sites there are and the policies that led to them, and the major environmental problems of burning brown coal, and so on. You could not raise these issues. Do you understand? You could *not* speak of these things. The discussions were absurd, like about punishing a farmer who had dumped some fuel into a stream."

"What did the Party value?" he asked rhetorically. "Economic production to prove to the capitalists that we could feed and clothe our people with a socialist economy—this is what the Party cared about. The environment could wait!" he bellowed as he slammed his fist onto the table at the outside cafe where we had just sat down.

"Please forgive my outburst. The Party had informers in every work group; we spent much time asking ourselves and each other, 'Who among our colleagues is the spy?' when we should have been doing science to solve genuine problems."

He paused and looked closely at me, "What I have seen so far of Western democracy and so-called freedom does not look good to me, either. It is not real freedom you have in the West; it is another government-constructed illusion like we had here. You Westerners—yes, West Germans, too—think the public makes big decisions. Well, this is false."

I gave him a quizzical "go on" look.

"In the West, there is a pretense of democracy; for me, it is easy to see that an elite rules Western society. The real decisions in the West are not made by the people, or the people are tricked by their political leaders, as in the recent March election."

He continued, "Back to your question: No, I would never return to what we had in the GDR—it was crazy. The final, small chance to change the GDR was lost in the elections last March, and now we have been taken over. Look at these new establishments," he held his arm out and pointed to *Unter den Linden*.

"This is not my city any longer. Since the Turn all these new shops with expensive items and restaurants few East Germans can afford have appeared. It changed so suddenly. I did not ask for these shops and all this luxurious food—or for the drugs, the prostitutes, the crime, and the beggars that accompany capitalism."

He sighed and said, "Soon many of my colleagues [at the Academy of Sciences] will lose their positions for no genuine reason. Germany does not need two sets of scientists duplicating each other's work; this I understand. Many good people will be dismissed as inferior or incompetent, when in fact they are not. For now, we must wait, unable to determine our futures, as West Germany decides our fate. As for myself, my work will continue; I am almost certain of this from preliminary contact with the *Wissenschaftsrat*."

I asked him, "Okay Dieter, can you tell me what country are you a citizen of?"

"Ha!" he frowned in pain. "I feel I am still an East German, what else? I cannot imagine being just a German. This is a good question. I would like to know how others would answer. I would like to know *my* answer in five years."

A few days later, after Lilly's class, while working in the small auxiliary Academy library at *Otto Nuschke Straße*, Marie Schultz, a librarian,

approached me. We had said hello a few days earlier. "Excuse me," she said in English, "Are you the American talking to Academy members about the Turn?"

We began to chat and I asked about the paucity of books on the shelves. "This is a reference or branch library with very few volumes. You must go to the main library on *Unter den Linden*; many books and materials are located there."

A self-deprecating apologetic look came upon her face as she told me, "I am not a real *Wissenschaftlerin* [woman scientist]. I am a mere assistant librarian; but a sociologist I know is someone you should talk to. May I get him now?"

Surprised, I agreed to stop what I was doing and she fetched him.

He was Detlaff Broder, an intelligent and serious young man who went right into his views of the Turn as a form of domination imposed on the GDR (German Democratic Republic) by the FRG (Federal Republic of Germany). As we talked, it became clear that he thought my focus was naively micro when it should have been macro. "What is happening now to us here at the Academy is similar to the Nazis' destruction of the universities in the thirties," he insisted.

He used the word "destruction" several times,[7] commenting that it would be done with "no physical violence but great symbolic harm this time—just as Michel Foucault would predict."

He went on, "The significance of what is taking place is that a new discourse is being imposed, yet you are examining the micro or social-psychological level and merely talking to individuals. This is not the most fruitful path of analysis."

I retorted, "Well Detlaff, if there is a new discourse being imposed, are you claiming my interviews will miss this? That seems unlikely because it will affect collective identity and power relationships during interaction. People will express this imposition of a new discourse in their communications—like you are now doing!"

He smiled and said, "I know this, but of course I wish you would do it my way because it is of greater long-term importance."

After we finished our discussion, I returned to Marie and said, "Why don't you let me interview you?" and she repeated that she was not a "real scientist." "That's okay Marie, you are a really smart person."

"You want to know how people experienced living in the GDR, don't you? And how they are reacting to the many changes? Like an oral history. Is that what you call it?" she asked.

"A good way to put it," I said.

We met twice in the following three weeks in an Academy office she borrowed from a friend. "Are you certain you want to talk to me?" she asked as we sat down the first time.

"I am. I'm seeking insight into life in the GDR. Why don't you just start talking? Talk about what you think it is important for an outsider to know about your education and the life of intellectuals in the GDR. You know, it's like I'm from Mars, and just arrived."

She chuckled and said in a theatrically deep voice, "Well, coming from the West, you might think the GDR is Mars." She resumed the voice that fit her petite frame. "I was raised in West Berlin and did not come to East Berlin until I was seventeen, in 1955. This makes my worldview somewhat unusual for an East German. I came with my mother and siblings. This was before the Wall so we just moved from West Berlin to East Berlin. My early and teen years education was in West Berlin and therefore I was unwilling to accept the Party's line here in the East."

"Why did you move here?" I asked.

"We were communists and wanted to help the GDR succeed. I come from a poor communist family. Being a woman and poor are disadvantages, you know, burdens you must overcome. My mother thought we could get spiritual satisfaction by helping to build socialism in the GDR. Also, believe it or not, there was more opportunity for children from poor and communist families here in the East. West Germany is much more structured according to class discrimination."

She paused and said, "You look as though you think I am saying something unbelievable."

"Sorry, Marie, in America the communists I knew best were during my university days, and, to be honest, they had little spiritual life I could see. But that was a small sample, to be sure."

She shot back, "That is what I think about many in the West! Consumerism has a shadowy side that diminishes and even corrupts the spirit. Some of my colleagues went on buying binges after the Wall opened; this was because they embraced the Golden West myth and thought goods would make them feel better. They had learned this mainly from West German television. I worried about their spiritual side when they rushed off to *Ka De We*.[8] I must say though [she started laughing] that there is truth and falsehood in both systems, capitalist and communist."

We paused to look at each other, in the way people who are getting acquainted do, before she went on, "I still believe in socialism, real

socialism, not what was practiced here. My mother and I wanted to contribute. This was our motivation. However, my genuine devotion to socialism was not valued here. I was too 'independent-minded,' they said. A typical East German would say, 'If the Party tells me the sky is green, I know it's blue but I will pretend and say, 'yes, I agree that the sky is green.' I hated this tendency and often spoke out against it. I knew not to believe most of what I read in the newspapers; they were not *news*-papers you know. And in recent years you could listen to the radio and television news from West Berlin, which was more often accurate and true."

"How were you punished for your independence, Marie?"

She kept smiling; the type of smile varied with her feelings. "I never joined the Party. This is what some people did to protest the system. If one did not join the Party, many opportunities were closed off automatically. The thinking was, 'If you do not want to join the Party, you are unpatriotic.' Oh, if you were brilliant or had a family member who was high in the Party, you might not suffer from not joining. However, for the average person at the Academy or a university not joining the Party was disadvantageous and you might be punished in subtle ways. I'm sure it cost me in my education and the job they gave me."

"A librarian's assistant? You're probably smarter than most of those you work for," I said.

"I do not know," she blushed. "Yes, this is what they gave me. The Party assigned all careers and, of course, your type of education. Now, after the Turn, it is good that I was not a Party member. The *Wissenschaftsrat* knows who was in the Party, it counts against you."

"It is held against a GDR scientist?" I asked.

"It is now a badge of honor if you can go to the West Germans and say, 'I was not a Party member.' Still, you can see how humiliating this can be for an East German. Many East Germans feel as if all we've done is to switch masters."

"Is this your feeling, Marie?" I asked.

"No it is not," she said. "It is more complex than that; this is my insight, my advantage from living in West Berlin my first seventeen years. Many here, who know only the insulated Party-dominated East German way of life, do not fully grasp what has occurred."

"I must tell you that everyone who was a Party member was not a bad person, or a spy for the Stasi. I do not fault people for joining the Party; it was an adaptation, a way to survive and feed your family. Perhaps ninety percent or more here at this institute were Party members."

"That many? What about other institutes?" I asked.

"I do not know; some say that perhaps in the natural sciences Party membership was not so high, but here in the social sciences I know almost everyone was a member. Otherwise, unless they were exceptional in some manner, they would not be here."

"Marie, how did your education suffer? Can you give me examples?" I inquired.

"I was not denied admission to university, but I was denied graduation for some time. I was good in physics and mathematics at Humboldt University, and I wanted to be a teacher. In addition, I studied Latin, Russian, French and English. I was fortunate to be admitted to Humboldt. The Party allowed only so many children to go on to university, usually the brightest. However the children of high Party officials had no concerns; even the dim-witted ones were admitted. On the other hand, if your family was openly religious your chances of going to university were small. I know of cases where the children of religious parents—intelligent children—were excluded from university studies for this reason. Many who went to church tried to conceal this fact from the Party."

"Typically, the average children in the schools were told, you will be a plumber, an electrician, and so on. One had little choice; the GDR was a planned society and economy. Only the privileged were allowed to change professions."

"You haven't told me why they delayed your graduation." I noted.

"The specific reason was that I refused to take a teaching assignment outside of Berlin. My superiors were angry and would not allow me to graduate. I was given a temporary teaching post and my supervisor wrote a letter for my file saying I should never be allowed to teach children because my outlook was atypical, not in conformity with the Party's views. Later on, he was found sexually exploiting children and was dismissed. Finally, I was allowed to graduate but—"

"But here you are a library assistant," I quipped.

"I wanted to teach or be an interpreter or, my big dream, to be a sociologist who explores women's issues. In the GDR there were no women's issues because that would suggest inequality in this officially perfect workers state. So my dream is to study women's issues now, after the Turn."

I then said, "I don't understand why you stayed."

"I never considered leaving. I hoped for a Gorbachev, a leader who would come along and say, 'Now we will have real socialism.' I hope

that now my children will have a good future—even if it will be under capitalism—and that there is still a chance for me at my age, even though they are saying that if you are as young as forty you will have difficulty finding new employment."

"Forty, Marie? The review panels tell people they are too old?"

"This is a common practice of the review panels," she said. "It is one easy way to eliminate a large number of people here at the Academy. I am told perhaps two-third will lose their positions."

We sat for a moment with nothing to say and I noticed her eyebrows twitching as if she were making a decision. "I have a story, an example, I want to tell you. It is funny now but was not when it occurred. It is about how the Stasi tried to recruit me as a spy."

"Please tell me."

"When I was a student for a time in Leipzig, one day an odd looking little man came to my door and said that I could prove myself to the Party if I would, you know, seduce foreigners to get secrets from them for the Stasi. He came to me because I had a lady friend who was seeing a man connected to a foreign government. This odd man told me that I could recruit my lady friend to spy and that he would then see to it that I met foreign men to seduce and spy on. This would help me with the Party and of course my career. He said that in this way I could 'prove' that I was a patriot. I was fearful but I refused, and after several visits he never came again. One did not say no to the Stasi without consequences, and I think the delay in graduating and being assigned this lowly job was my punishment."

"Do you know if this kind of recruitment to spy was common?" I asked.

"No, I do not. Nor do I know how many Stasi spies were at the universities or were here at the Academy. I could never make that judgment; I just knew they were here. Also, I have no idea why he came to me instead of going to my friend who was having an affair with a foreigner. We all knew that anyone could be informing—this was the Stasi's source of intimidation: fear and uncertainty. And now we are learning from the Stasi files that are being opened how some people one would not have suspected were in fact spies—even on their own family members, lovers, and friends."

"How did people manage this fear of not knowing?" I asked.

"People spoke in a special way, with figures of speech or in paradoxical fashion, when they discussed the system. People had their *niche*, their little private world separate from the Party's control. I was deeply troubled by what this did to our character. Most of those I know here at this Academy building spent more time in their gardens than here working. There was

little incentive to work. For some, it was better to keep silent and stay in their little *niche*. A job was guaranteed, making the temptation to be silent and cynical great. You must realize that many thought the Party was all powerful; the Turn was a complete surprise to them."

"It seems you wanted heroes, Marie."

She shot back, "Big heroes are in books. The Party would destroy you if you tried to be a big hero. Why not be a little hero? There were many opportunities to be one, through simple acts of kindness and generosity; these acts were small victories against the system. My disappointment in my fellow East Germans is that many would not even do these small acts. Recently, I asked the director of this institute for a meeting to clear the air, to cleanse some of the guilt and begin repairing our wounds, betrayals, confusions and anger. He did not agree, even though the GDR is gone and the Stasi with it; and soon this institute will be gone."

"Marie, may I ask what were your thoughts when you heard the Wall was opening?"

"I was filled with joy even though I knew"—she exhaled—"that this would bring both good and bad. Clearly it was the end of the GDR and would lead to a merger with the FRG. I knew drugs and crime and consumer goods would quickly arrive; the Wall did keep things under control. I worried about how it would be for my children. It is not all bad, though. There are opportunities for the children, if not for most of the East German adults."

She stopped for a minute and said, "Listening to myself tell you this I must confess that I am making this sound more logical than it was. I had general feelings and thoughts on a societal level that things would not be the same. I did not see the direct consequences for the Academy and for myself. I clearly remember telling myself, 'It's your life now,' and then—without warning—I was filled with memories of when I moved to East Berlin. This has always been one city to me; I never could say 'East Berlin, capital city of the GDR.'"

I told her, "You are the first person to tell me you knew the Wall would come down permanently. I have only spoken to about two dozen people, but they believed the government that this was just a three day opening of the Wall to allow them to visit West Germany and West Berlin and then return to the GDR."

Marie scoffed, "*Mein Gott*, such thinking. I had no doubt the Wall would never be closed again. This shows how out of touch the Party was; and how willing the intelligentsia were to believe in the Party."

"Marie, you've brought up spiritual matters. Do you believe in God? What does God mean to you?"

"God is something abstract created by the human mind. Let me tell you a story from my childhood. As a child in a communist family, I secretly prayed to God for comfort and to rescue me from poverty and the hard times of the Nazi and then the post-Nazi era. I studied religion at school in West Berlin; this helped me think about the concept of God. Once grown, I never accepted the belief that there was an omniscient being interested in me; this seems childish. Communism was my family's religion, what we believed in our hearts."

"You should know that religious institutions were vital to opposing the Party in the GDR; it was like one religion with almost all the power, the Party, being challenged by a religion—I mean the churches—with very little power. I do not believe that religion is always the opiate of the people. Marx and Engels were trying to rally the people and I do not think they really saw no use for religion. They grasped its power."

"I know what you mean. They understood the power of religion even if some of their followers did not," I quipped.

She replied, "It's like a joke, really, Marxists misunderstanding Marx. It's good to laugh at serious things."

We met occasionally for coffee and spoke on the telephone several times as she offered the names of people to interview and her opinions and insights on current events and questions I put to her. I saw her last in the spring of 1991 when the building at *Otto Nuschke Straße* 10–11 was beginning to be occupied by business enterprises and Academy staffs were being dismissed or reassigned.[9]

Two weeks before my conversation with Marie, I had my first contact with a recently retired chemical anthropologist, Doctor Gunther Kohl. He was a member of Lilly's Wednesday afternoon class. He rarely spoke and sat erect in his chair, always dressed in a navy sport coat and tie. He had smiled politely and gently nodded hello to me at every encounter in the class, although he had never spoken to me.

"Dan, Doctor Kohl knows of your interest in the Turn; he wishes that you listen to his accounts. I have assured him that you are not a spy. He is waiting for you," Lilly told me after class.

"Fine, Lilly, I'll set up a meeting with him for next week or whenever."

She replied, "I do think he is ready now."

"Now, Lilly?" I said, looking over at him smiling like a schoolboy, his hands clasped, waiting his turn to give a piano recital. There were still people

milling around in the class when I sat down with him, thinking we would get acquainted and that I could schedule a talk with him after the next class meeting.

He began, "Thank you Doctor Bednarz, for this opportunity to speak with you. I note that you have a slight resemblance to Klaus Bednarz, who was once a correspondent here in East Berlin. It is a good thing you do to hear our story. We are in a bad way and I do not believe many know who we are or what our life here in the GDR was like. I wish to tell you."

I started to respond and found him taking his next breath and launching into his story. For the first minute I was uncomfortable, mistaking his intensity for psychological confusion and disorientation. I looked up and saw members of the class still talking to Lilly and each other and felt uneasier. However, he spoke in a soft low voice and soon only Lilly remained; she said goodbye and excused herself leaving us alone in the classroom.

As I listened to him, I realized that he was anguished, not deranged. He began to explain himself, saying, "I am a pawn, and I am telling you my story so that you can combine it with other stories and make what you will of it. I have heard from others in this class that you will listen to me."

He then told me that recently he had been "forced into retirement, with a very low pension," and as a consequence prevented from finishing the research to which he had devoted many years. He said he was sixty-two and that most Academy members were being told that anyone over fifty would likely be forced to retire. "I have even heard of people as young as forty being told by some of the review panels they are too old."

"I was sixteen when I joined the Nazi army; all the older men were gone, you see, and schoolboys were told it was our patriotic duty to fight for Germany. As much as such a young man could grasp Nazism, I confess I did believe in it. We were told we must stop the Russians because they would rape all the women and kill or enslave all the children. After joining the army, I was captured by the Russians and made a kitchen helper. They were kind to me and said I could become a socialist and help built a just world. I found their kindness remarkable in contrast to the harshness of the Nazi army and the propaganda I had been given in school."

"We were full of great expectations after the war—blind, unbounded, youthful hope. We had big dreams for socialism after the Nazis."

"In 1953 I still had hope and that led me to participate in the 17th of June revolt here in Berlin against the Soviets and the East German Socialist Party. I was captured and beaten regularly in prison until my supervisor, a

high man in the Party, came to secure my release. He told the Party bosses, 'This Gunther is a young hothead but a good socialist; turn him over to me and I will redirect his misguided character,' and I was released to him."

"After the uprising we, my friends and I, began to wonder if perhaps the dream might not be true. Unfortunately, the main lesson I drew from this revolt was that resistance was futile; the Soviets would crush you and the East German Socialist Party would aid them."

He began to lower his intensity level as he saw that I was paying attention. I still was not able to get in a question.

"I know you wish to know why I stayed in the GDR after the revolt." I nodded and he went on in a still softer and lower voice, "When you are young there is always time, you can leave next year, one had only to walk across the street to leave—do you understand? Finally, I made a plan to go west; however, my father died just as I was prepared to go. Consequently, I told myself I would leave only after my mother died; I could not leave before this out of devotion to her. Suddenly, the year was 1961 and the Wall was being erected; and my mother was still alive. One of my daughters escaped before the Wall was fully built."

"How did she do it?" I got in a question.

"It was quite easy to escape. First, Honecker's[10] security men laid barbed wire to surround West Berlin. This slowed the rate of those leaving, although young people like my daughter could wade across one of the many canals to West Berlin. One Friday evening she just walked into a canal with her clothing in two suitcases held above her head and waded to her boyfriend on the other side. It was accomplished that easily. As time went on, and the Wall was being built, people passed around information about pathways still open across the border. Eventually, Mr. Honecker sealed every inch of the border. He knocked down buildings if they were too close to West Berlin; he closed streets—whatever was necessary to seal the border. My mother lived a few more years and when she died it was too late for me unless I was prepared to risk my life, and my wife to risk hers as well."

He sat slumped over at the table, with his head in his hands, sweating, before he regained his typical erect posture.

Finally, his face announced he would take questions. "Doctor Kohl, can you tell me what your thoughts were when you heard the Wall was opening?" He gazed down at the table for a long moment and I watched him start sobbing and gasping for air. I leaned forward in an awkward show of concern as he drew his handkerchief from his pocket and wiped his soaked

face. "Please forgive me. I have cried twice in my life: when my dear mother died and when I sat in front of my television and saw the Wall opened." He smiled slightly and went on, "And now for a third time."

He then said, "The announcement came in the evening as I was looking at the television. You may know that in that time, last year, everyone looked at the television constantly because there was uncertainty and new events every day. Honecker had resigned in October; the protests in Leipzig had spread here to East Berlin; the police had attacked people at marches; there was the *Neues Forum* reform movement; and many forms of resistance to the Party were appearing in public. To my astonishment, the people were openly angry with the Party and holding massive demonstrations without fear of reprisals."

"Mr. Schabowski, the Party's press spokesman, read the announcement at a press conference saying we could visit West Germany. I thought I had not heard him properly. I called my wife into the room and said to her, 'I think Schabowski is saying we can go to the FRG for a three day visit, beginning tomorrow morning.' When the announcement was shown again, we knew it was true but it was confusing—could he really have said that? Then Schabowski said to a reporter[11] who had asked for clarification something like, 'It looks like citizens can go immediately,' and I began to cry."

"I knew I was old and had no new life to make in the West, yet I felt such joy for the young people of the GDR. I felt joy for them and sorrow for those of us who had once believed and now were old and disillusioned. It is striking how quickly one's life flashes through the mind during such a startling state of affairs as that night."

He said he wanted to talk about the Stasi, a topic he returned to in every conversation we had. "They took our souls . . . They made us into cowards . . . this should not happen to people, to surrender their souls to have a job, a life. We were afraid of what they could do if you did not cooperate; only the truly brave among the intellectuals resisted. The rest of us were two-faced. Others will tell you, if they are honest, that we said in public what we were expected to say. If we wanted to speak candidly, we looked around to see who might be listening. We spoke in code, for instance, 'I had my hair cut yesterday,' meant that I had finished a forbidden book and was ready to pass it on to the next reader. We often taped books underneath restaurant tables to pass them along."

"I had my *niche*, my summer garden house,[12] my career; and I said nothing to upset this arrangement. It claimed a terrible price on my soul.

And now, after the Turn, I find myself still looking over my shoulder, especially when I sit in a restaurant."

I noted to myself his agony and regret and then wondered why he spoke of himself in passive language, yet he alluded to *selling* his soul. I later learned that those people asked to leave the Academy in early 1990, before unification and before the Academy was closed at the end of 1991, were most likely official Party representatives at the Academy or accused of spying for the Stasi. I never asked Doctor Kohl about this for three reasons. First, I think he took it for granted that at some point I learned this information; second, he hinted at cooperating with the Stasi in every one of our conversations; and, third, there was a slim chance that he was forced to retire simply because of his age.

He turned lighthearted and quipped, "I do not like my name, you know what it means, don't you?"

"It means 'cabbage.' Have you heard of coleslaw?" I asked him.

"Of course I have heard of coleslaw many times over. I get jokes about my name, because it means cabbage and because of the West German Chancellor, Mr. Helmut Kohl—not a popular man here in the East. He is something of a cabbage head, you know?"

He became serious. "Doctor Bednarz, I have much to tell you, and it is not all about me and my woes and troubles. Thank you for listening just now, and for not embarrassing me. I did an excellent job of that myself. I have been in the GDR since it began, if you need insight I will give it to you. I need to feel of use, to tell the truth to someone. I will ask several of my Academy colleagues to speak with you if you like."

"Fine, Doctor Kohl. Maybe we can meet again in two weeks. Everything you have told me will be masked by giving you a pseudonym, to protect your anonymity."

"Please use my name," he said. "For once I want the world to know what I think without being in fear." I agreed to do so.

"I know a nice restaurant at the cultural center just a few doors from here; it is where my colleagues and I often lunched. We can meet there in two weeks," he said.

We met for lunch in front of the Academy building and walked to the restaurant at the culture center. As we decided where to sit, I noticed him scrutinizing each table before he turned to me and pointed to one by a window with no one sitting nearby. "May we sit there?" he asked. As we sat down, he looked around as if he were exercising his neck muscles and said,

"I just now realized that I have once again worried about the Stasi. Old habits are strong."

"Doctor Kohl," I commented, "You said before that you came here often with your colleagues. I wonder if entering this familiar place where for many years you worried about being overheard has triggered your behavior today."

"I hope it is that simple an explanation," he chuckled. "We call it the Stasi syndrome, it poisoned everyone who had contact with them. Accusations and counter accusations are now being made regarding who was a spy or collaborator. I have been told that of the twenty million citizens of the GDR, as many as six million at one time or another, to some degree, were spied upon."

"Do you think the Stasi are still active, Doctor Kohl?"

"Not here in this restaurant, of course, this is my paranoia from a lifetime of living in fear. I have heard from colleagues that some of them—the Stasi—are secretly working in an old house and still watching people."

"Who would they be watching and for whom?" I asked. "The GDR no longer exists. How would they earn income? Who would they be serving?"

"I concede," he lamented, "it is irrational . . . One never knew for sure in the GDR; anyone could be a spy, anyone. Maybe the CIA is employing them."

He changed course. "I have thought about our conversation in Frau Dieckmann's classroom and it must be noted that the control of intellectuals was not uniform across time in the GDR; there were times of liberalization and repression, although there was always central control. There was more flexibility in the past few years, leading to the Turn, for example. In the sixties, most of the seventies, and early eighties, the government highly regulated what the people could read. At times it sent inspectors around to apartment houses to see where your television antenna was pointed. If it faced West Berlin television, you were in trouble. In recent years this practice was discarded; we all looked at West television. With print, it was much the same; some Western journals were openly passed around in recent times. For example, retired citizens could travel freely to West Berlin and they would return with literature. In the repressive times, however, the Party's cruelty could be harsh for attempting to smuggle forbidden literature into the country."

I commented, "I understand the Party's repression; I was unaware of the ability of retirees to visit the West."

"Oh yes, the Party wished they would stay in the FRG; then they would not get a pension from the GDR because the West Germans would support them. Retired people often brought back goods not available here in the East, and at times these goods were wrapped in newspaper, like a fish or vegetables. Well, in repressive times the guards confiscated the newspapers to prevent anyone here in the East from reading them."

"The most critical item is that the means of organizing and communicating among intellectuals were tightly controlled by the Party. In the last few years the Party made much of the claim that books critical of the system were published in the GDR. The number of copies printed was ridiculously small. In this way the Party could say dissent was given voice, while in reality these books had absolutely no chance of reaching large numbers of people."

"As for widespread resistance, it appeared only at the end. It is safe to conclude that there is no history of intellectual resistance in the GDR, only an occasional dissident or refusenik, and they were expelled, imprisoned or bought off. Consider, for example, the protests last fall. Most intellectuals were late in joining in, especially those here in Berlin. I know of one or two from the Academy who joined in the protests early; most of those who participated did not do so until the hour was late, after Mr. Honecker's resignation. You know, of course, that the major demonstrations were in Leipzig every Monday evening."

"Not in Berlin, is this your point?" I asked.

"Correct, not in Berlin, where there were far more intellectuals and artists than in any other city."

"How do you explain this, Doctor Kohl?"

"The intelligentsia were two-faced, even people like Christa Wolf, the novelist. She wrote the manuscript *Was Belibt?* (1990) and put it in her desk drawer. Then she published it after the Turn, not before when it would have taken courage to do so."

"If you want to understand normal times in the GDR, then imagine that they were like George Orwell's description of *Animal Farm* (1945). That is the simile for understanding life in the GDR."

He looked around the room, exhaled deeply, and then said, "The Party not only controlled what we said and did in public, they believed the state could determine what a person desired and needed. For example, we received 2.2 pairs of shoes a year, no matter that I might need one pair this year and three the next, or that my neighbor needed four."

"I would not like to be the one who got point two pair of shoes, Doctor Kohl," I teased him.

He grinned and said, "Yes, one could buy more than two pairs, of course, but the economy was planned with such thinking in mind as to only produce 2.2 pairs per capita. It caused shortages."

"They sought to control us as individuals; ultimately to determine the very nature of our personalities."

"They wanted to create what some call the Socialist Personality?" I asked.

"I have read of this," he said, "and there is truth to it; we were able to be ourselves only in private, and we had no genuine, guaranteed privacy. This is why we had our *niche*, our psychological illusion of privacy that came at the price of turning away from the truth."

He pulled several sheets of paper from his navy blue blazer. "I have made some notes on the severe economic circumstances we here in the East are facing. Unfortunately, our West German cousins have not rescued us. You need to know these facts about the bigger picture of what is coming. There were price rises this past July 1st, when the currency conversion from our East Mark to the D-Mark took place. Many people bought goods before the conversion to save on expenses. What is coming in January [1991] promises to be severe."

I asked, "What is the unemployment rate in the former GDR? From all I've heard and read it's high and going higher in the East German states and quite low in West Germany."

"This is in dispute, the West Germans saying one thing and we in the East another. Many jobs were lost this year as GDR companies, which were run by the government, failed in the capitalist market. There are companies with subsidies that will end in January, at which time thousands more will be unemployed. Right now? Perhaps twenty-five percent are out of work in the East, while in the FRG unemployment is at an all-time low of about 2 percent as they manufacture goods to sell here in the East."

"This is why some East Germans say we are an internal colony of the West Germans; it is simply how capitalism functions. The correct unemployment figures here in the East are hidden by part-time work, *Kurzarbeit*, and by retraining programs and classes subsidized by the FRG. This means that many people who have lost their jobs or are working part-time are not counted as unemployed. The unemployment percentage here in the East will be very large in January; that no one doubts. The questions for me are, How long will it last? Will we here in the former GDR become a poor relative to the FRG? It looks that way to me."

"I have more in my notes. You know about the recent rise in rents here in the East, when they went up by a factor of two, three, even six in some

instances; they will rise again next year. There are other price increases of which to take notice. Public transportation currently costs on average eleven *Pfennig* per kilometer and in January it will cost thirty-three *Pfennig*. A simple haircut formerly cost 8.5 East-Marks and now if you look for a bargain you will pay 20 D-Marks.[13] I have done some simple calculations and found that prices of various reasonable necessities have gone up two to four times since the Turn."

I commented, "The West Germans say that your standard of living was low and artificially subsidized; a transition period is needed."

"Ah, a transition, that is a nice word; that is how they wish to see things. This is connected to why so many East Germans continue to 'transition' to West Germany, where they can earn a higher salary for the same work."

"You are speaking of the flow of people from East to West?" I asked him.

"Yes, there are wage disparities driving workers from the GDR to the FRG. An East German heating and cooling repairman, for example, with five years of experience receives 1,500 D-Mark a month; a newly trained repairman, with no experience, earns 2,400 D-Mark in West Germany. As many as 300,000 may leave the East this year to earn more for the same work in the West; and here in unified Berlin, the same jobs pay according to where you live, in the former East Berlin or West Berlin."

"Why? Because of the assumption that East Germans can live on less?" I asked.

"There is a sixty-six percent rule in place. If you live in the former East Berlin, you earn two-thirds of what a West Berliner earns for the identical work. Take the transportation workers, the *U-Bahn*, *S-Bahn*, bus, and here in the East, the street trolley drivers. Those who work for the East Berlin transportation company earn less than those who work for the West Berlin company. It is done according to a master economic plan devised in the FRG. All these workers have to live in the same economy, however. The East is not really cheaper. The major justification for the rule is, to be fair, the difference in the cost of rents in East and West Berlin. However, this has already begun to change as rents rise in East Berlin to the levels of West Berlin; food, clothing, insurance and other necessities all cost the same. This dismays and angers many here in the East. It is taken as an indication that we are second-class and being exploited by our West German cousins."

We talked on the telephone and met regularly during my entire time in Berlin. I soon asked him to call me Dan, although I declined his request to

call him Gunther. “If you do not mind, you call me Dan and I want to call you Doctor Kohl.”

“As you wish, Dan.”

Frau Ingrid Grund, whom I met in Lilly’s class my first time in East Berlin, also was enrolled in one of Lilly’s Wednesday classes, and she renewed her invitation to Potsdam and *Sans Souci*. One morning in late October, I took the *S-Bahn* to Wannsee, where I boarded the 99 Bus and traveled to the end of the line at *Bassin Platz*.

“Please call me by my first name, Ingrid,” she requested, “You are an American, so this means we can use our first names, does it not?”

“If you like, Ingrid.”

She told me, “I hope you like to walk; walking is good for your health. We shall view some historic places in Potsdam and then enter the estate of Frederick the Great to see his *Schloß Sans Souci*.”

As I kept up with her pace, she gave warnings about her colleagues at the Academy. “Do not accept what my colleagues will tell you about their opposition to the Party. They want to survive now that the Party is destroyed, so now it is in their interest to say they opposed the Party. But where was their opposition when the GDR existed? They will tell you nonsense about how heroic they were. What *Quatsch*!”

I told her, “Actually Ingrid, most of your colleagues are not professing heroism or opposition to the Party. They are lamenting, mourning, guilty, angry and confused.”

“These are honest reactions; I am surprised,” she replied.

As we continued our brisk pace, she demonstrated her love for Potsdam by offering a constant flow of historical anecdotes and information: “Here in these houses is where Napoleon’s soldiers stayed. This place is called *holländische Viertel*.[14] This is where some young people not too long ago risked their safety to stop the Party from knocking down these historic houses to erect new housing of inferior quality.”

She continued, “I do not wish to leave Potsdam. My mother and sister are here; I have an opportunity to be retrained and take a new post in Leipzig, but it’s not such a good opportunity. If I would leave, it would be to go to America; maybe I could go to your country and be a cleaning lady.”

“A cleaning lady? What about your education?”

“I am an East German economist and my English is not so good. It is only an idea that came to me in all this confusion and chaos. I wish to remain in Potsdam.”

She kept up a steady pace as we walked several miles through the city and then reached the *Schloßpark* grounds.

We entered a small building and she asked me to wait while she held an animated conversation with a man. I could not hear what they were saying. Eventually, I saw him give her a set of keys. She came to me smiling and said, "The manager of the grounds has agreed that as my American guest I may give you a private showing of the Teahouse and *Scholß Sanssouci*. Please, we should hurry before he changes his mind!"

She explained every tapestry, wall mural, the jewels in the walls, the floors, and any item I happened to notice that she had missed.

Then we began to walk to her mother and sister's house. "My mother, my sister and her daughter are waiting for us. I live in a small apartment with my son, who will not join us today. My mother was an English and Russian translator after the War. She is eager to meet an American and speak English again after all these years."

"I want to show you where the Wall stood near my sister's big house. Also of interest is that fact that her house is on a canal connecting two lakes. One could look out at the Wall and beyond it to West Berlin from the living room."

We walked along fifty paces or so from the water's edge on *Schwanenallee* and she pointed, "Notice the outline of the shallow trench in the ground. This is where the Wall stood. Across the water is West Berlin. You see there are some houses along this road. Only important people in the Party were allowed to live this near to the Wall."

About two hundred yards along the road, we turned left and walked beside the canal to *Tizianstraße*. Ingrid pointed out a park on the other side and noted a barbed wire fence in the middle of the canal. "Ingrid, how difficult would it have been to get to the water, and once beyond it to West Berlin?"

She howled with laughter, "There was no hope of escaping this way. You would be shot before you got to the water. If one could enter the water and reach the fence, you had to go over or under it; not a likely accomplishment with the barbed wire and undercurrents. If you reached the other side of the fence, you were an easy target for the marksmen in guard towers, who were trained to believe it was their patriotic duty to shoot without question."

The house was a bucolic, slightly tattered at the edges, comfy stone two story with large rooms and picture windows facing the canal and park. The lakes, *Heiliger See* and *Jungfernsee*, were visible at either end of the canal.

Ingrid's mother, Helga; her cousin, Beate; and sister Eva—along with her daughter, Caludia—were there with coffee and tea brewing along with pastries. Her frail mother struggled to speak. "She damaged her voice from many years of speaking in the cold rooms of houses and *Schloß Sanssouci*," Ingrid explained.

Her mother exerted herself to tell me, "I was a translator of Russian and English. It's been many years since I have spoken English. Once I was quite accomplished in your language."

We ate and talked for several hours. The women made a hilarious quintet, lampooning members of the Party and telling funny stories of all the indignities and absurdities of life in the GDR. Ingrid's mother referred to Erich Honecker in English as Mr. Honeysucker. "My daughter and her son must live in a tiny apartment in Potsdam with windows on one side while Mr. Honeysucker lived in several houses with many windows. I am happy the GDR failed, even if we do not know what unification with the West Germans will bring us."

They told a story of the agony and humor of buying a car in the GDR. "At the age of eighteen," Ingrid said, "one was eligible to own a car but," and her sister Eva chimed in, "One had to wait fifteen years or more for one's name to come up on the list."

"Fifteen years?" I exclaimed. "I have been told one had to place one's name on a waiting list, but I did not know it could be so long a wait."

They told me that cars were scarce, prompting families to enroll every member on the waiting list. "There was a benefit to this," said Eva, "If your name came up and your family had already purchased a car, you could sell your place on the list for 3,000 to 5,000 Marks. In addition, people often bought a used car—for a high price—because such a purchase could be made without the long wait." I knew that Eva had a car and asked how she managed to get it.

They started laughing and Ingrid said, "It is my mother's car." Her mother giggled as she pretended to drive a car, moving her eyebrows up and down like Groucho Marx. Ingrid explained that if one worked the system properly, older, ailing people could get a high priority to receive a car. So Eva used her mother's poor health status to buy the car for herself and her husband. "You see," Eva said, "Everything was according to the Plan; we always had a plan in the GDR."

They paused in their satire a few times to tell about "solidarity," a concept I was to hear discussed many times in East Germany. "We had solidarity with friends and colleagues," Ingrid told me. "Yes, we did," Eva

and her mother and cousin agreed. I asked how they developed and maintained it, given how the Party and the Stasi kept everyone guessing as to who might be a spy.

They were startled by the question, "The answer must have something to do with this fact," Eva said, "that the more the Party tried to control our lives the more solidarity we developed. As for the Party, they thought solidarity among the people indicated their success in having us support and believe in the Party, which it did not."

"Before you leave I want to tell you about the night the Wall opened," said Eva. "My husband was in his usual evening position." She pantomimed him lying on the sofa half-asleep.

Ingrid interjected, "Everyone was watching the television in those days, it was only three weeks after Honecker's resignation and the protests were throughout the country."

Eva went on, "I was leaving for a meeting when my husband got up from the couch and ran to the bathroom and shouted as he ran by, 'Come here, come here, you will not believe what is going on.' He ran back from the bathroom and said, 'Did you hear Mr. Schabowski?' He could not sit down and started rapidly pacing in front of the television."

"Eva, I have heard that Schabowski was not clear in what he said. What did you hear him say and see him do?"

"I know what you mean. He had just come out from a Politburo meeting, I think, and was saying some nonsense typical of the Party, when someone handed him the paper with the announcement. He read it and it was obvious he could not believe the words on the paper. He kept on reading it because he was the Party's spokesman, a cool cookie or whatever you call it. He said we could 'visit' West Germany for the weekend and then the Wall would close again. I was by then crying. Living near to the Glienicker Bridge, my husband and I walked to it and found many people standing there saying, 'Let us through, we heard on the television that we can go through for the weekend.' The guards said they had received no orders and told us to come back in the morning."

"Ingrid and I went to the bridge in the morning, and the scene was a fiasco. The guards were shouting, 'Everyone needs a pass.' However, they did not know what kind of pass to issue. The crowd was large and noisy, and eventually the guards decided to open the gate to avoid a calamity. Of course no passes were issued."

"We walked across the bridge for the first time in nearly thirty years and immediately went to the park that can be seen from our home. We

remembered playing there when we were little girls. Then we cried. Next, we got on the *S-Bahn* at Wannsee and rode to West Berlin, where we met a man—we just began talking—and he said, 'Come in my car'—a Mercedes it was—'and I shall give you a tour of West Berlin.' We had forgotten how big the city is."[15]

"And then?" I asked.

"Ah, and then," Eva said. "We celebrated for days. But now? Well, that was a year ago and it seems like a thousand years have gone by."

Hans Adlersflügel was one of the first East Berliners to find employment as a social science researcher in West Berlin after the Wall opened. He had participated in the roundtables,[16] which were organized more or less spontaneously soon after the Wall was opened. He told me in his deliberate, gentle giant voice, "We had a real democracy for about four months, from November 1989 through February 1990. It was thrilling to be a part of this process. We held meetings almost every night, trying to determine our future as East Germans, searching for a form of democratic socialism … And then it all ended with finality after the March vote."

He elaborated that following the opening of the Wall, members of the East German intelligentsia believed they had an unparalleled opportunity to create a "third way," a synthesis of the few good aspects of democratic capitalism within an overall socialist system. The roundtables were organized to address the questions, "What now? How to do it?" He detailed for me how East German intellectuals had gone from elation and anticipation to dejection and resignation as they came to realize they were out of step with the wishes of the rest of the GDR's citizens. Equally deflating, they recognized there would be no public discussion over how West Germany should be improved though unification with the GDR.

"Who voted for and against unification, Hans?" I inquired.

"The intellectuals and, naturally, committed Socialist Party members voted overwhelmingly against unification. They argued that the CDU, Chancellor Kohl's[17] Christian Democratic Party, was buying votes by promising instantaneous prosperity without any sacrifices from East German workers. The opinions of the East German people were surveyed in early January of this year and only 20% favored unification. Yet by March 70% favored it. At first, this seemed an astounding turnaround, however it was not, given the success of Kohl's promises. I am not sure that if the vote were taken now, after the East German people have seen what sudden unification has brought them, that unification would be approved. This is speculation after the fact, of course, but I know many East German

workers—not intellectuals—who now feel misled and even lied to by Mr. Kohl and his party."

"I think the people felt, 'Why should we give socialism another chance after all that the Party has done to us? We need only look at the West Germans and their prosperity to see what we have been denied. The GDR went the wrong way under the Soviets and the Party. Now is our chance to live like West Germans.'"

"I understand this reasoning. The East German people were not solely responding to Kohl's promises of goods, vacations, cars, and money, one must realize. They were psychologically weary and felt cheated and oppressed by the Party. Additionally, at that critical time before the vote there was release of information about the corruption of high government and Party officials. This came as a total shock to many East Germans. In my understanding, all this combined to produce the massive swing in public opinion to favor unification."

"As for me and my fellow East German intellectuals who were hoping for a chance to build Democratic socialism in the GDR, the vote was a major, major blow."

"How much do you know about intellectual life versus Party control at the Academy?" I asked him.

"I know this from the outside, I was not an Academy member or employee. In my experience, there were two cultures at the Academy, one of scholarly inquiry and the other bureaucratic, oriented to the Party. Each culture had its distinct styles of arguments, language, views, values, and so forth. They could be intermingled and produce conflict in any one individual—which was interesting—but there were two distinct cultural orientations in tension with one another."

Hans thought for a moment and added, "Undoubtedly, joining the Party was necessary if you wanted to push for reforms of any kind; you were not heard unless you were a Party member. This is true for the entire GDR society, not merely the Academy. In this sense, you should know that ninety-five percent of those at the Academy whom I knew—they were in the social sciences—were Party members. The issue is what kind of Party member one was, a difficult, subjective assessment to make, especially now with all the recriminations and charges about Stasi collaboration flying about as East German intellectuals strive to save their careers and secure a source of income."

"In any case, the Party did not listen well, and it would compromise scholars and their work if it was politically advantageous to do so."

"You don't know, Hans, how many were primarily scholarly versus primarily bureaucratic?"

"No, I do not," he said, "This may be the less relevant question to pose. I am sure you will meet people there who you will notice from your discussions are scholarly. This does not mean they supported or opposed the Party on any given issue. However, you are speaking with them after the Turn, when they may no longer hold to their previous attitudes and positions—and not even recognize how much they have changed their views! Presently, after the Turn, many East German scientists and scholars are seeking to build alliances and networks with their FRG counterparts; they want to be connected to power again."

"This is a complex sociological phenomenon. An issue of how they behaved in GDR times and are behaving now; an issue of collective and historical memory that has intricate effects at the individual and collective level. Some in the West would turn this into *only* a moral issue—'Did you betray anyone to the Stasi?' In some cases it is a moral issue, but how ridiculous to use an absolutist standard of Western morality to make these judgments."

"Who should make these judgments, or should they not be made?" I asked.

"We East Germans know best in this regard."

"Very difficult," I observed.

"Indeed it is," he said.

During November I had several meetings with a member of Lilly's English class, Alfred Biermann, an Academy member whom I found to be the most outspoken and unapologetic Party supporter I met. He had a sharp wit and enjoyed clever repartee, puns, and sarcastic one-liners. We talked informally during the coffee break several times, and then he asked me to proofread and edit a paper he had written in English.

After I obliged him, he asked, with skeptical intonation, why I was interested in East German intelligentsia, quipping, "If I talk to you, will the CIA hear of me by next week? Maybe it will help my career, which is otherwise at an end." I tried to explain that one day people regardless of ideology would want to know about him and his East German colleagues. I felt that he understood my words but remained suspicious of my motivation.

"Okay," he said, "so we can meet for a long discussion. I have some things to tell you, whomever you are."

We met at *Otto Nuschke Straße* 22–23. The central administration of the Academy was in this large building, and Fred, as Doctor Biermann had decided he wanted to be called, knew it well. "I have an office reserved for us on the upper floor," he informed me as we walked through the entrance and foyer. The office was spacious and comfortable, obviously that of a high administrator. We sat down and he began speaking.

"I have been dismissed, purged really, and at age fifty-four and as an unrepentant communist, I see little beyond what we call *Vorruhestand*. What do you call it, again?"

"Early retirement," I answered.

"Yes, early retirement is a most pleasant way to describe being thrown out."

"Fred, given your doubts, I'd like to tell you more about the sociological and even human interest aspects of this research I'm doing."

"Please do not think me rude," he said, "but let us put this aside for the moment. There are some observations I want to make about what has taken place and is yet to come here in the former GDR."

"Alright," I said, "what's on your mind? How do you see the events of the past year? Is this a turn? a revolution?"

"It is a restoration of capitalism and that means it is a *counterrevolution*. The conduct the FGR has undertaken is typical of a capitalist nation: neo-colonialism. I am confident you understand that property is the central concept to analyze. Whoever owns property determines the limits of acceptable, rational discourse. Put directly, property is the organizing principle of a society. An occupying power structure is coming into place in the GDR and the intellectuals at the Academy are scrambling to deny their connections to the Socialist Party of the GDR and to align themselves to the FRG, the new property owners, or power holders if you do not like to see it in terms of property."

"Virtually all intellectuals at the Academy were connected to the Party; and the Party ultimately controlled what they did and said. This was a given. Now that a new master has appeared, there is pressure not to speak up. Therefore, there is no collective activity or movement of any sort at the Academy to represent the interests of GDR intellectuals. We are literally being decimated and humiliated in silence. In other words, there is no collective action at all while members are being dismissed with the knowledge that these dismissals are unjustified. If Academy members speak out and defend their rights, they will lose their tiny chance at keeping their position. So silence and ingratiation are the default tactics. GDR

intellectuals will not admit that almost to a person they did not want capitalism, they wanted to reform socialism. The *Wissenschaftsrat* review process is like your 1950s American McCarthy witch-hunt."

"*Sie müssen jetz Anpassen!*" ["You must adapt!"] he shouted. "This is what this so-called Turn is; it is really a counterrevolution!"

He looked at me to emphasize his anger. His equanimity returned and said, "None of this is new for Germany or for intellectuals in any society." He reviewed what he described as the "dismal record" of intellectuals under the Kaiser, in Weimar Germany, of course in the Nazi years, in the GDR, in the FRG, and now in the present colonization era, which he refused to call the Turn.

"Only a few resisted in any of these periods. German intellectuals are servants, not fighters; this explains the psychology of the bitter denunciations of us coming from many West German intellectuals, and especially those coming from intellectuals in West Berlin, where the rivalry with GDR intellectual was intense. They denounce us East Germans to please and ingratiate themselves to their West German masters. It is cowardice masquerading as bravery."

He announced he was ready to take questions.

"You were, then, not encouraged when the Wall opened?" I asked.

"I was not in high spirits. I came to Berlin in 1952 and I knew West Berlin well. I waited several weeks after the Wall came down before visiting. I was happy to have the opportunity to visit West Berlin again."

"And what did you think returning after all those years?"

"It was good in some ways, but I knew problems unknown in the GDR, like drugs, crime and all manner of corruption would soon arrive. The Party believed it had no choice; the Wall was opened to avoid a civil war and—the Party reasoned—to stabilize the GDR society. It was too late; Honecker was too rigid to change and the fundamental truth is that if the Soviets could not make socialism survive, we in the GDR could not survive."

He continued, "Article six of the GDR Constitution reads, 'The German Democratic Republic is forever and irrevocably allied with the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.'"

"I see, Fred. And the Party thought opening the Wall would stabilize the GDR?"

"It was a desperate move that obviously did not succeed," he said. "I can assure you this is why the Wall was opened. You will hear nonsense about a Stasi plot to destabilize the GDR by using the confusion with which the Wall was opened as a pretext to regain control. This is rubbish."

"There are some who think the Party engineered the opening to regain control? I have not heard that before," I noted.

"Yes, they cannot imagine what took place any other way, as if the Party was still in control, acting rationally when the situation was literally out-of-hand."

"Tell me, please, Fred, what do you see as your future living under capitalism?"

He laughed and smiled wryly, "I regret that we East Germans no longer support Castro. I wanted you to know this because it illustrates my outlook. Now we are reunited with the many fascists who fled the GDR to find refuge in the FRG, where their crimes were whitewashed or ignored. As for capitalism, it is a form of wish fulfillment, it takes good care of many and ignores or exploits quite a few, too. Here in the East we call it the two-thirds society that depends upon exploiting a third of its citizens."

I asked him, "What do you think your future holds?"

Without anguish he said, "A meager existence, with health care of basic quality, nothing more. The pension for early retirement is small for citizens of the GDR, much smaller than for FRG citizens. My rent is rising, as are the other costs of living. Furthermore, I have no visible way of increasing my income, which is how one survives under capitalism."

"Supposedly, we have a lower standard of living in the GDR states. In fact, we now live in the FRG's economy. My rent was about 200 East Marks per month and it just doubled. In the coming year it will rise again. How will I and other East Berliners pay this increase? In addition, I am convinced I will never again work as an academic. Who would hire me with my past I will not deny? I will not betray who I am, a Marxist economist, or what I worked for all these years."

As we said goodbye, he surprised me by inviting me to the East Berlin zoo. "We have a fine zoo here in East Berlin, although the West Berliners look down on it. I will telephone you," he continued, "in some weeks when I know better what my situation will be, and, frankly, how much money I will have to support myself. And also if this zoo remains open!"

Only a few days before my discussion with Doctor Biermann, Doctor Renate Tantzscher had invited me to dinner at her apartment, which was in a high-rise apartment complex not far from the *Müggelsee*. I arrived and buzzed Renate—she too had asked to use first names—from the lobby. She gave a set of convoluted directions on entering and exiting elevators and hallways. "The elevators do not go to every floor in my part of the

building," she explained when she met me in the hallway. "We shall take the elevator on the other side of this walkway."

When we reached her apartment, her mother was sitting in their eight by ten living room. She had a warm and generous smile that fit Renate's introduction. "My mother is gracious and gentle; yet she is also what you Americans call a tough cookie. She was a social worker and had many experiences in her career."

I sat down and asked her mother about life in Berlin after WWII. "Everyone was hungry, nothing worked, almost every building in many areas of the city was damaged, and women had to take measures to protect themselves from soldiers. Those were the hardest days," she reported.

Renate added, "She is somewhat weak due to her poor health stemming from the post-war period of deprivation—you know people had little to eat in the months following the war." After dinner, her mother chatted a few minutes more and then excused herself and went to bed.

Renate and I moved from the dining table to the living room, "I have heard on the telephone today from my colleague that the *Wissenschaftsrat* has decided to close our institute, it is only a question of when this happens. This is not surprising. I may find another position, some members of the *Rat*[18] have indicated they will try to help me."

"Your institute has been visited by the *Rat*?" I asked.

"They visited recently and told us they would in all likelihood wind things up at my institute. Now it is official for my institute. They informed us those under forty—I am thirty-nine—had a chance for reassignment. I have written a few books and they know who I am. They will try to 'rehabilitate' me because I am a young socialist. This is funny, yes? I think it is quite ironic and funny. My age may save my career. And they wish to rehabilitate me."

"We are nothing to the West Germans." She motioned her arm as if to throw something away. "They have no use for us and our socialist mentality; we are a page of history that must be torn from the book. They will 'rehabilitate' a few of us young ones to make it seem that they have integrated us."

I replied, "Renate, you and your cohort will one day be important; they cannot just tear a page from the German history book and throw it away."

She stared at me. "For an East German such a coincidence—of you showing up and wanting to 'study' us as we are being dismissed—is difficult to accept. I'm sure you know this. Nevertheless, the situation is different now, not like in GDR times when all was controlled by the Party. So maybe

this is a real coincidence, nothing more. You know, of course, that it was illegal to speak to an *Auslander* without the State's permission?"

"Yes, Herr Grentz mentioned this to me on my first visit to the Academy."

"Fair enough, Dan, the GDR does not exist, and you seem, if anything, like a typical scholar exploring for answers. I will tell you my views of what is occurring here. It is just like what happened at the universities in *die Nazizeit*. Such 'evaluations' of Jewish and other so-called undesirable intellectuals were made by the Nazi party to justify dismissing them. So you see, this is not a scientific assessment; rather it is an ideological purge."

"Renate, if this is like during the Nazi era, why would they want to rehabilitate you?"

She gazed at me and said, "It is only a promise that I was given, '*Maybe* we can help you find a new position, the competition is high,' they said, nothing more. We shall see what comes in the future when I am actually dismissed. It is true that many at the Academy and intelligentsia throughout the GDR were Party members; many will tell you they were not or that they resisted the Party. Do not believe them."

"To answer your question, they cannot dismiss all of us at one time—it would expose their motivations and call forth a direct comparison to the Nazis purge of the universities. So you have made me refine my view. I thank you. It is not identical to the *Nazizeit*; but it is a similar process. Also, the younger ones, those in their twenties and early thirties, have a better chance to be successfully 'rehabilitated.' The central goal is to destroy the power base of the GDR intelligentsia. That is undeniable."

"There is something else to keep in mind. As an outsider you do not appreciate how the intellectuals on both sides of the Wall fought with one another, especially here in Berlin. There is bitterness built up, grudges, and so on. I think many from the East, who have a reputation as strong Party supporters, will lose their posts—and of course their power base. Younger scientists are obviously the easiest to retrain and control; their lives lie before them, so they are likely to conform. Therefore, the *Rat* informed us when they visited that, 'if you are fifty or older, just retire; if you are forty, probably you should retire.' As I said, it would be obvious this is a purge if all the Academy members were dismissed at once. Instead, they tell us that overall one-third will receive a new post. They divide us to conqueror us. If Academy members publicly adapt and renounce the GDR, they might survive as model East Germans. And this is exactly what intellectuals in the GDR know how to do, to be two-faced. I detest this behavior and outlook."

She went on: "So some GDR scholars, those who looked out only for themselves in GDR times, will be of use to the West Germans because they can be controlled with money and other rewards. They will say, 'Oh, how wonderful it is now after the Turn, the GDR was horrible and see how good things are in the FRG.'[19] This is not too different from when you Americans grabbed up all those Nazi scientists after Hitler fell. You whitewashed their awful beliefs, like those of Werner von Braun."

"A great deal of intrigue is involved?" I asked.

"Of course, nothing is as crude as, 'let us dismiss all the Academy members.' No, as I said, a few will survive to make it look acceptable. But surviving is one thing, how long will the survival last? You see, some may receive a new post, a temporary post, be reviewed in two-year's time and *then* be dismissed. And in five or ten years, the purge is complete without notice, really. That is a scenario I find very possible."

"Well, we'll see," I said. "Let me change the subject slightly. Do you know that in America it is against the law to dismiss a person because of his age?"

She laughed, "This is not America. It is nice to know this about American law but here in Germany this fact is irrelevant. I realize how unfair this is, and it makes me angry."

She put her index finger to her head and stared at me for a moment. "Most of myself knows you are not a spy. However, since you are so unlike what a spy would be, perhaps you are one. You know that we lived in fear in the GDR. My mail was read, my telephone bugged. You are an American, you do not know how this feels because if it is done to you, you can protest and assert your legal rights. You cannot imagine, I mean, you cannot imagine it as I experienced it. How it feels to have your letters read, to have to explain to your supervisors at the institute what a passage in a letter from an American colleague 'really means,' to have to worry about accounting for every man who enters your apartment, to worry that the workmen did more than repair your lights and as well may have installed listening devices all over the flat. We had no personal rights in the GDR. The state had laws to control you and take away all your constitutional rights to privacy. These rights existed only in theory. At any time the authorities could cite laws about 'Riotous assembly' or 'Resistance to the state's measures' or 'Hostile propaganda,' to invade your personal world. These laws could cover any behavior."

"You had trouble with the Party, Renate?"

"I was told since I was a child that I was too independent, 'A good socialist should follow the Party, not one's own way or opinions,' teachers and other authority figures—including my father—would tell me. Fortunately I was quite smart, smarter than many in the Party; and my uncle, my mother's brother, was high up in the Party and feared for his power and respected for his integrity. You know, they always keep a few honest men around who do not have big personal schemes and aspirations that conflict with their loyalty to the Party."

"He sounds like a genuine true-believer. You said, 'was'—is he dead?"

"Yes, he passed away a few years ago."

"How did he die, Renate?" I asked.

"From a heart attack, thank you for asking. He knew all the top Party members; he acted with dignity and discretion, and not for personal gain. Because of him, I was considered a nuisance—and merely a woman—of no real importance. If someone in the Party wanted to criticize or hurt me, they had to deal with my uncle as well. Why bother? There was nothing to gain and something to lose. Moreover, I have been a good hardworking scholar. I was even allowed to travel out of the GDR, to America even one time."

"I always wanted the party to reform and spoke out about it. I was warned many times about my independent outlook, but as I said, my uncle and my scholarship gave me protection. Nonetheless, I have been terrified of being spied upon since his death."

"My father—he's dead, too—was embarrassed by me many times because I would not conform in school. One time, he was called to the school when I was seven or eight years old. The teacher and headmaster told him, 'Renate is not cooperating again; we do not want her to influence the other children.' I had maintained that a Trabbi was made from cardboard."

"You must explain this Renate," I said.

"The teacher asked the children, 'What is a Trabant made from?' and I said 'cardboard.' The teacher said, 'No, no Renate, it is made from steel, the Trabbi is our fine East German automobile,' and I insisted, 'No it is not. I saw one with its door crashed in, and it was a cardboard [particleboard] door.' I was stubborn. I would not change my view and that is when the teacher and headmaster called my father, who came to me in the school and said, 'you must say what they want, Renate.' But still I refused."

"I am a socialist in my heart, but in the GDR loyalty to the Party was bigger than loyalty to socialism. I always hoped we would one day have true socialism and resolve this contradiction."

"Honestly, I tell you I did not welcome the Turn; our dream has been crushed. Now there is no going back. I must adapt to survive without compromising what I hold true in my heart. I feel I will always be a socialist; of this I am certain. This dilemma is difficult to resolve because it involves my ability to earn a living."

After a while, she said, "I will tell you more about the GDR and academics in the GDR and the Party as your work progresses. It was not a pretty picture, as you say."

"I am not able to share with you everything people tell me, Renate. I tell those I interview their words are confidential with me, that is, I will not give their real names to identify them with any quotations. I can, however, ask you general questions like, 'I have heard that in recent years such and such took place.' I must tell you that to this point I have not met anyone praising the FRG or capitalism—quite the opposite, in fact."

She replied, "This is good to know. Anonymity is necessary to assure any chance of people being honest. I am glad so many are being honest with you. They think of you as the stranger on the train to whom it is safe tell your sad life story."

Rubbing her chin with her hand she said, "I have reached a conclusion. I was contemplating doing some collaborative work with you on this project, but now I see this as a bad idea. I am an East German and this could cast doubt on you."

I tried to interrupt, but she did not let me. "Listen to me. This is one reason; the other reason is that I cannot study this destruction in the way you can, directly; it is too painful for me. I can help you and myself best by commenting, giving you clues and insights. This is what I shall do."

We met regularly over the next year as she provided me with insight and her entertainingly phrased acerbic yet deeply idealistic perspectives.

A few days later, Renate phoned to arrange our next meeting and announced, "My mother spent her career gazing inside people's character and she tells me you are trustworthy. This means I should end my suspicions of you. So I am informing you of this situation."

"Thanks, Renate, I guess," I laughed.

Her suspicions continued, of course, but they were never a problem in our relationship because she realized—upon reflection—they were groundless. Eventually, they came to an end.

When I would come to visit her to gain insight or tell her of my latest thoughts on what I was finding, she would say, "Let us go for a walk around the *Müggelsee*." And when we got there, she would say, "I do not know if

my telephone and apartment are being bugged. I still have these worries. Walking by the water is private."

Lilly and I met for coffee once a week before her English language classes. Occasionally, she took this opportunity to suggest more people to interview. At one meeting in late November, she said, "I want you to know about Heike Erbacher, my colleague who teaches English on Monday afternoon."

"At the Academy?" I asked.

"Yes, she has asked me to invite you to her class. You can do the same things you do in my class regarding stories about America, the fine points of English and their many questions. Will you do it? She says you may discuss your project with the class."

I attended Heike's class, and afterwards she asked me, "Doctor Bednarz, will you please come to my small apartment where I live with my husband and two young children? My husband and I would very much like to tell you about life in the GDR and our hopes and fears for this new life we are beginning."

I traveled by *U-Bahn* and *S-Bahn* to their apartment in the Pankow district of East Berlin. Heike and her husband, Peter, had the children in their nightclothes when I arrived and put them to bed after they were introduced to me. The apartment was typical East Berlin cramped: a kitchen, bath, (many apartments in East Berlin had communal toilets in the hall and showers in the kitchen), and a sitting room that doubled as a bedroom. "We apologize for the size of our apartment," Heike said, "Peter and I sleep here in this sitting room because we want our children to have the feeling of their own bedroom."

I watched the children climb all over their father's muscular arms and broad shoulders as he made mock threatening noises while carrying them to bed.

As the interview began, I noticed Peter gazing at Heike as if she were a work of art that he was continually noticing for the first time.

"I teach and interpret Portuguese and English," she reported. "Peter is studying marketing."

"Marketing?" I inquired, "this is new since the Turn, I take it."

"Oh yes," he said. "Formerly I was in the East German border patrol." I glanced sideways at him, and he said with an embarrassed grin, "It is true; I guarded the Wall."

I had learned from others I had interviewed to let them go on to tell their story as they wished. "We met in the southeast of the GDR, where our

respective families were sent by the Poles after the War," Heike reported. "You know many Germans were deported by the Poles from Silesia?"

"I do know this," I said, "In some cases the Poles were so angry they just put Germans on trains and said, 'At least you are not going to Siberia or to the gas chambers.'"

Heike said, "Those kinds of words were spoken because of what the Nazis did. Wherever the train was going to in Germany, that is where the deported families got off," Heike noted and went on, "Perhaps as many as twelve million Germans were forced out from or fled German occupied territories that were retaken by Poland, Russia, and Czechoslovakia."

They told me of the antifascist foundation of the GDR. "Our nation was based on a rejection of Hitler and all that he stood for. We were taught that many fascists escaped from the eastern part of Germany into what became the FRG, where they were treated leniently or rehabilitated without punishment."

They took turns telling me of how they had built their careers, hers in language instruction and interpreting, and his in the military, to get them to Berlin, where they wanted to raise their family.

"Finally, we both found jobs in Berlin last year; and soon after that the protests began which lead to the Turn," Heike explained.

"We knew," Peter said, "that the system could not hold; something had to give after the fall [1989] protests became so massive. We, like so many East Germans, were holding intense discussions with our friends, trying to think of ways to save the GDR and reform the Party."

"I became concerned for his safety after the Wall opened," Heike said, "because sometimes the protesters were angry at the border guards for previous acts of cruelty. He was an easy target, a concrete representative for all the people's anger at the Party."

"You must have had strong reactions to the Turn," I said to Peter.

"We were instructed by authorities from the time we were children that capitalism offered a two-thirds solution, two-thirds live adequately to luxuriously, and one-third suffers in poverty," he explained. "We learned in school that the West was dangerous and corrupting and the GDR offered the correct historical alternative to capitalism."

Peter further explained that in his training, he was taught that "the West was our enemy, the enemy of socialism and of the working people of the world."

He said this with no irony; this is what he had internalized into his identity. His tone switched as he said, "And suddenly, in the days following

the opening of the Wall, our superiors came to us and said, 'Congratulations, you served your country well. Now your future is in the West.' My fellow guards and I were confused and angry. What did this mean? 'Your future is now in the West.' The villains in the West were now our comrades?! We spent all that time struggling against capitalism, being prepared to shoot fellow East Germans if necessary to protect the socialist ideal and then, suddenly, we are told 'Your future is in the West.'"

"And now you are studying marketing," I quipped.

"This is amazing." he exclaimed. "This is so incredible. I must support my family. The need for border guards is gone—an obvious fact. Therefore, I must adapt, find a suitable career to support them. Marketing is at the center of capitalism, no? Capitalism needs to promote and sell goods and services."

"What did you think when you first went to West Berlin?" I asked.

Heike answered, "It was difficult for us, we waited several weeks before going."

"We entered at the Pankow cross point," Peter explained, "and we saw all these strange sites such as billboards with advertising, rubbish on the streets, beggars, all the goods—far more than one could desire or justifiably use—in the stores. Everything looked strange, even the West Berliners." Heike interrupted, "He refused to go for his *Begrüßungsgeld*,[20] a matter of GDR pride."

"You must have felt uncomfortable there," I noted and waited for their reply.

"Yes, it was such a strange experience," Peter said, "to walk into another world inhabited by people who were speaking German yet were not at all like us. This is confusing to describe, to put into words how we felt."

I asked him questions about the border guards and he politely answered. "Peter, how were the guards trained to shoot their own people?"

"Do not think me cruel or like a Nazi, but it was a matter of duty. We believed we were protecting socialism and our nation. A few in my command, I was a captain, would have enjoyed shooting people. This is true. The rest of us saw it as our duty; a soldier does not ask questions once given the order. I am happy I never had to shoot."

"Would you have shot?" I asked.

"Of course, I was a soldier; but how glad I am I did not since the Turn has made the deaths of those attempting to escape over the years the GDR existed absurd and pointless. They died for no good reason, really. I would not want that kind of death on my conscience. I am trying to say they should

not have been shot if one day the GDR would end as it did, with my superiors saying, 'Your future is in the West.'"

"You just mentioned the Nazis. They were accused of blindly following orders. What do you say if some in the FRG say the same about the border guards?"

He thought for a few seconds and responded, "The Nazis killed people for who they were, a Jew or a Communist, a Gypsy or a homosexual. That is all that mattered; the person's character was of no consequence. We did not do that; we did not persecute a class of people. We did, however, control the political situation of the nation, something I think you, being from the West, do not find acceptable."

I paused and asked him, "Did your commanders worry about desertions by the guards?"

He guffawed through his nose, "Oh, yes, they would not let any solidarity grow up between the guards; they made us change units regularly so no mass escapes—by the border guards—could be planned. Also, they did not let us work in pairs for long periods because if one soldier tried to escape, his partner might look the other way or refuse to shoot his friend in the back. Without doubt, they kept us loyal only to the military."

"What about when the Wall opened? Did you get orders to let people through or were you not informed?"

He laughed heartily, "We were not given orders for many hours. The people were screaming at all the crossing points, 'Let us through, we want to visit West Berlin,'—and still no orders came. At some checkpoints the guards allowed people to pass through around eleven o'clock that evening. It is not clear, but many say that *Bornholmer Straße* was the first to open. Later that night the orders finally came. We were told to issue passes. What passes? we wondered. There were no such passes to visit the FRG. There was confusion from above; after some hours of this confusion at my post we began to let the people go through without a pass, which they did in an orderly manner. And then, of course, within a day the young men were climbing on the Wall and shouting, 'Knock it down! Knock it down!' and '*Ihr Scheiße* [You fucking] guards! You kept us locked up!' It was disorder, the very situation an officer attempts to avoid."

"I wish to add some additional comments, if I may," he said.

"What do you want to tell me, Peter?"

"The deepest shock was not when we were told the West is our friend; this was painful and crazy, yes, but somehow it made a crazy kind of sense due to the fact that the GDR had lost the struggle. The deepest hurt, for

Heike and myself, came when we learned of the corruption of GDR officials. This was not really a violation of the rules. It was playing by a wrong set of rules no one here even knew existed. Such corruption took place in the West, we thought, not here where the people came first."

"It must be astounding that an American is sitting here in your living room. A year ago this would not have seemed possible, would it?"

"No, it would not," Peter replied. "I feel no bitterness toward you, an American. Heike received a good recommendation of your character from her colleague, Frau Dieckmann. Fortunately, we become more adapted to the changes as time passes. It upsets us that we feel this is no longer our country, especially since unification. This is embarrassing to admit; how one does not feel at home in the only environment one has ever known."

"It is hard to know what country you are a citizen of, then?" I asked them.

They looked at each other to see who would answer and both began talking. Heike said, "It is confusing to be a citizen of a country you were told from the time you were a child was the home to all the Nazis who ran away from the East. We have already told you our outlook of capitalism. In our view, the GDR was taken over; there was no unification."

"What about the Stasi revelations and all those who are now learning of how they were spied on by friends and family?"

Heike answered, "We had friends in the Stasi, we do not wish to hide this from you. This Stasi issue has many sides; there were betrayals of family members and friendship, this much is clear. But working with or for the Stasi was tied to loyalties to the nation and the Party, to building socialism. There were some who had to cooperate because they held a high position. If you did not cooperate, they would appoint another person to your post, and maybe punish you. Also, there were ways of cooperating with the Stasi that hurt your fellow workers and friends and ways that did not hurt them."

She added, "Not that there is a connection, but it is noteworthy that our sense of solidarity with friends and fellow East Germans is gone. We had great solidarity in the GDR. We had solidarity with each other and the workers of the world. We thought we were on the right side of history—and the West on the wrong side. We thought we were working with our friends in other nations to build a better world. This sounds childish as I listen to my words; it sounds like a dream, but we believed it to the end. Now we have little time for friends; we focus on our families and ourselves. Everyone is attempting to find a new path, to find a way to live and survive in this alien

world, to earn money in the capitalist manner and to go on with our spirits not totally broken."

I told Peter before I left them that aside from his physical stature and conditioning, and his total belief in socialism, he did not fit my stereotypic expectations of a border guard: dim-witted, gruff, insensitive, hierarchical in interpersonal relations, and unwilling to accept the irony of the social world. He said, "I was a soldier with a duty; I understand how hard it is for an outsider to accept that I did my duty as a military officer. I do not think the military is different in a democracy from what it was in the GDR."

We said goodnight about 10 PM, and I walked along *Ossietzkystraße* pondering how their worldview, their identities, and the very meaning of their lives were no longer reflected and reinforced in their new social context. I tried to imagine how differently Peter and Heike would have answered the identity quiz, where one writes out twenty answers to the "Who am I?" question, before the Wall opened, and now, one cultural light-year and twelve chronological months later.

Three days later, the first hint of winter's approach arrived in the pungent smell of brown coal in the East Berlin air. Lilly and I were sitting in a café looking out on the mercurial November morning having our weekly discussion. "You've been coming here how long, Dan?" she asked.

"I first came to East Berlin at the end of August."

"Just three months; this surprises me. It seems like much longer, but our sense of time is distorted since the Turn."

She announced she would teach no more English classes at the Academy in 1991. "The Academy will be shut down at the end of next year. It is certain only one third of Academy scientists and scholars will save their jobs; and I hear that those who are kept on will be transferred to institutes elsewhere. I hear it is definite that all the Academy's institutes will be—"

"A few people have described it to me as *die Abwicklung* of the GDR or being personally *Abgewickelt*," I said.

"Yes, *Abgewickelt* is an uncommon way to use the word, as a past tense verb. But, yes, you could say it that way. It fits what is occurring. *Abwicklung* is a commonly used noun."

"I want you to know that my job in West Berlin at a publishing house has come through. Therefore, it is sensible for me to take this new job in West Berlin and give up this one at the Academy that has only a few months left before it ends."

"What good news, Lilly. After all the anxiety and dismay about the future I've heard these past few months, I am happy for you. When do you begin?"

"In the new year," she said, "there will be a great deal of traveling to sell books in the *Neue Länder*, you know, the five states of the former GDR. I do hope this situation works out for me."

"I'm sure it will if your ability with English has anything to do with it."

"Thank you, Dan. I worked many hours, listening to the BBC and in the language laboratory listening to tapes and scratchy records."

"By the way, my husband and I were with some West Germans last week and an unpleasant incident occurred regarding my ability in English."

"What happened, Lilly?"

"I made the acquaintance of some West Germans at this social gathering. My new position with the book-publishing house came up and the West Germans started speaking in English and invited me to join in. I suspect they wanted to show me that their English was superior to mine. Once they heard me speak English, they were in disbelief. 'Oh, Lilly, you speak excellent English. When did you live in England and for how long?' one of them asked me."

"What's wrong with that, Lilly? It sounds like a compliment."

"Yes, Dan, but it was not a compliment. When I informed them that I had never been to England, they refused to believe me. They were polite, as Germans are trained to be, but they did not believe me. It was as if I, an East German, must have lived in England. They could not accept the fact that I had never been outside the GDR. What I mean to say is that they were envious that an East German could speak English better than West Germans. This is typical of many West Germans who think they are naturally better than the East Germans at everything; and if they are not, there must be some extraordinary explanation. So instead of accepting my good English as my accomplishment of hard work—and remember they think most of us are lazy and dimwitted—they insinuated that I am a liar. I was so angry inside."

She relaxed and said, "Oh, well, that is how things are now."

"To change the subject, I've enjoyed our discussions this autumn."

"There is something you can tell me for my curiosity, Dan."

"What is it?" I asked.

"I have wondered if you think the people in America who attend church really believe in God? It seems a childish belief, but I have read recently that ninety percent of Americans believe in God."

I replied, "That's true, but not nearly that many go to church. I think it's a rather superficial belief in God. People need something beyond themselves to say they believe in, something eternal. Christians think of a place, heaven,

where there is no toil, treachery, or torture like there is here on Earth. Marx, I think, wanted to bring heaven to earth. But beyond this speculation I will tell you that part of why I'm doing this study is to learn what a group of people do when what they believe in, their mythos and collective identity, is destroyed."

"You think socialism was our religion? Our dream of heaven?" she asked.

"In a very serious sense, I do. I confess it. Are you offended?"

She looked relieved. "To coin an appropriate phrase, heavens no. I was always tepid about socialism, especially as practiced here—I mean formerly—in the GDR. I do see what you mean; and socialism was the easiest ideology to believe for GDR citizens. We had so many superficial rituals and pretenses involving socialism. There is no doubt the Party acted as if the churches were its rivals."

She went on, "The thought of people going to church and praying as if there is a God in heaven listening and answering their personal requests makes no sense to me."

"It's not rational, you mean?" I asked.

"Yes," she said, "it is not a rational approach to the world. It's like a child's belief in Santa Claus." She grinned and said, "I have a feeling that you are not a typical American, are you?"

"How about an easy question, Lilly," I pleaded.

She laughed, "Okay, let us enjoy our last meeting. Questions about belief are unanswerable; they lead into the area of faith, and who's to say what one should have faith in."

Changing the subject, I said, "I was out walking before our meeting this morning," and Lilly interrupted,

"In this drizzling rain, cold, and wind? Whatever for?"

"The trench running from the Brandenburg Gate to the river near the *Reichstag* where the slabs of the Wall were embedded is being filled in and I wanted to see it one more time before it disappears. They are paving it over; in a few years it will take a historian to know where the Wall stood, unless the government places historical markers there.[21] I first saw the Wall up close in October of 1989 from the back of the *Reichstag*. Do you remember me telling you?"

"I recall what you said about seeing the Wall, but I did not know it was near the *Reichstag*."

"The Wall came close to the rear of the *Reichstag*; only a few feet from it if I remember correctly. It was covered with layer upon layer of spray-painted graffiti so thick—the paint was so thick—it was peeling off from

its own weight, like it was wallpaper that came unglued. It struck me as poignant that West Berliners could walk right up and paint the Wall. There was a signpost nearby with the names of those who had died trying to cross. The latest one was for a young man about twenty years old who was shot during the summer of 1989."

"That was Chris Gueffroy,[22] a young man many here in the East made into a symbol of the struggle for reform last fall. I believe he was the last person to be killed attempting to escape to the West. His photo is on a wall in *Alexander Platz* near the *U-Bahn* line that runs to Pankow. You should visit it."

"I will look for it the next time I'm there. I have some appointments coming up at the Academy building on *Prenzlauer Promenade* and I think I will take the Pankow *U-Bahn* from Alex *[Alexander Platz]* to get there."

"Have you spoken with all those members of the class who have agreed to be interviewed?"

"Not quite, a few more to go before pausing for the Holidays. I'm seeing Doctor Fritz Assenmacher tomorrow."

When we met the next day, Doctor Assenmacher brought along a colleague, Doctor Robert Hess, who also was in the English class, and a woman he introduced only as his "sweetheart, who is also a medical doctor." We met in a café near *Friedrichstraße* that had a bar and tables for light lunches and dinners. There was an array of glass doors looking out to the Plaza of the Academy.

They seemed simultaneously eager to talk and suspicious. I closed and put away my notebook when they stared at it as they walked up to sit at my table. I was now accustomed to what they did: immediately launch into what they wanted to tell me. Doctor Assenmacher, a thin athletic man, explained that he and Doctor Hess were developing what they termed "a synthetic form of bone replacement with the great advantage that it will not be rejected by the human body; there is no chance the body will reject this substance."

"Did the Party interfere with your work?" I asked and simultaneously they began talking. They giggled at one another and more or less said in unison, "No, our problem was that no one paid attention to our work. The Party saw no practical use for our work and ignored us. Our greatest problem was obtaining resources; another problem was the very old equipment we had for our experiments; finally, our contacts with Western medical researchers were not satisfactory because they were difficult to arrange."

Doctor Assenmacher noted that the Party did not allow them to travel to international conventions to meet other colleagues in their field. "But this prohibition to travel was common among medical doctors, especially for those not married or with children. You see, having children—the Party never allowed a doctor to travel with his children—was good insurance that a doctor would not defect if allowed to travel to the West."

He went on, "It was frustrating because our work might be more advanced if we had been permitted more contact with researchers in the West. Also, you should know that those officials in the government who made the decisions on our funding knew absolutely nothing—had no expertise—about what we were doing. This situation was deeply upsetting to us."

He added, "We are very interested in your opinion of socialism." I at first demurred the invitation, but they insisted. "It is a great idea," I said and they erupted into laughter at my evasiveness.

"It was not so great in the GDR," was their response. "We want to know what an American thinks of socialism," the woman, who introduced herself as Angela Schulte, insisted.

I told them it was not appropriate for me to talk about this topic because part of my interest was in how GDR intelligentsia felt about socialism. This explanation made sense to them as they nodded, saying, "Oh yes, we see now, you do not want to influence our outlook and opinions."

I told them all they said was held in confidence and that they would be given pseudonyms in my writings. Then I asked them if I could take notes and they agreed. "Of course, you must remember what we are telling you," they said.

Several times they expressed concern for the GDR's workers. "How will they pay higher rents and manage with the other rises in the cost of living? You know that many of them are or soon will be unemployed?" Doctor Hess asked rhetorically.

I was now familiar with the pattern they exhibited: contempt for how the GDR functioned under the Party, a passion for socialism, and regret that unification had been ratified, thus ending the chance to reform the GDR into a socialist democracy.

"Unification is bringing suffering and chaos to the former GDR. Hard times will come in the next year when more people are unemployed," Doctor Assenmacher added as they went on to catalog the challenges facing East Germans in the new Germany, accompanied simultaneously by a running critique of the Party's misrule of the GDR.

I steered them back to their work. "Do you have any idea if Western medical researchers are doing what you are doing? Do you know if some doctors in the West might have developed something as good or better as your invention? Or if they might have tried and abandoned your line of inquiry?"

"We believe we have a sound basis for our work and that it will be useful in the West," Doctor Assenmacher said. "Of course, we do not know this directly—there are some colleagues in the West doing similar experiments—and we hope the *Wissenschaftsrat* will make it possible for us to continue to fund our project."

Doctor Hess went on, "We are young, about thirty years of age, and this can help us. We are also trying to make contacts with those in the West in medicine who may invite us to their nations to complete our research and development if the West Germans reject our ideas. We are encouraged that we may receive this help."

"You have told me about your work and your concern for the working people of the GDR. How has the Turn affected your personal lives?" I asked.

Doctor Assenmacher searched the faces of his friends and answered, "It is like one week instead of one year since the Wall opened." His two friends nodded in agreement. "My mind is spinning, always trying to make sense of the changes that keep appearing since a year ago."

I pointed out, "As disappointed as you three seem at what has taken place in the past year, do you feel you have a chance at the kind of life you would like to live in the West?"

Yes and no they said. Their misgivings about a market economy were by now familiar to me and in that moment, only a few weeks past unification, white hot. The question, they agreed, was one they could not answer easily. Doctor Assenmacher summed up their sentiment with an appropriate cliché: "We shall see what the future brings to us and our fellow GDR citizens. Right now it is too early to make this judgment; as I said, our heads are spinning."

A few days earlier, I had met a lawyer at the Academy whose head was also spinning but who, in contrast to the three physicians I interviewed, had only a sliver of hope for his professional future. Doctor Uwe Dienst, a member of a law studies group at the Academy, was not in Lilly's class; rather, someone in her class had introduced him to me during a coffee break in the basement cafeteria. He told me with an earnestness easily

misconstrued for self-pity that he wanted to "explain the situation of myself and my colleagues who study GDR law here at the Academy."

Our first meeting, at his request, was at the Karl Marx Library, on *Unter den Linden*. I assumed he wanted to meet there for reasons of privacy. His demeanor was, like Doctor Kohl, intense and polite. I decided not to take notes initially based on the look he gave me as I sat down with him. He began talking immediately—I did slip in several questions. Partway into this recitation, I asked for and was granted permission to take notes and explained the terms of confidentiality to him. He seemed reassured that he could take me at my word.

He was not too old—"I am under forty" he informed me—to have a career in the new Germany. "My problem is that the West Germans, those members of the *Wissenschaftsrat*, have told us, my colleagues and me at the Academy, that there is no need for experts in GDR law in unified Germany. You see, Doctor Bednarz, the GDR laws are now obsolete after unification."[23]

"This is what they told us, 'There is no chance for you, you would have to take all your studies over to learn the FRG laws and this is too great an undertaking for you.' They wanted us to give up and find new careers."

"None of the GDR laws apply now?" I asked him.

"Correct, they told us directly that our degrees were worthless; and in just a few weeks from now I was to take the final examination for certification to practice law in the GDR. The *Rat* members were deliberately callous. But they are in error, you see. Much of our work at the Academy is in international law, and they, the *Rat* panel, knew this to be the case. They wanted to humiliate us. Further, being a lawyer, thinking like a lawyer, making arguments like a lawyer—this is the same in any nation."

He stopped and sipped his tea, stroked his blond hair, and felt his tie to make sure it was straight. Looking off to one side, he said, "I do not know what I will do now; yet I do not want to end my career in the law I love so much. This is most unnecessary and unfair to my colleagues and myself. We possess basic skills and knowledge, like in international law, that is valuable in the new Germany. Regrettably, we must struggle against the West Germans."

We agreed to meet the following week with his three colleagues. Before we parted, I turned the conversation to Party control of their work. "Is it possible the *Wissenschaftsrat* panel was hostile to you because they believe your group was compromised by the Party?"

"Yes," he said, "I am certain of this; they did not want to hear our position on this very topic. It was all settled in their minds before we met; they treated us as if all we had were self-serving excuses."

"Doctor Dienst, before we end today, can you tell me how the Party influenced the work of you and your colleagues?"

He replied, "I have a good group of colleagues; we have trust in each other. There are four of us in our group at the Academy institute. In GDR times one could say what one believed with no fear; all opinions were accepted in the privacy of our group. We were without question loyal to one another and not reporting on each other to the Stasi. However, what one published was censored; in general it is accurate to say public criticism of the system was not allowed."

"One time my superior at the institute wrote a report that was to be submitted to a high GDR official, a minister in the government. Such reports normally passed up a line of reviews to Party and government officials. In this way criticisms were removed, softened, and so on. My institute leader was sick in bed; nevertheless, one of the minister's subordinates summoned him to the institute to change his criticisms in the report saying, 'the minister must never be shown such criticisms. This report will not be delivered to him until you change it; and you must change it immediately.' Even though sick, my superior came in and altered the report. He had no option but to do so. This is a typical story except for being summoned from one's sick bed, which was unusual."

"If one sought to make some form of criticism in print, there was a formula to follow that could bring success if done skillfully. You began by talking about class struggle, then you criticized America—it was quite helpful to criticize America and perhaps the West overall—and then you introduced your reform comments about socialism in terms general enough or subtle enough to get past the censors."

We arranged to meet in three days at *Otto Nuschke Straße* 10–11 along with his colleagues. When we met, only one of the three colleagues was there, Doctor Irene Rasmussen. She and Doctor Deinst explained that the other two were busy, and it would be difficult in the next two weeks for all of them to meet at one time.

I began by asking them when they first suspected they would not be allowed to carry on their studies of the law. Doctor Dienst answered, "I knew from the first days after the Wall remained open that our work situation would change in some ways, but it was not until January that we knew our careers were threatened by the West Germans."

Irene agreed and went on, "In January, a conference between East and West German lawyers and law professors was held and we were told by a West German professor that it was certain that the Academy would be taken over completely, and probably closed, by the West Germans." Doctor Dienst added, "This came as a total shock to us; we thought our work would be merged with the West German's work over time in some cooperative or parallel manner under an agreement between the two German states. We thought there would be two states for some time to come, with a period of gradual and orderly integration."

Irene continued, "It is not as if we were concerned only with GDR law. Our central project in this group is, until they dismiss us, a comparative study of the law in five nations. It is a study in international law, which is of value in contemporary Europe."

She hesitated before going on, "We are being colonized by our FRG 'cousins.' They think we are incompetent and corrupt—all of us."

Bleakness emanated from their faces as this tale from their January meeting was recounted. They explained how they now were reduced to "individual acts of cleverness and hoping for lucky fortune" in their efforts for occupational survival.

Irene, who did much of the talking, was indignant and trying to control herself. "When the *Rat* panel came to officially evaluate us a few weeks ago they reasserted what we were told in January. 'You have no hope,' they said, 'your work will be ended.' They regarded us as so inferior that as the meeting began they did not introduce themselves. They began straight off with condescending questions aimed to show us how uncivilized we are. They only introduced themselves after these questions—which they thought had established their superiority—had been asked. Do you, as an American understand this? I am trained in American Studies and I spent eighteen months in your country. Such behavior would be insulting in your country among educated people."

I nodded in agreement and asked, "You are in American Studies, not a lawyer?"

"That is correct," she said. "The panel scoffed at me, 'How can you, a non-lawyer, think you can study Supreme Court decisions of the United States and international law?' and I knew they did not care to know; this was a form of ridicule. Here in Germany it is a greater insult than it is in the United States not to introduce oneself before any business is conducted. Our names were unimportant—their conclusions and recommendations were decided before they met with us—of this we are certain."

"Are you certain?" I pressed.

Irene said, "Well, they almost laughed at me, a 'non-lawyer' who wants to study the U.S. Supreme Court and international law. They told our group over and over, 'You have no chance.' There was not so much as a pretense of an evaluation. They enjoyed their dirty work; it gave them a feeling of superiority to mock us."

"You told me you knew from the meeting in January that the Academy would be taken over and your work would be terminated. It is my impression that in January the sentiment for unification was not strong in the GDR," I commented.

"You are right," Doctor Dienst admitted, "It was, looking back on it, the first warning, and it gave us some concern because it was expressed with such self-assurance." Irene interjected, "We were hopeful then that the March vote would reject unification and make fools of those preening West German lawyers."

"We had a real democracy between the opening of the Wall and the March referendum; afterwards we became dispirited. I left several of the organizations and roundtables I was involved in because the vote sealed our fate as a colony of the FRG. Our vigor and hope disappeared."

"You knew after the unification vote that your work and careers were imperiled. And what now of the future?" I asked.

"For our group," Irene said, "we will be disbanded at just the moment when collective struggle is needed. Everyone must now act as an individual to survive economically. We have been divided and conquered, the classic colonialist strategy."

"One thing about the GDR was its predictability; the transformation now taking place feels unbearably chaotic because we are accustomed to the predictability of a non-democratic regime. The people, overwhelmingly the workers, who voted for unification did not anticipate this chaos and upheaval. They had fairytale ideas presented to them by Mr. Kohl about what was to come. Now they are experiencing loss and domination as GDR institutions are being taken apart."

I ran into Doctor Dienst several times in the main West Berlin library in the following months. He kept a slim hope alive that he could retrain in West German law. "I am not yet forty, there is some hope," he would say as he poured through FRG legal texts and told me of his efforts to "find a way to survive and pursue my love of the law."

I continued to talk with Academy members and employees in Lilly's classes whose institutes had been recently visited by *Wissenschaftsrat* panels.

I met with another class member, Frau Gisela Meerz, an Academy mathematician, in early December. She had a dissociative demeanor that I felt was a sign of depression and shock, and going into the interview, I wondered how she would have behaved under normal circumstances.

"I am twenty-five, and I am not pessimistic about my future, even though the *Rat* panel that visited my institute informed us that our group's possibilities were poor. At present I am not an Academy member, I am an employee, you see?"

"I think this means you are like an apprentice or what we call a graduate student assistant who is working on the PhD degree."

"Yes, I think so, but I just wanted you to know I am not a full Academy member."

"How did you find the *Rat* panel's attitude toward your group, Frau Meerz?" I asked.

She quickly said, "One member of the panel was most kind and considerate, contrary to some of the evaluation panel stories I have heard from other institutes. He told us with no great pleasure that few will survive. Our group has six members, and he asked us to show him 'something original' in our work that would allow him to argue our case. He added that he knew the Academy had both competent and unworthy members and that many competent members would lose their positions because of funding reductions. The other panel members explained that our work is duplicated by a group of mathematicians in Bonn. They informed us that we had been placed in competition with this group for money. This was deceptive because it was clear there would be no real competition with the Bonn institute. It was obvious that our group was being eliminated for the security of the Bonn group. Therefore, we felt unfairly treated, not evaluated."

"After this meeting the mood in my institute turned dark; there is presently no control, no leadership or direction. Everything is crashing in and we have become rivals among ourselves for these few positions the *Rat* told us might become available. We are fighting and scratching at one another like hungry rats in a cage."

"Worst of all is the conduct of my group leader. Suddenly he is a great critic of the GDR. He was a member of the Party who always said what they wanted him to say and now he is doing all he can to impress the West Germans that he favors the FRG and was a strong critic of the Party. He wants to survive, who can blame him for this? But it comes at such a high cost to his character and ethics."

"Frau Meerz, since it seems you have no hope to remain in this position, what will you do?"

"I enjoy my work in mathematics and wish to finish my doctoral studies at Humboldt University. I have one year to completion, and then I shall request to do my *Habilitation*[24] work at a West German university. At my young age this is sensible. The FRG has money for this kind of study for younger GDR scholars. If I were older, my possibilities would be few or absent."

We were sitting in a corner of the lunch café at the Academy main building sipping tea as we occasionally glanced out into the Berlin sky of rain, wind, and sunshine. She sat straight in her chair, a contrast to my relaxed, even slouchy posture.

She reflected, "Despite all the confusion and disappointment that surrounds us, I am not pessimistic for my personal future. My doubts are about the common workers and older people like my father, who in his mid-fifties and as a former high Party official has little hope for employment."

"You should know, Doctor Bednarz, that I was privileged in the GDR. My mother is a professor of engineering at Humboldt University. My father's high Party position gave me a better life than the children of the workers. I attended special schools for high caliber children where the teachers were not of the standard indoctrinating style. My teachers regarded students in a different way; they demanded that we think and learn. It was done in a Marxist context, although one-third of my classmates were Protestant."

"That's interesting," I remarked, "How did the Protestant students get on with you and your fellow students? Were the Protestants forced or encouraged to accept the Party outlook?"

"Marxism versus religion was a genuine conflict in the GDR," she replied, "but we had good relations at the school, this was an exception to GDR society. As I indicated, my teachers were tolerant and real educators who held intellectual discussions comparing Marxism and religion. It should be noted that the church was a haven for those who did not get along with the socialist system. Anyone who claimed to be a true Marxist and true Protestant was not taken seriously. You could choose one or the other but you would be unable to convince others that you lived by both outlooks."

She became pensive and stared out the window for what I thought would be a few seconds, which stretched into a minute. "Are you all right?" I asked.

"I am; but just now I am pondering all that has happened in this past year—so much has changed so fast. When the Wall opened I couldn't believe it; it was like going to the moon when I passed through it into West Berlin. Even now, a year later, I do not understand all these changes that have come so fast to overturn my world. I am a so-called intellectual who should be able to understand what has occurred."

"Suppose I ask you, what country are you a citizen of? How do you answer?"

"I answer with confusion. I went to the Brandenburg Gate on unification night and sang the German national anthem, and I had the feeling while singing that all Germans were one people. On the other hand, the FRG is where many Nazis were harbored and protected after the war. I also feel that Mr. Kohl is directing the takeover of my country. Yet there was no option once the Wall opened, unification was unstoppable. You see my conflicting outlooks and opinions. It is no good either way."

"What about the upcoming election on December 3rd? [1990] Do you see any hope for better treatment of GDR institutions and citizens if the CDU loses to the more liberal SPD?"[25]

"No I do not," she answered, "Neither party has merit in my eyes. The parties I favor are so small they are not even parties."

"You are, it seems, an idealist in a cynical world?" I asked.

"This is not quite correct; I am something like a person with ideals that no current party meets." She looked closely at me and said, "Socialism is idealistic, too idealistic. It does not work. I think mankind is not alienated from its natural goodness. Actually, most people are evil."

I suppressed a consoling comment, wished her well, and thanked her for speaking with me. She made a final remark: "I am relieved that I was able to speak about the changes since the Turn to an outsider, someone who has a perspective that is different from an East German or a West German. You ask questions only an outsider would pose."

I set out in January to determine if this near-universal reaction to the Turn as a takeover of the GDR I had encountered, almost exclusively from participants or friends of members of Lilly's and Heike Erbacher's English classes, was present in a wider range of GDR intelligentsia. I decided to meet with historians and natural scientists at the Academy and members of the larger intellectual milieu of East Germany in media, the arts, and theater and also at Humboldt University.

By chance, 1991 began with an interview of a former STASI agent. Andreas Pfeiffer agreed to speak with me after I had met his wife, Anita,

in Heike Erbacher's class. When I spoke with Anita, she remarked, "My husband worked for the Stasi and, if you like, I think he will allow you to interview him. He has much on his mind and such a conversation with an outsider would benefit him. How about you?"

"It would be of interest to me, Anita," I answered.

I took the *S-Bahn* to *Bahnhof Schöneweide* and walked along *Sterndamm Straße*, a busy and wide street, to a side street where Anita and Andreas lived in a first floor apartment. As I walked along, I recalled what someone had told me about the neighborhood, "It is still mostly East Berlin there—you can see how East Berlin shops appeared before the Turn." The storefronts were unadorned, with few flashing lights or commercial signs. On side streets were plies of brown coal that people would gather to heat their apartments, and the people had a rough-hewn appearance and demeanor compared to the typical tony West Berliners. I stopped in a small bakery and bought a loaf of *Landbrot*, German rye bread.

Upon reaching the apartment, only Andreas was there, and he invited me to sit with him at the kitchen table. He offered me a cup of tea and placed some pastries on the table as we settled in. The sunlight streaming through two large windows facing the courtyard filled the room.

Andreas sat with a blank demeanor that beckoned me to begin my questions. I felt that this was a tactic to allow me to view him as a Rorschach blot. I smiled, kibitzed about my loaf of bread, and decided I should begin our conversation.

"Andreas, so much is being said and written about the Stasi, by East and West Germans, all of it condemning those who worked for the state security apparatus. Why do you come forward to me, a stranger, to discuss your work for them?"

"Well, you are an American, not a West German, and my wife was pleased with your discussion. She thought you would hear my point of view without condemning me, and in this moment this type of conversation is of great importance to me. There are some things I did for the Stasi I will not talk about with you. This means I regret a few things I did. Overall, however, I am not ashamed of my actions."

"Before we discuss the Stasi, Andreas, please tell me about your childhood and your parents," I invited.

He treated the question with no suspicion of my motives. "I had a very happy childhood despite being in a boarding school and home only at the weekends. My father was a government official and my mother a librarian

before my father took a position at the Academy of Sciences and we moved from Mecklenburg to Pankow."

I asked him, "They were Party members, right?"

"Of course they were," he said, surprised that I would ask such an obtuse question. Then he went on, "I was active in my support of socialism; I joined the youth programs, the Free German Youth and the Young Pioneers. As I became a teenager, conflict with my parents grew. It was not conflict about their authority and my independence. No, my argument with them was over what I called the reality of the world versus what was in the newspapers. Do you know what I am speaking of?"

"I think so," I replied, "I have heard that some children, starting around age ten or earlier, questioned their parents about why the world they experienced was so different from what the Party, television, school and the other institutions portrayed and told them."

He commented, "Please understand that this was a common experience among intelligent and sensitive children, this awakening to the contradictions of the GDR. My parents did what most parents did in those times. They cautioned me to be silent and speak of these matters with them in private, and to never raise them among Party members or anyone outside our family. They told me over and over that good Party members did not ask these questions; the GDR was on the correct path to socialism, so it would all come out good in the end. '*The Party knows best*,' I still can hear them scolding me over and over. For a young person this was seen as hypocrisy; for them it was pragmatic and patriotic. This disagreement between us festered, and as I grew older I realized they feared the Party. Nevertheless, I maintained my idealism about socialism; it was the Party that was the problem, not socialism."

"At age sixteen I left my parents to live with my girlfriend, who had a two year old baby."

"This seems quite young to leave your parents. Was your girlfriend sixteen also?" I asked.

He seemed surprised by my question, "She was my age, but you seem not to understand that this was not uncommon in the GDR. Many children left their parents early, and my girlfriend having a baby and no husband was not exceptional, either. The state saw to the health and care of all children, so men were not economically necessary for a woman's survival. If the woman did not like the man's treatment of her, she often threw him out; there was no shame in this action, and the community supported her decision. This

was in my view a good feature of the GDR; women did not have to tolerate stupid, brutish and otherwise unbearable men to survive."

I told him I had heard of and met several women with stories of "throwing the man out" but that I had not heard of sixteen year olds striking out on their own.

"The state provided for people," he replied, "and this gave us a freedom you in West do not have or—I think—understand. You talk about freedom all the time in the West and overlook some of the very important freedoms we had here in the GDR."

He focused on the loaf of bread.

"You have bought some excellent East German bread. I am told the bread in American is not nearly as good as our bread."

"A good loaf of bread is difficult to find in America," I said. "The bread in my neighborhood in West Berlin is excellent, too. Rye is the German's specialty."

"Did you know Hitler decreed that all bread must be three days old before it could be sold?" he asked me.

"No. Why did he do that?" I asked.

"To keep consumption down. If the bread was old and stale, its taste was poor and people were less likely to crave it, as they do fresh bread. There is nothing better than fresh bread."

I turned us back to his early life, "So at age sixteen you left your parents and thought about becoming an adult and having a career?"

"Correct," he said. "Due to colorblindness, I could not enter the military, which would have been a common route for me to follow. Just by chance I learned of the physical therapy profession. As a conscientious youth, I became excited by this work; it gave me a good feeling to help people. I was sent to a school to learn this profession and soon realized my fellow students and I were not being trained."

"Why not?" I asked. "How could you not be trained for a profession that requires skill and knowledge?"

"I do not know. It was so strange to not receive training in a training school. I felt cheated—and so did my classmates. You are correct, one needs a high level of skill and knowledge to do physical therapy. However, the school's administrators exploited us. They assigned us stupid tasks, like remodeling a room, things that would in no way prepare us to be physical therapists."

"As the local representative of the Free German Youth, I spoke up and demanded that we receive proper training. The leaders of this school did not

like such behavior and without explanation terminated all training for our class. Therefore, we students met and decided to emulate Solidarity in Poland by calling a strike."

"That must have been a popular act?" I joked.

Andreas began to smile a little and stopped squinting at me through his narrow wire-rimmed glasses. It was as if he had decided to open his eyes and look at me.

"Oh, it was quite popular I assure you, so popular that it brought me into contact with the Stasi. They sent a man who asked me for an explanation of this strike action, which ordinarily was not tolerated in the GDR. I liked this man; I admired him as trustworthy and honest. He promised me, 'If they are not training you, this will be corrected;' and then he investigated the situation and saw to it that we received appropriate training."

"I imagine that you then came to know this man, Andreas," I said.

"We developed a relationship; and soon he recruited me as an informal Stasi observer, part of the network the Stasi had in all sectors of society. They depended on such good citizens as myself to keep aware of grassroots moods of the people. I joined and observed a peace group in Pankow and, if you must know, I feel no guilt about this activity of monitoring this group. Later I was trained to be a member of the Stasi and became a full operative in 1987, when I was twenty-five years old."

"Tell me what it involved to be a full member. Did you have a cover profession in physical therapy?" I asked him.

He nodded. "I built my network in 1988 alongside developing my skills in physical therapy. I greatly enjoyed building my network, especially my contacts with young people. I felt as though I was helping people individually and on the larger scale, my country."

I thought for a moment and decided to ask him, "You thought building this network of informers was patriotic?"

He reacted swiftly, "Of course. You do not understand because you are from the West. This *was* patriotic work. All societies monitor what is going on among their people. Your government does it in America with the FBI and CIA. Does it not?"

"I see. What were your assignments?" I queried him.

"Most important we had to prevent doctors from defecting to the West; second, to be aware of criticism of the system; third, to uncover undesirable influences from the West that could spread among the people of the GDR."

"Were there many doctors who wanted to leave?" I asked.

"They had to be kept happy or they would attempt to leave, therefore we watched them closely and gave them benefits and privileges to keep them here. It was a top priority to prevent doctors from leaving the GDR. My official assignment was preventing them from violating paragraph 213 of the Penal Code: leaving the country without a pass."

"I'm not following what you mean, Andreas. There was a law against leaving without a pass?"

He seemed a bit exasperated with my incomprehension, but he also seemed to enjoy explaining to an outsider how his world had worked.

"The exact law they were violating was not having a pass to leave; you know, you cannot leave your country without a passport, and you Americans cannot go to Cuba. Also, I was in charge of issuing official travel permits to doctors. This was difficult for me because it involved evaluations I was not competent to make. Specifically, I had to judge if their travel to a conference was justified."

"In any event, you were chosen to make these judgments," I observed.

"That's right; someone had to do this activity. The basic rule was that you did not allow a doctor to travel to the West unless it was guaranteed that something or some relationship in the GDR would assure his return. I might not have been competent to judge the intellectual merits of their trips out of the GDR, but I knew how to establish that they would return. If they had a family, normally you did not allow all of them to travel together. Having children was a good sign that a doctor would return—girlfriends much less so. You see how these decisions were made."

Andreas stopped to look around the room, sipped some tea, sighed, and sat back in his chair, "You should know that the Stasi became the fix-all center of the GDR, the 'Soiled boots of the Party' we called ourselves. 'The Party has a problem? Give it to the Stasi.' This was the pattern, especially in the final years leading to the Turn. What were we to do with all these issues? All these dissidents? We knew the ills of the GDR and the discontent of the people, and in many of their complaints the people were justified. But those high in the Party did not want to hear this. They just ignored troubling news, if it ever reached them. And most often it did not reach them. Bad news was censored out from below as it passed through the hierarchy of the Party."

"Andreas, perhaps you could tell me about the divisions in political outlook among the Stasi. How much and how deep were they?"

"Generally, the older members were fixed in their ways and quite out of touch with those of us born during the existence of the GDR. The leaders of

the Party and the Stasi were born during the early decades of the century. They knew Stalin; they knew personal hardship, losing loved ones and comrades to the Nazis. The struggle against the Nazis was burned into their minds. Their basis of experience was life and death, the fight against fascism and capitalism, from which fascism came. Those of us younger people who were concerned with the future of the GDR had many debates about how to reform the nation and how to communicate with the old guard running the country. I reproach myself for not joining with like-minded colleagues to create a 'palace revolution' or at the least a more active debate. By 1989 it was too late; we all knew it except for the old-liners in the hierarchy; they were literally living mentally in the past."

"Can you elaborate?" I asked.

"Certainly. Mr. Honecker and his followers were for many years unmovable; and when they finally responded to the people, it was far too late. I began to destroy documents on November 1st 1989, eight days before the opening of the Wall. I did not know the Wall would fall down, but I knew that the Stasi would not survive and great anger and feelings of revenge from the people was about to come upon us. On November 4th there was a massive demonstration in East Berlin; the estimates ranged from five hundred thousand to one million people."

I told him I saw it on CNN and in newspaper photos.

He went on, "Even the Party had to recognize the force of these numbers, the power of '*Das Volk.*' And five days later the Wall opened. After it opened, not *before*, after, the Stasi submitted a plan to reorganize itself. How absurd. Looking back on this, I laugh that I supported this plan eagerly. I now see this as nothing more than an effort to save the same old gang. It was not in the least a genuine plan for reform. In January of last year I left the organization."

"You mean the Stasi? You stopped working for them?"

"I did; we were finished. I continue to work as a physical therapist; this has not changed."

"Let's switch to a specific topic, Andreas. What do you know about members of the Academy and other intelligentsia? How were they controlled?"

"Much like in my area, I assure you; the basic strategy of the Stasi was to build and maintain grassroots networks of informers, some paid, some not paid, but doing this work because they were patriotic. The intelligentsia at the Academy and other organizations were less a threat to escape in the trunk of an auto than they were to write or say something that should not be

expressed in public. On the whole, the intelligentsia were loyal in public; they had no choice really."

"They would be punished, Andreas?"

He leaned forward in his chair to get closer to me. "You say, 'punished.' I say they had to support the GDR against its adversaries, not indulge their swollen images of their brilliance, like the intelligentsia do in the West. Intellectuals are by nature independent-minded and vain; this is how they distinguish themselves, you know, 'Look at me, I am this grand thinker with unique ideas.' That is fine; I accept their need to be independent and critical thinkers; but they had to be good socialists, also. They are, when all is said and done, quite easy to control because they know the boundaries of independent expression. Most could be controlled through flattery and small privileges. But remember most here in the GDR deeply believed in socialism and this made them pliable and tolerant of the missteps and political control of the Party."

We sat for a moment looking at one another before I went on, "So you came to see your parents' perspective in your dispute with them in your youth?"

He laughed at himself and said, "I saw the larger picture as I grew older, and I appreciated their wisdom. As I said when we began, overall I am not ashamed of my work for the Stasi."

"What now, Andreas? Where do you go from here?"

"It is a question of where my country goes from here, if we Germans can become one country. I am not so old, not yet thirty, my life may not, I think, be normal; my children's lives—I hope—can be normal."

Before we parted, he told me of the upcoming day of memorial for fallen socialist heroes: "Rosa Luxembourg Day," he called it. "We celebrate the memorial each year for our Socialist comrades. It will be on Sunday, the 13th of January this year. You should attend."

"I have heard of the memorial Andreas. Someone has invited me to attend, but as an outsider I am not sure if I should."

"Oh, do go. You will see how we honor these heroes and commemorate them. In the view of most East Germans Rosa Luxemburg[26] stands above all others. The Weimar police murdered her along with her comrade, Karl Liebknecht. Their bodies were thrown into the river."

I had been invited to go to the memorial by Christa Fuchs, whom I had met at Heike's Academy English class in November. She suggested we meet at *Bahnhof Friedrichstraße* that Sunday morning "at 8:30 so that we can

arrive before the crowd becomes too large. The Memorial Park is not that big and long lines will form."

The morning was clear and nippy, 20 degrees with no wind. I felt in balance between the chilling effects of the air and the warmth of walking. Christa began to share her views as we exited the *U-Bahn* with scores of others, most of them silently making their way to the park.

She whispered, "Rosa Luxemburg Day in East Berlin is a solemn holiday, something the *Wessis* cannot take away from us. Notice all the people carrying flowers to place at the graves of socialist heroes, especially Rosa."

As we got close to the park, the line stretched for about an eighth of a mile.

"It will get longer still," Christa said.

"Who other than Rosa and Karl Liebknecht are buried here, Christa?"

"They are all communists, of course, some who were murdered by the Nazis, but there are also GDR officials, most not highly regarded by the people. They do not belong here with Rosa and her comrades, in my opinion. You will see the names of many heroes of the struggle on a wall near the graves."

Behind the partial circle of graves was the elliptical wall with the plaques. Set back from the graves was a display with communist literature and slogans on it informing the reader that the Turn proved that capitalism was exploitative. People were handing out leaflets and displaying various party banners.

Approaching the graves, the line fell silent; only classical music playing from a tiny speaker crackled through the silence. We followed the line and walked the ellipse past the graves. People paused to meditate, cry, and place flowers at some of the graves, although the line kept moving in slow, orderly fashion. Luxemburg's grave overflowed with flowers; Karl Liebknecht had many flowers, as did most of those murdered by the Nazis. We walked past the grave of Walter Ulbricht, the de facto leader of East Germany from 1950 to 1971, which had not one flower on it. I looked at Christa and she at me. She nodded in acknowledgment of this and then pointed her head toward a gentleman standing off to one side of the line looking as if he were waiting for someone to arrive. We kept our silence until we were about fifty paces from the graves.

"That gentleman standing there is Heinrich Fink, Rector of Humboldt University. He wishes to save the university from West German takeover. He is a symbol of resistance to us."

"What do you know about him, Christa?"

"He is not a typical East German. He is a theologian, you know. The faculty of Humboldt chose him as their leader after the Turn because the former rector was a puppet of the Party."

I then remarked, "I was told he's a priest, but that he uses his religion as a deception; this is what some West Berliners think. In your opinion, did he have problems with the Party and is he now seen as someone who stood against the Party? Maybe that's why he was nominated to head Humboldt?"

"This is what I would like to believe, and it is what people here in the East say of him. I know that the East Berlin police beat him at one of the demonstrations just before the Wall fell. I think there was a photo of him in the newspaper after the beating."

"Most East Germans know that Fink was appointed because he represents a clean break from the Party. The West Germans regard him as a Trojan horse to keep the Party in control," she said with growing sarcasm. "The *Wessis* would not accept any East German who was chosen to be rector of Humboldt University. The only East German they might accept would have to be a member of the CDU."

"I know from friends that Fink is a deeply religious man; the Bible comes first for him, the GDR second, and Socialism is a far third. My friends and I talk about him and the situation at Humboldt frequently because, unlike the Academy, the fate of Humboldt is not determined."

"You are a student at Humboldt, aren't you?" I asked.

"Yes," she replied, and went on, "Of course, many here in the East are skilled at creating a view, an image of who they are that is false or distorted; many did this to survive in GDR times and are doing it now to survive after the Turn."

"As for me? I think Fink is an honest man struggling to save some of the GDR way of life, to give us inspiration and dignity after all that we have lost. Whom else do we have to admire except him and a few others, like Gregor Gysi?"[27]

"So you do not find Fink's religiousness an issue for you as a socialist?" I asked.

"Why should I? Many of us who believed in socialism also respected religious people; in most cases they were trustworthy. This was not a problem for my friends and me, as it was for the Party, which treated religion as a rival for the people's hearts and loyalty."

She looked distressed, prompting me to ask, "Did something happen to you with the Party?"

"Yes, this is why at my age, thirty-one, I am a student. This is my second time in university studies."

She was reluctant to talk, but as we walked along and boarded the *U-Bahn* her story came out. "I am from a very poor family. I was noticed as one of the brightest children in my early school years, and the Party decided that I would be allowed to attend the university in Leipzig. This was a great honor for me, proof that socialism was the right way, because I, a child from a poor family, could be recognized and allowed to attend university. I performed well and had a teaching post at Humboldt waiting for me upon graduation. In my final year of study I was living with a man, and he decided that he wanted to leave the GDR and go to West Germany. This brought much misery upon me, although I brought much of it on myself."

"How so, Christa?"

"I was loyal to him and also loyal to the Party. I regarded myself as a good communist from a good communist family. The Stasi came to me and said, 'Inform on him and then we will prosecute him.' I told the Stasi, even though they frightened me, 'No, I cannot do this. I do not want to leave the GDR—he does. I am loyal to the Party, yet I cannot betray him.' Then my professors at the university came to me with a warning, 'Christa, you must openly denounce him; you are in danger with the Party.' Again I refused, thinking that honorable Party members would step forward and champion me."

"You did it for love and honor," I interjected.

"I was young and idealistic. This man did not really care about me, even though I stood by him when nearly all our friends ended contact with us—you know, due to fear of the Party and the Stasi. He was a do-nothing, with little motivation. He enjoyed reciting his big dreams to anyone who would listen. His main activity was lying around the flat and complaining about his life. I never thought he would apply to leave the GDR; and suddenly he did without sharing this major decision with me. I heard this news from the Stasi. The Party let him go to the West because they found him so worthless they saw no value in imprisoning him."

"Just before he was allowed to leave the GDR, I was given a final opportunity to denounce him. I was ordered to read a prepared statement—not written by me—at a Party meeting criticizing him as a stain on socialism, communist solidarity, and so on. It was to do this or suffer the hard consequences. And still I refused."

"Christa," I interrupted, "I think they let him emigrate and punished you because yours was the greater offense: you—a bright academic with a future—did not follow their orders and he was merely a do-nothing malcontent."

She agreed with me, "This was deeply hurtful and insulting because I was a Party member all of my life. I was in the Free German Youth and Young Pioneers."

"I was informed that I would not be allowed to graduate, the position I was to have at Humboldt was, of course, denied to me, and I was given a low-paying job as a clerk—and expelled from the Party. This made my life hard. I had few friends remaining and very little money. As I said, this took place six years ago."

"Yet now you are studying at Humboldt," I noted.

"I have a second chance because of the Turn. This is ironic, I realize, because I hate Mr. Kohl. He stole my country and my hopes for a third way with socialism in the GDR. It is so odd; he gave me a second opportunity to finish my doctoral studies."

We reached *Bahnhof Friedrichstraße* and Christa asked, "Are you interested in seeing Hegel's gravesite? It is not far from here."

I agreed and asked her as we exited the *Bahnhof* and turned left onto *Friedrichstraße*, "How was Hegel regarded in the GDR?"

"Oh, he was considered a great bourgeois philosopher who needed the revisions of Marx to reveal the true nature and workings of the dialectic.—Do you know that Hegel thought Africans were outside of the spirit of history because he judged them incapable of higher intellectual processes?—We could, you understand, study Kant, Hume, Descartes, Leibniz and others as long as we did so in a Marxist context. Marx was the measure of all philosophers, you could read and discuss almost any philosopher as long as it was from a Marxist point of view."

The cemetery is wedged between buildings on the busy *Straße* near the *Deutsches Theatre*. We found the weathered stone marker of Hegel's grave, and Christa complained that the GDR had let the cemetery fall into disrepair. "There are several prominent Germans buried here, [Bertolt] Brecht for example. I wish that more care had been given to these grounds during GDR times; this place is of great consequence to many people."

She explained that since we were near *Oranienburger Straße*, she would like to show me "another East Berlin." We walked as she described the area: "This is an historic and interesting part of East Berlin. Not far from here, back toward the *Bahnhof*, is Brecht's Berliner Ensemble Theatre; the

Academy of Arts is not far; and a synagogue destroyed by the Nazis and now being renovated is just ahead. Also, the beautiful but in poor condition Monbijou Park, which borders the Pergamon and Bode Museums in the rear, is ahead."

"There seem to be many abandoned buildings in this area, even for East Berlin," I commented.

"There are; many of these buildings have been occupied by students and young people in the Squatter's Movement. They simply move in and live for free, often without electricity or heat. Here in *Mitte*, the city district we are in, and *Prenzlauer Berg*, adjacent t*o Mitte*, many buildings have been condemned by the government as uninhabitable because the GDR did little to repair or maintain them. This is one way—not making repairs—the rents were kept low for the people. I read in the newspaper that at least thirty percent of the housing in *Prenzlauer Berg* has been condemned as uninhabitable. In this area we are entering most buildings are in terrible condition."

"The overall poor condition of these buildings and the lack of heat, electricity and sometimes water do not stop the squatters, though. It invites them to move in and defy the government to throw them out into the streets, like they did in the *Mainzer Straße* after unification last year. Many of the squatters are communists and left-wing students from West Germany. They are not all East Germans."

We walked up to what looked like a warehouse and saw young people handing out leaflets announcing upcoming rallies against capitalism. A few paces away from the warehouse, strewn on the ground were dozens of tiny red plastic flags, with the hammer and sickle emblem on them, stapled to short dowels.

Christa explained, "These are from a demonstration against capitalism that took place a few days ago. There is another one on Wednesday. Not many people come, but still they are held regularly. I attend many of them knowing this is a hopeless activity."

"They [the flags] look like toys, Christa."

"I shall ignore that comment," she replied.

"This building is the original home of East German television. No squatters live in it, no one lives in it. Artists and young people gather here each day to communicate and organize."

"Now I will take you to a truly hidden part of East Berlin, where almost all the buildings are occupied by squatters or empty." We were still near *Oranienburger Straße*, and I wondered if we were not close to Humboldt

and *Unter den Linden*. "Yes, Dan, we are more or less behind Humboldt, the museums, and *Unter den Linden*."

We reached a small heavily littered courtyard and she said, "Here, come with me into this building." We circumvented debris of all kinds. Above us dangled a pair of old shoes from a wire running between buildings.

"Is that an electricity wire?" I asked. "I thought all electricity service wires ran underground."

"It does," she said. "This wire is supplying electricity from one building that has it to one that does not. My friends are starting a computer software business and they do not have money for an office, so they have expropriated this empty building and are supplying it with electricity in this manner—for free of course."

We walked up a few steps and into a dingy unheated hallway with falling plaster and turned into a small room that had been cleared of debris but was not locked, merely latched with a hook. "There's no lock!" I blurted.

"There is no need for a lock; everyone here has solidarity with their neighbors in the other rooms," said Christa. "This is a cooperative and communal house."

"And where's the telephone?" I wondered.

"They do not have a telephone; it would help their business if they had one, I suppose," she remarked without irony. "They are struggling to make a success of this enterprise; and they are learning to do business in the Western manner, under capitalism."

Our tour of a part of underground East Berlin completed, we headed for a coffee at a swanky restaurant near *Unter den Linden*. As we walked along, she pointed and said, "If one walks that way, in the direction of *Marx-Engels Platz* at night, one will see the young prostitutes. They gather there because it is an isolated area that is also close to the *S-Bahn*. They wear high heels and short dresses, but they appear awkward in such clothing. I can tell they are inexperienced rural or small town teenage girls. They are attempting to appear mature and sell their only commodity: their bodies. It is a disgrace. This never happened in the GDR."

"Were there prostitutes in the GDR, Christa?"

"I suppose there were," she said, "However, it was not like this: in the streets and ruining the lives of young girls. What is to become of them? Women felt safe walking at any hour of the night in GDR times. If a man attacked a woman, she could scream and many people would come running out of their apartments to assist her. This happened to me once, and

strangers rushed out of their residences to apprehend my attacker. I often walked alone at night. Now, after the Turn, I am fearful."

Christa was uneasy when we sat down in the restaurant. "Such places as this are new to East Germans. I do not approve of opulence based on the hidden exploitation of workers."

"Christa, someone told me the service in restaurants in the GDR was horrid."

She looked at me not knowing whether to smile or attack. "It's true; the waiters at restaurants and service staff at hotels and other such places in GDR times were disrespectful. You see, they got the same low wage if they served you or if they did not serve you. A common tactic they used was to take a very long time to ask for your order. They hoped you would become angry or frustrated and go away. There was a restaurant *Am Alex* well known for its awful service. And *Alex* was a center of life in East Berlin. When they did serve you, it was often rudely. So maybe capitalism is not all bad," she said with a smirk.

"When will you finish your studies, Christa?"

"In one or two years, at which time I hope the situation here in the East is better and I will be able to find a good job. I have given up hope that socialism will return. We nearly saved the GDR you know. Mr. Kohl came with pots full of money and big promises he used to dupe the people. I think East Germans now wish they could vote again, now that they see what the Turn has really brought them."

"This is why many of us wish Rector Fink success in saving Humboldt from total control by the West Germans. This could give us a rallying point."

A short time before Christmas I had met a West Berlin intellectual who suggested that I speak to an academic in West Berlin who was active in the Berlin university policy debate. I decided, after my day with Christa, that it was time to contact this West Berlin academic. I phoned him and explained that I was seeking his views on the reorganization of the academic life in the former East Germany.

When we sat down at his finely appointed apartment to chat, rather than give me an analysis of institutions, historical context, and structural trends that I had expected, he focused on "that deceitful Heinrich Fink at Humboldt University."

He viewed Humboldt University as a sullied jewel and Fink's election as an attempt of the corrupt GDR socialist mentality to maintain ideological control over the university.

"The Party used Humboldt for its totalitarian purposes. There is no practical difference between the GDR Socialist Party and the Nazis; both ran society with an iron fist crushing all opposition; both controlled the universities; and both were totalitarian. The Nazis expelled the Jewish faculty and students from Humboldt in 1933 and the Communists drove out the democratic-minded faculty in 1948."

"Do you know how many Nobel prize winners have studied at Humboldt?"

"No, but I know Einstein, Marx, and Hegel studied there," I answered.

"Twenty-nine Nobel prize winners."

He continued. "The FU[28] was the response to the tyranny the Stalinists were engaging in at Humboldt after the world war. And now, it is as if unification did not take place. Fink seems to think he can have his own little duchy over there. He must acknowledge that the GDR is finished."

He went on, "Do you think the so-called 'popular' selection of Fink was legitimate and not arranged by the 'Red Brigade' still running Humboldt? He was placed there to perpetuate the Stalinist hierarchy that dominated the GDR and the university. They think they can put this compromised man up as a symbol of reform because he was a theologian, a religious leader. Such a deception will not stand!"

"He was, I strongly suspect, involved with the Stasi. Virtually all of the faculty and administration at Humboldt must be replaced. I am in contact with colleagues working to document Fink's dealings with the Stasi for the *Gauck-Behörde*[29] so that he can be legally removed from office. He will not last out this year."

I said little as he went on, listing grievances against the Nazis and the Party with no distinctions drawn between them. When he paused for what appeared to be a bit of a rest, I did inquire out of politeness and a desire to avoid awkwardness, "Your view is that Humboldt requires a thorough cleansing?"

"Yes, it does; this is exactly what it needs. You must appreciate how they destroyed lives in the name of socialism. I was a child during *die Luftbrücke*[30] after the war. They tried to starve us out of West Berlin, but we would not give in to them. And look at how they treated religious people in the GDR."

I decided to put a real question to him: "What about the Academy? You've said nothing about it."

"The issue of the Academy is being resolved by the *Wissenschaftsrat*; it is settled that it will be closed at the end of this year. The Academy has no Rector Fink parading around inciting its members about the value of the

GDR. Closing the Academy is a national issue, not a Berlin issue, as is Humboldt. The Berlin *Senat* has legal jurisdiction over Humboldt and will not close it; it is a matter of who controls Humboldt."

"You should try to meet Rector Fink, this so-called pious man. You will hear all his humble, soft-spoken nonsense about the GDR and preserving what was good about it. These are appeals crafted to make this case sound like one of cultural imperialism versus self-determination. This could be appealing to an American, except that it is not true. We have one Germany, not two. Fink wants two Germanys."

"The backwardness, incompetence, and corruption of the Humboldt faculty are beyond dispute. They are far behind Western scholars and scientists in every discipline. They were, on the whole, poorly trained, and totally under the Socialist Party's thumb. Every idea and every faculty member there had to be approved through the Stalinist ideological filter. This created a charade of intellectual life. And now they think they can give us a man who would carry on this horrible tradition. Humboldt once was a magnificent university, its founders meant it to be the 'mother of all universities,' and it will be once again. This I guarantee you."

After about a half hour, he was emotionally spent and nearly out of breath. We parted with him saying he had enjoyed our discussion.

Christa phoned a few days later to give me the names of several administrators at Humboldt to approach about an interview. "I regret that I do not know any of these people well enough to make a personal introduction."

I cold-called one of the Humboldt administrators, Christian Kuhn, Christa had suggested. He acted as if he had been waiting to hear from me. "I would be delighted to speak with you; these are stark times for us in the former GDR and speaking to an American would be interesting for me. I spent some time studying in your country a few years ago."

We met in early February and I began by asking him about his background as a prelude to getting his views on how the situation at Humboldt fit into his understanding of the Turn.

"My parents were Party members and I felt as a child that socialism was right and capitalism was wrong, much like a child in your country would love God and fear the devil, I think. They instructed me from early in my childhood that the Party was to be obeyed regardless of how inane or insane the circumstances. I had many questions because so much of the GDR was obviously not as the Party claimed. Most important, my parents warned me never to discuss my criticisms of the government and the Party in public.

Children see what's there and just automatically ask questions, especially if there is a contradiction that adults are too polite or frightened to discuss. This is a common pattern in the GDR as children mature and became aware of the GDR's contradictions."

"My parents and others of their generation were fearful of the Stasi and the Party. Without a doubt, the Stasi was the control and enforcement arm of the Party. I observed this fear in my parents when I was a child and this memory remains vivid with me. I myself never felt such fear; it was a matter primarily of the times. The fifties and early sixties were times of great repression in the GDR, versus the seventies and eighties, when there was less repression. I know for a fact that physical and psychological threats and pressure were applied more often in the fifties and sixties than in the late seventies and eighties. On a personal level, I can tell you that I listened to Wolf Biermann[31] records without fear; everyone in the GDR did so these past several years. This was not always so, not always tolerated by the Party. So my children—when the GDR was in existence—were not growing up with the same social restrictions and fears in place as when I was a child. They still saw contradictions, however."

"The realization of the contradictions and hypocrisy, were they Marxist contradictions?" I teased him.

"Quite," he laughed, "Perhaps Marx should have analyzed their materialist source. Anyway, it was the parent's job to control the natural honesty and curiosity of their children. I was instructed by my parents to adapt and conform to succeed. I did this; I never spied on anyone or betrayed a friend or colleague, but I knew how to behave to get along."

"Now the West Germans hold Party membership against East Germans, however, almost everyone was a Party member," I commented.

He pondered this for a moment and replied, "This is quite logical and, at the same time, overly simplistic of the West Germans. What they often fail to ask is the 'What would I have done in that situation?' This is a frightening question to ask oneself. Do the *Wessis* who criticize us really think they would have behaved any better than we East Germans did? Here I am speaking in a statistical, probabilistic sense. What would their mean, median and modal responses have been if western Germany had been occupied by the Soviets and eastern Germany by the Americans? We have had two different German experiences since the Nazi times. How do they know they would have stood up to the Party? I can assure you they would have adapted to survive and made compromises just as we East Germans did."

"You are referring to cultural relativism, a fine tool when you're analyzing someone else but uncomfortable when assessing yourself," I noted.

He smiled and said, "I agree, this is the heart of the German unification issue. We East Germans face the decimation of our collective identity, our real national identity. Forty-five years ago we were all one Berlin, one Germany. We are different from the other Warsaw Pact nations that have abandoned socialism. In nations such as Rumania or Bulgaria and perhaps even Poland and Hungary, the economic conditions will be hard for some time to come."

"Not so here in Germany. This is complex because I do not want to overlook the great loss of jobs that is taking place here in the East—it is staggering to be sure. What I'm arguing is that people in the former East Germany will not go hungry, and their standard of living will not severely decline as it may in these other Warsaw Pact countries. The West Germans have taken us over and they cannot let us slip to the level that a Bulgaria might sink to economically. As bad as many things may become here, we will not face severe shortages of food and serious economic decline. The West Germans will, nevertheless, treat us as second class."

He paused and said, "Our East German national identity is destroyed; this is one great price of unification as I see it. We may end up for some years a colony of the FRG, both economically and psychologically. The Poles and the others have not lost their national identity; they will not be colonized by other Poles with a different idea of what the Polish cultural identity is."

I queried him, "I have asked many people the question, 'What country are you a citizen of?"

"And they have difficulty answering." he remarked.

"They do. They cannot simply say, 'I'm a German.'"

"The conflict is deep, you know," he observed. "Even after only forty-five years."

"How so?" I asked, "Because the West Germans are rewarding those who deny or disparage the GDR and are punishing those who want to preserve some aspects of it?"

"Partly, you are correct, Doctor Bednarz. But partly you are off the mark."

I invited him to explain.

"First, there is a willingness among some East Germans, especially the workers and opportunistic intellectuals, to be done with the GDR and to repudiate it as a worthless and disgraceful period of German history, like an evolutionary dead-end. The West Germans like and reward this outlook.

It's much like the repudiation of the Nazis—what good did they bring to Germany? None whatsoever."

"Second, the Party attempted to create a socialist personality in a crude, oppressive, unsophisticated and utterly misguided fashion. They had virtually no theoretical construct of the personality; they just assumed, according to vulgar Marxism, that every person was more-or-less identical to the next person and all were a product of their environment, period. Very few of us deeply internalized the Party imposed identity because it was not a genuine identity that sprang from human interaction. It was external, a vise, a straightjacket, fitted to the populace in a context of fear. This did psychological damage to many citizens of the GDR."

"You mean few actually lived it? Believed it? Felt it?" I wondered.

"Actually, it was virtually impossible for a human being to internalize this cardboard one-dimensional identity. Many used the socialist-slash-GDR identity in a hypocritical fashion, pretending to be 'good socialists' while not believing it. Some who believed in genuine democratic socialism talked of 'real socialism' appearing one day; this was done to keep hope alive. However, only idiots and 'true believers' could possibly believe a genuine identity would be developed on the basis of what the Party imposed upon its citizens. This distorted attempt to create a socialist citizen personality is what the West Germans see; it is all that they see. They do not recognize how most East Germans successfully resisted the Party's clumsy efforts."

"So the dilemma is that now, after the Turn, many are realizing there really was a GDR identity worth preserving?" I asked.

"I would agree; and it was separate from the Party although it formed because of, in reaction to, the Party's control of the GDR. This is what our struggle here at Humboldt is about, our identity, the one we did not know we had until it was fully revealed after unification."

I asked him, "So do you think the West Germans, with some exceptions, want to narrow unification to an economic issue, as in, 'How much integrating the GDR into the FRG will cost?' It will cost in money—it now seems—far more than they anticipated; and this makes them tend to think the East Germans are a burden and ungrateful. In contrast, for you East Germans it is primarily a matter of identity, as you've laid it out for me just now."

He replied, "Something like that; we East and West Germans have incompatible perceptions and interpretations. Neither side is fully right or wrong, I think, but they do not mesh, they shoot past each other. The typical West German attitude is that questions of GDR identity are clever

stratagems or mere sniveling excuse making designed to evoke sympathy. Therefore, for them the GDR identity issue is either irrelevant or simply false. On the other hand, we East Germans, because of our identity problems and socialist heritage, see the West Germans as insensitive and taking over economically, dismissing people, closing factories, and in general ruling us in neo-colonialist fashion."

"As if they are exploiting you economically as well as dismissing your identity crisis?" I asked.

"That's right, East Germans, the ones who endorsed unification a year ago, are beginning to experience huge rates of unemployment, factory and enterprise closings, the harmful aspects of goods flooding in from the West, the virtual giveaway of property by the *Treuhand*[32] to Western capitalists, rising prices, and the appearance of West Germans to staff and administer organizations, including the universities. They view all this as an affront to the GDR identity they barely knew they had. It is as if the West Germans are saying to us, 'You wasted forty-five years; now you must learn to do it the correct way, the *Wessi* way.'"

"As you have no doubt heard from others, the expectations of the East German people and the promises from Mr. Kohl and the CDU were all rosy a year ago. 'No one can stop a united Germany' was what they crowed, along with 'We are one folk.'"

"But now we are learning that we are *not* one folk, but two. How could it be otherwise? The *Wessis* got the Marshall Plan and we got Stalin's boot. Do you know that the Soviets took up many railroad tracks here in the East and shipped them to their country as reparations?"

"Reparations? I would imagine that much of the railroad system was destroyed by the War," I said.

"Yes, but this was not important to the Russians. What did the Americans, French and British take as reparations from the West Germans? The Americans were clever; they gave the *Wessis* the Marshall Plan and then used that plan to fund selling West Germans American goods."

"With this as our context," I said, "Can we turn to the state of affairs here at Humboldt? How do you see what has taken place and the future of the university?"

"The first thing to state," he said, "is that the Berlin *Senat's* evaluation of Humboldt is legal. The *Senat* has jurisdiction over Humboldt and it is their right to evaluate us. Still, the evaluation is a sham; it is being used for political/economic purposes to expel many who should not be dismissed. History, law, economics, philosophy and perhaps psychology are the areas

under the greatest threat of a total purge. For reason I need not elaborate, I trust."

I nodded and he went on.

"Scholars in the areas I just mentioned are likely be—it is my strong opinion—dismissed *en mass* or forced into retirement at an early age by the West Berliners subsequent to this so-called evaluation. This is complicated, of course, but let's use what I've said thus far as a largely accurate description of the state of affairs. Humboldt University's current administration does not want to dismiss large numbers of faculty because they have a degree in this or that discipline. We are developing our own reorganization plans for the departments. We are East Germans, however, and we are not trusted by the West Germans."

"Tell me, then, where will the replacements for those let go come from?" I asked.

"They will be replaced by West Germans, if the Berlin *Senat* has its way. It is certain that a few token positions will go to East Germans who are recruited from the GDR Academy of Sciences, which, I'm sure you know is closing at the end of this year. Hiring a few East German scholars from the Academy, or even keeping some on here from the current faculties. This will be done for cosmetic purposes or to repay loyalty from East German intellectuals who have denounced the GDR, or to protect those few GDR scholars who over the years before the Turn were able to establish alliances with powerful professors or politicians in West Germany. However, there is a countertrend in that the Free University, and possibly the Technical University, stands to lose some funding to Humboldt. So I do not know precisely how this will play out."

"It is a given, a certainty, that this university, Humboldt, was hampered intellectually and controlled in GDR times by socialist ideology. Of course we lagged behind the West Germans in many areas, due to the Party's ideological control, the lack of resources for equipment of all kinds, the restrictions on contact with scientists throughout the Western world, and so on. This is the justification for eliminating us East Germans and bringing in West Germans to administer the university and teach the students."

"But?" I interjected.

"But, why can't we East Germans reform our university? There were, that is, there are many fine professors here at Humboldt. I suggest that you speak with our Rector Fink about these matters. These are difficult times and I think you should hear about the struggle for Humboldt directly from him."

"I am told he is busy, working almost continuously," I replied.

"This is so. However, I will tell him I have met you and suggest that he meet with you. I cannot promise he will grant you an interview. Please call his secretary after tomorrow when I will have had an opportunity to speak with him."

My first of two short meetings with Rector Fink had a shaky beginning; we began fifteen minutes late, uncommon among Germans. I started to explain that I was talking with intelligentsia about their reactions to and interpretations of the Turn, when he squinted in disapproval and interrupted waving his hands,

"Doctor Bednarz, I do not want to be discourteous to you, but you strike me as yet another Westerner with no understanding of our situation. You have your notebook in your lap ready to write down confirmation of what you already know. I mean to say you have your questions that, no matter how I answer them, will fit your preconceived notions of who we East Germans are. I do not think there is anything to say to you. I have been misquoted by several Westerners and do not want this to take place again. Nothing good can come from such an interview. This is what I wanted to tell you—as you are a representative of the Western point of view—in person and in no uncertain terms."

I reacted, "I cannot *understand* your situation as you do Rector Fink. Nevertheless, I want to *try* to convey your understanding to my readers. That's what an ethnographer is obliged to do. I have some prepared questions but they are only guidelines to solicit and probe your interpretation of how the Turn is affecting Humboldt."

He took in what I said and replied, "This sounds good, Doctor Bednarz, but perhaps I will read what you have written one day and regret it because it will be twisted and used against us East Germans. We want to have our own history here in the East, and I'm concerned you may write a history in the West in sociological-technocratic terms, and this misses a great deal of what is spiritually significant. The West Germans disregard this dimension of spiritual destruction they are committing. Do you see my point?"

"The Turn thus far has been a series of political and economic impositions on East Germans by West Germans. From my perspective there has been no revolution. The opportunities for a genuine revolution were opened in the fall of '89 and then were quickly closed off. Do you understand what I'm suggesting?"

"Are you speaking of a revolution in consciousness, as in Martin Buber's[33] discussion of 'Us-Them to I-Thou'?" I asked him.

"This is what I mean; a genuine revolution in how we think about each other. In this sense I must tell you—because you are an American—of how deeply troubled I am by the Gulf War that your country is today prosecuting. There is another way that does not involve war to resolve difficult political problems. I do not hold you personally responsible, of course, but this war is a great outrage and tragedy to many East Germans."

I did not know how to answer him. He became silent and sat gazing through me. I ran through options in my mind and I decided to ask him, "Where does the concept of the sacred stand in your view of the world and what has taken place after the Turn?"

He answered immediately, "It is central to my thinking. This is why the Gulf War is a tragedy for all sides. None of us need be enemies. Here in East Germany our desire is very simple and very threatening: *We East Germans want our own history*! We wish to be recognized by the West Germans as having a legitimate past, cultural identity and national history."

"Do you feel that the West Germans see you as feral children, Rector Fink?"

"Yes, in this manner, as wild children who must be civilized," he said.

"So you find the West Germans self-satisfied and treating East Germans with an aura of superiority," I commented. I went on, "Of course this is normal among those who feel they have won a victory; victors are neither humble nor reflective—let alone sensitive to spiritual matters of those they feel they have vanquished."

He replied, "Assuredly, they are quite self-satisfied; it is we East Germans who must do all the changing. It is as if they have nothing to learn from all that has occurred, going back to the Nazi times, military occupation and the division of Germany into two states. Our struggle here is fundamentally about preserving what was good about GDR character and institutions. We can only have one united Germany. That said, a real unification requires that our East German past is acknowledged, not crushed and demeaned as if we are no different than the Nazis."

"That history is, for the West Germans, I think, tied to Stalinism and the abuses of the Party and the Stasi, and as well to the rivalry between the two nations," I replied.

"Doctor Bednarz, I am not a Marxist. I am an East German, I am a religious man, and a humanist, this [holding up the Bible on his desk] is what I believe, my guide. This, however, takes us into another discussion. I only gave you 10 minutes because I thought we had nothing to discuss. I invite you to return, but as you know, my schedule is hectic. Please see my

secretary for a future appointment, although it may be at an odd time in the evening. Here are some reading materials I would like you to review about the situation in the former East Germany."

We met again a few weeks later, but only for a short period. As we sat down, I began, "Rector Fink, I've read the literature you gave me and I will not ask you about your strategies for dealing with the Berlin *Senat* regarding the evaluation of Humboldt."

"Good, because I would not discuss this with you," he said.

"Fine. I think we both are concerned about identity, I as an outside observer and you as a matter of symbolic life-and-death."

"And what do you see as the outsider?" he asked me.

"I'd like to read a passage from a sociologist of religion. His name is Hans Mol (1976, p. 62) and he writes, '[T]here is a tendency for personal and social identity to become sacralized and … this is particularly so when changes, upheavals, injustices, and uncertainties make a specific identity both fragile and precarious.'"

Fink sat thinking. "Ah, this is how it is. What choice do we have other than to resist the destruction of our history? The West Germans demand capitulation. People are sacred, one cannot tell them, 'Your life thus far has been worthless and disfigured.' By whose standards does one make such an assessment?"

I went on, "The corollary to this among the West Germans is the tendency to desacralize, or invalidate, the East German identity. I was at a sociology conference in Leipzig recently where two East German sociologists discussed identity in the GDR. They stressed that it had validity, that it was not wholly dysfunctional and totally rooted in authoritarian personality structure. The discussant was a West German sociologist who was agitated with their proposition. He said, 'the so-called GDR identity is a nostalgic delusion.' He asserted that family life in the GDR was dysfunctional along several critical dimensions, especially in terms of how the state controlled the private sphere. Therefore, overall, he said there is nothing of positive value to warrant claims for a valid GDR identity. He went further still and suggested that socialism had created a freakish society of people spying on one another, living in fear and incredible hypocrisy; it had 'created a totalitarian personality'," he said.

I continued, "On an anecdotal note, last week I was at the Academy offices in *Prenzlauer Promenade*. The person I was interviewing introduced me to two of his colleagues in the hall. They were young women historians who joked with me about their lack of job opportunities. I asked them to be

serious about their future, 'What do you think it holds for you?' I asked. One of them replied, 'Oh, they don't want us in the West; we are the products of an invalid country.'"

I went on, "So what I see, Rector Fink, is conflict over the right to define one's past, which, of course, is connected to the power to define one's present and future."

Fink smiled and then was interrupted by a phone call. "I am sorry that we do not have more time. Please make another appointment so that you can further explain what you just said to me about these young historians. Also, we shall discuss the positive aspects of life in the GDR alongside the ugly aspects."

We had three more appointments that were canceled at the last minute due to the constant crisis status of Fink's tenure at Humboldt. We never met again.

Several weeks later, I was visiting Renate Tanscher when Rector Fink's name came up as she told me of her networking efforts, which she referred to as "Vitamin B,"[34] to secure a new academic post. She asked that we go for a walk.

"My best possibility is that the head of my institute at the Academy will be allowed to take several of us to a new institute in West Germany. I wish that I would know my fate; even if it is that I will not have a new post. I want to know. We must watch everything we do and say around the West Germans so as to not disturb our chances for employment."

I asked, "What are you really saying, Renate? You sound as if you know something and don't want to directly tell me. Can I coax you to speak?" I asked.

"Dan, I think you should interview Rector Fink at Humboldt as soon as possible."

"Uh-huh," I muttered.

"You have already spoken with him, haven't you?" she asked.

"I have, Renate, but I should not discuss the content of the interview with you, partly because our discussion is ongoing. However, he understands that all he tells me is on the record because of his position as Rector."

"I understand," she said. "Tell me, do you think him a fool?"

"No, Renate, given how he understands the Turn, he's got no other option in my estimation."

"I regret to say he is a marked man." She sighed.

"A marked man," I repeated.

She continued, "The West Germans will link him to the Stasi—I think they are working on this and waiting for the right moment to act. The Stasi often came to speak to many of my colleagues and with me, especially after we had returned from an out of country trip. We could not prevent this; they would take notes. If these notes turn up in the Stasi files, just like that you can be branded a Stasi agent or informer."

She looked away, walked a few paces, and sat down on a bench in front of the *Müggelsee*. "You are an outsider; you do not fully understand us and our situation. The question of how we managed our dealings with Stasi is complex."

"It's alright, Renate, I am grateful you want to explain this to me."

"Okay, Dan, here is what I know. As you recall, I am looking for a new position and recently I was at a book reception in West Berlin to meet scholars who might help me. One FU professor asked me if I knew Fink and I said of course I know him. I made the mistake of telling this professor that I think very highly of Fink. He reacted by whispering to me that Fink was not a man worthy of praise."

"So you know Fink, Renate?"

"Of course. He is a dear man to many in the East."

"Now let me tell you the next thing this West Berlin professor said to me, because it was a warning. He told me, 'If I were you, I'd stay away from Fink. He is not someone you want to have any association with.' This was advice about how to secure a new job, make no mistake."

"Are you sure, Renate?"

"The West Germans have all the power. I am certain from this conversation that soon Fink will be accused of having worked for the Stasi."

"I'm sorry to hear that, Renate. Do you believe the charge against him?"

She replied, "Who knows? It could be true. However, I will need strong evidence to believe Fink was with the Stasi. It is at this moment a rather easy and convenient charge to lodge. It is a quick and deadly way to remove him from Humboldt. Still, as I hope you know by now from all your discussions here in the GDR, one never knew who was connected with the Stasi and the nature of their connection."

I nodded as Renate went on.

"The West Germans make the Stasi accusation when they want to bring an East German down. There are many East Germans I know who had connections to the Stasi. These connections are being ignored or sanitized by the West Germans for political reasons. They did the same whitewashing for many Nazis if they were useful or politically connected."

"So you see, my qualifications as a scholar are of secondary importance to securing a new post, if they are of any importance! In GDR times my supervisors would warn me about whom I associated with and monitor my research topics and in other ways control my life. This new life of 'Western freedom' is not so different."

Simultaneously, since January, I had been conducting interviews with members of the Academy at several of the institutes of history. The building that housed them was on *Prenzlauer Promenade*. The large drab building sat alone in a field just beyond the *Prenzlauer Berg* district of the city.

On my first few visits, each time I would enter the building, the person in the reception office would ask to see my passport, take down my name and its serial number, and ask whom I was visiting. I would then have to wait for my host to come downstairs to meet me. This practice became lax and intermittent in the early spring.

The first conversation I had was with an Academy institute head, Professor Jonathan Schröder. He greeted me in his comfortable two-roomed office and as we got acquainted he said, "I have taken the liberty of coming up with a random sample of members of this institute for you to interview. I've selected every sixth one after mixing their names in a hat; in this way you get an unbiased sample. You will see for yourself when you meet them how independent they are. My suspicion is that you may have some doubt as to whom I would nominate for you to interview."

I thanked him and said, "I suppose we should begin your interview on the topic of the recent visit of the evaluation panel. How did you find them?"

He laughed slightly and said, "Evaluation is a very good thing for science, and an appropriate step to take at this time given the massive social changes underway. Unfortunately, what occurred was a politicized and farcical event; it was hardly an evaluation, to be precise."

"Please explain, professor."

"An evaluation with negative consequences, that is, one used to legitimate a political agenda is no evaluation. It is nonsense from a scientific point of view. There were no standards or criteria in place that I was made aware of to serve as a basis of our evaluation. It seemed this institute was to be measured as if the GDR never had existed. There is no mystery as to the results of such an evaluation."

"So the evaluation did not reflect the 'Compared to what?' question?" I observed.

"Exactly, but let us start at the beginning. The panel sent here was composed of social scientists, some of them quite ignorant of our areas of economic and historical study. In fact, it turned out that only four of the seventeen panel members were expert in any of our areas, the rest were sociologists, political scientists, and psychologists."

I interrupted him, "You are saying some of the members were not experts in your areas of inquiry?"

"That is what I am saying. In addition, they conducted this evaluation in a shoddy and lazy fashion. They convened at eleven in the morning, met with me for one hour, broke two hours for lunch; then they broke up to spend two more hours talking with the small project teams of scientists from the institute. At the end of their short day the leader spent fifteen minutes with me to say, 'preliminarily' there was 'some promise' at our institute but 'no focus.' So, he said he would find it difficult to recommend that this institute survive. It was by then clear that the evaluation panel members were not prepared. Most of them had not read any of our work or the summary paper we had submitted earlier for their information. Furthermore, they had not convened beforehand to decide how their evaluation was to proceed; they merely came together for the first time that day at this institute. It was a rather insulting episode yet not unexpected given the agenda. Why should they put any effort into preparing for a foregone conclusion?"

"Closing your institute?" I asked.

"Of course; if they had cared to look at our work, they would have seen that we are doing research recognized by scholars in other Western nations. Recently we held a meeting of the directors of Academy institutes already visited by the *Wissenschaftsrat* panels. When we directors compared our experiences, we found that the pattern of our meetings with the review panels were stunningly similar. We learned from each other that none of the institutes would survive as they are presently constituted. The best we can hope for is the reassignment of some scholars or teams of scholars to various institutes in Germany."

"And you think this is being done for political-slash-ideological reasons in the guise of peer review and evaluation?" I asked.

"This is undoubtedly what is taking place. The institutes with the best chances are those in the so-called non-ideological areas; what you in the West call 'hard sciences', like engineering, physics, and chemistry. These institutes and some of their scientists may survive in some form or another. All in all, evaluation is a misnomer because the *Wissenschaftsrat* thoroughly

ignored how science had been hindered and constrained in the GDR. You know, there is another way to 'evaluate' us. We had accomplishments and internationally acclaimed results despite the difficult conditions under which we operated."

"You are suggesting they might have seen it this way if they had utilized some form of weighted or culturally relative standards?" I asked.

"Why not? That would be a genuine evaluation. This would take time, effort, and be an acknowledgement that we were capable of doing good science. I have a letter here from a colleague in England; [he pulled it from a folder and read parts if it] you see that he criticizes the *Wissenschaftsrat* for engaging in a process that has an implicit built-in conflict of interest."

"I'm not sure what you mean, professor. What is the conflict of interest your colleague is pointing to?"

"There will be a limited amount of funding in unified Germany for various kinds of scientific inquiry. Many of the people sent to 'evaluate' the Academy—and I assume this will hold true at Humboldt and other universities—are in fact competitors for the same research funding. What funding and positions we would receive would be at their expense, from the same funding source. In essence they were 'evaluating' their funding rivals."

"Oh." I said.

"Oh, indeed. If I am sent to review my competitor for funding, how will it come out?"

"They lack focus!" I quipped. "This suggests that there is both a conflict of interest and a lack of expertise, right? In that some of the panel members have little or no knowledge of your area and some others are directly in competition for funding?"

"That is the case; I hadn't seen this bit of absurdity but, yes, this is how it is," he remarked.

We agreed that there was nothing left to cover regarding the visit from the *Wissenschaftsrat* panel, "Except to note that you will hear much the same account from the scientists you interview here. The panel's visit was a great blow to our institute's morale; we are not engaged in make-work or hack work here. We consider our projects real science and it will be traumatic for these scholars to end their work and see their work groups broken up."

I asked him, "Professor, you mentioned the difficulties of doing science in the GDR. May we go over what they were?"

"I do not wish to discuss the difficulties alone; there were also benefits." He said.

"Fair enough, let's talk about both." I replied.

"The major benefits were that at such a place as the Academy, with its institutes that did not have teaching assignments as they do at the university, one had ample time to do major inquiry, to reflect deeply on complicated issues and problems. Also, one had the ability to travel, and, most important, the ability to deal with '*heißes Eisen*' [hot potato] issues that allowed us, intellectuals I mean, to push the limits and criticize existing policy. These were the major benefits. At this institute we prided ourselves on extending the debate forward on policy issues, especially *heißes Eisen*."

"Not everyone could travel I am told," I queried him.

"This is correct, but in recent times travel restrictions were easing and contact with other scientists throughout the world was becoming more common. Sometimes travel was out of the question because of some issue the Party would raise. This could be stupid and shortsighted, no doubt. As far as I know, however, no one at this institute ever had a travel request denied."

"Maybe there were some requests that never were made?" I queried.

"Quite so; there were instances of self-censorship," he said.

"*Heißes Eisen* issues, professor—many in the West would be surprised to hear that they were dealt with at the Academy," I pointed out.

"Of course," he scoffed, "nevertheless, we dealt with these issues and we sought to acquire as much leeway in the debate and discussion as we could. This brings us to the drawbacks of our system of science. This was a closed society and science is ideally an open area of inquiry; all views should be assessed for their merits, not for their adherence to doctrine or authority."

"Right," I said. "And . . .?"

"And aside from the issue of direct interference by the Party, which did not often take place, there was a related matter, a 'best and worst phenomenon' in place at the Academy, and this often hurt morale. To take up a challenging idea one had to have an intrinsic interest in science, to want to know an answer or to solve a problem for the sheer enjoyment of it. Academy scientists were guaranteed work and, as you know, the system gave work to those who did no work as well as to those who had this intrinsic interest in science. The two types did not mix well, but I had no choice in this matter. Bluntly, I had to deal with some who had no real devotion to science."

"Like a bi-modal distribution?" I asked.

"Precisely; one would find the very best at the Academy, but one did not look too far to notice the worst, those who had no inclination or ability to

do anything. If you sit as the head of an institute and must tolerate the slackers and the disinterested, you see how the scientists who want to do good work can be disheartened and occasionally ask, 'Why do I do this? For what?' Unfortunately, the GDR educational system encouraged the equalization of character; this is a strong illness to overcome in encouraging scientific inquiry, where discrimination and acknowledging differences in the motivation and ability of people is necessary to the advancement of any given discipline."

"How do you assess your institute?" I asked him.

He smiled wryly and said, "What else can I say? Very highly. I think we were able to build a strong community of scholars here, to set standards and to reward and encourage one another in a productive fashion. I have previously mentioned that some of our work is recognized in the West, not just West Germany, I mean. Our work was recognized in England, America and other nations."

I asked, "What can you tell me about the Stasi? So much is said about them in the West, especially how they controlled and perverted intellectual life here."

"Yes, this is a hard question to unravel so as to give you an accurate answer." He sat thinking for a few seconds and went on, "First, one must try to imagine the difference between what was real and what one feared. This is for some impossible, and for any one individual at various times a difficult separation to make. I—and some colleagues—were on occasion approached to do work for the Stasi, and we declined their request."

"Just like that, without consequences?" I asked.

"Yes, there were no negative consequences. These were, scientifically speaking, absurd requests. Nearly every scientist was at one time or another approached to do work for them, so turning them down was not uncommon—it did not in itself single a scientist out for punishment."

"What about spying for them on one's colleagues." I asked.

"As I said, this was a closed society; they did have informers throughout society. The mere existence of the Stasi produced fear, and a psychological fact is a fact."

"That which is defined as real is real in its consequences?" I asked.

"That is what I mean. I often told scientists who came to me in fear, 'If the Stasi want to harm you, they will; so just relax because there is nothing you can do if they really want to bring you down.'"

"'Don't worry, be happy?' That does not sound comforting, professor."

"I said this with the confidence that it was most likely by far that nothing would happen. You see, after realizing nothing would happen, some of my staff were, if not comforted, at least less fearful, so that the next time they were less anxious; and then they could tell their comrades, 'Don't worry, I have been through times of worry about the Stasi.' What I'm arguing is that the actual incidence of persecution was much less than many imagined."

"We need to discuss the Party's efforts to control the Academy. There was a very, very difficult set of relationships in place," he told me.

"Can you give me some general patterns or an overview?" I inquired.

"I will try, Doctor Bednarz. No general statement about how the institutes were run is possible other than to note a broad distinction: some were organized on a military model, which I did not favor, and some were organized around a community of scholars model, which I worked to promote in this institute. Need I say that the Party tried to control the institutes as tightly as possible? The Party wanted a 'hard line' military approach but encountered over and over again the countervailing forces of professionalism and scientific individualism. The soft line approach worked best and that is what we worked to promote here. However, keep in mind that in those institutes run like the military scientists could be most unhappy, and probably not as productive as they would be in scholarly-community modeled institutes. My aim was to build morale for scientific inquiry, and this did not always mesh with Party interests."

I observed that he appeared proud of his work and his institute. "I am quite proud of what we did here under the circumstances."

"Should we talk at the macro level then? About the GDR and its end?" I asked.

"Yes, we should before you go on to meet my colleagues."

I wanted to know his thoughts on why the GDR had collapsed. "In my view," he began, "one cannot consider the GDR and its fate without discussing the Soviet Union, Poland, and the other East European socialist countries; our fates were interdependent. The Party would not—I once hoped—do *everything* wrong.—Alas, they did *almost* everything wrong.

"But let us delve back in history somewhat to the context of Eastern European Communism. The Soviet experiment during the early and middle decades of this century looked promising."

"How so?" I asked.

"I note your skepticism," he said, "so let me remind you that in the twenties and thirties capitalism looked to many in Europe as a system that

could not hold, that was bound to fail, that was failing, indeed, to provide the basic needs of a civil life."

"Without doubt, Nazism's successes can be traced to the failures of democratic capitalism. Given the crisis in capitalism at that time, socialism appeared a stabilizing and successful force. It follows that World War II was taken as proof that socialism was the correct approach to organizing a society. It had withstood the fascist onslaught, the intended mortal blow of the Nazis, and emerged victorious."

"What about the American presence in the War?" I asked him.

"It was good fortune that capitalist America got involved in the war against the Nazis. This made Stalin's task easier, but I speculate that the Soviets would have defeated the Nazis regardless of the American presence. Had the Americans sided with the Nazis against the Soviets it would have been a major struggle with an unknown outcome. We cannot do more than speculate about this possibility," he said.

He continued. "Nevertheless, it is a social-psychological fact that the conclusion among communists in 1945 was that the Soviet system worked. And this brings us to the critical paradox of the Soviet system that ultimately doomed it and the rest of socialist Europe."

"And that would be?" I asked.

"That would be the paradox of rigidly institutionalizing central planning, an approach with an extremely low tolerance for deviation from the plan. In 1945 central planning, based on the defeat of Hitler, seemed to work; it appeared to be the future principle from which to organize the economy and society."

"I add that as any Marxist will tell you, in theory reality is dynamic and not static, it is emergent and is in flux. This is the dialectic, if you will," he said waving his hands in a presto magician's gesture. "By installing central planning as if it would work in all cases, for all time, and in all contexts a great blunder was committed. Do you know that the GDR built bridges with a ten-ton weight capacity that would hold only ten tons, not even a few pounds more?"

"No, but I've been told people were allocated 2.2 pair of shoes a year," I quipped.

"That was correct some years ago; but metaphorically, it typifies a dominant principle and style of Party thinking, so you understand," he said.

"Okay, so what about the GDR and its context?" I queried.

"In May of 1989," he explained, "there was an election, the last one with only East Germans on the ballot. The nation was in deep crisis, the deepest

since 1961; many thought the results of this election were fraudulent. Before the deep discontent arose in the fall, during the summer months following the election, I still thought the government was not doing everything wrong. By October, and definitely in the days before the Wall opened, I realized it was too late for the GDR. Orderly, rational reform was impossible."

"And after the Wall opened, professor?"

"I told anyone who would listen that the world was completely changed. It was as if someone—the East German government—was so anxious about death that he committed suicide. The opening of the Wall did not enhance the position of the GDR reformers, as *Neues Forum* and other such groups at first gleefully reasoned. It destroyed the possibility of reform. This was not fully appreciated until the unification referendum."

"Because this opened the way for Chancellor Kohl and his party?" I speculated.

He nodded, "More to the point, it opened the way for a hasty unification that was grossly inappropriate for the GDR. I must admit to you—as I sit here reflecting—that I revived some hope in December after the Wall opened. 'Maybe there is a way,' I told myself. We had a real go at democracy in those few fleeting weeks between the opening of the Wall and the vote in March. However, the decision by the roundtables in January last year to hold the referendum on unification was intemperate. In essence, it was a vote on the promises of having the D-Mark for a currency. The vote allowed the GDR to be swallowed legally by the FRG."

He sat for a moment and said, "In every revolution, and this one is a reintroduction of petty-bourgeois values and institutions, the old is swept out with no regard for its merit. It would be best if the winners remembered and preserved those things of value from the old system, but this is not how this process unfolds."

"Can you summarize just why the GDR failed?" I asked him.

"It failed due to the inflexibility of its economy, there was no tolerance for stochastic occurrences; and its inflexible political apparatus resulted in a rigid, centrally planned economy. The GDR was unable to evolve and create new goals, better goals, and thereby to improve its culture, the mentality of its people and in turn their behavior. Unfortunately, my fellow countrymen saw an idealized style of life on Western television and they thought they could have this lifestyle by simply casting a vote. The FRG politicians were all too willing to promise this good life to them. But here's the rub: the East Germans who voted for unification actually wanted to continue living in a

socialist way. We rushed into unification and now we are thrown into the so-called valley of trial and tribulation."

"This is called wanting to have your cake and eat it too," I noted.

"I know this cliché. It applies here, to us as the collective GDR people," he commented.

"Professor, What country you are a citizen of?"

He got a puzzled look on his face and said, "I beg your pardon. I did not hear the question."

"What country are you a citizen of?"

With a few seconds of contemplation, he leaned back in his chair, looked out the window, and replied forcefully, "I am a member of the European cultural landscape. You know," he went on, "when unification took place my wife was out of town and I called an old friend a few minutes before midnight so that I would not be alone when the GDR passed out of existence. We talked and talked knowing that the hour had passed until one of us said, 'I'm now looking at my watch; the GDR no longer exists.' It was half past midnight."

I said nothing and he continued, "Oh, do not feel sad for us; a philosopher has observed that one should not feel sad about a past that has brought one to the present."

He gazed at the ceiling and then focused on me. "The members of this institute are prepared to begin talking to you. You will judge for yourself how good they are. If there would be a fair assessment of their skills, most of them would carry on with their careers. As the situation is, however, I have hopes only for the younger ones."

"What about you?" I asked. "You look to be in your forties."

"I am, but I estimate that I have a ten percent chance in the new Germany. I'm much too Red and unrepentant for the West Germans; they are looking for docile East Germans. Perhaps I will find a position in another European country. We shall see. My secretary will now take you to the conference room we have reserved for your interviews."

The first person I met was a freshly minted scholar, Doctor Theo Zuckerman. He was nervous when we shook hands, not knowing quite how to behave and wondering, I suspected, just why I was there to speak to him. I asked him if he knew his name had been drawn from a hat and he said "no" as we laughed about the randomness of our meeting.

"You are quite young, Doctor Zuckerman. How long have you been at this institute?"

"A short time. My appointment began only this past fall and now it is clear from the evaluation panel's remarks that the institute will be drastically revised or simply closed. Because I am new to this institute, my contact with the *Wissenschaftsrat* panel was minimal. All they wanted to know from me was how I came to be at this institute. That was all; they spent more time asking other colleagues here about their work. I think they were only somewhat interested in our work, but it was clear they felt they were sent here to close us down. This was a strange situation to be a part of; to know they had some respect for us but, nevertheless, they were on a mission to dismantle us."

"They did not tell you this? You sensed it, right?" I asked.

"That is true. I assumed it from their conduct and questions, which indicated they were unprepared and ignorant of our work. You do not believe me?"

"I believe you; I've heard this description many times. Tell me, Doctor, about your work." I requested.

He chuckled. "My research concerns monetary systems in the Middle Ages, the social and political contexts in which they arose, stabilized and changed. I cannot say much about my work here because I arrived here in the fall last year. My experiences with research are from my student days at Humboldt."

"I see, so you arrived here in time for the closing?" I quipped.

"Yes," he laughed, "I arrived in time for the closing." He began to relax and sit back in his chair and give more contemplative answers to my questions.

"Tell me about Humboldt, and, to whatever extent you can, about your time here in this institute," I asked. "What did you like and dislike about your work as a scholar in the GDR?"

"I am certain you have heard my criticisms before. They are that the relevant literature was typically difficult to acquire—for reasons of economic scarcity as well as sometimes censorship—and there were the restrictions on travel. On the good side, my research here and at Humboldt as a student, was free of non-scientific interference. I was guided according to what I consider intellectual and scientific standards. This was a most rewarding experience. At Humboldt, we exchanged opinions freely and had many good arguments. There were a few world-renowned scholars in my area of Middle Ages history. I was fortunate because in all of East Germany there were only a few such well-known scholars in my area."

"And the rest, Doctor?"

He looked at me intently and noted, "Here in the GDR we had just these few great scientists and many in the middle and below. The emphasis on publishing was not great here, as it is in the West. One had to love scientific work in the GDR, and some did not—they merely sat back and did no real academic work."

"What about the Stasi?"

"From my experience in my area of history, the Stasi were insignificant. I came to believe that most scholars were unimportant to them. In some areas of science I'm sure they were important. I recall a GDR physicist who was arrested in the United States as a Stasi spy. But with my area, the history of coinage in the middle ages, they did not concern themselves; it is an esoteric topic."

"You are young and I suppose you have a chance for a career in science. What do you think?" I asked.

He replied, "I am not really afraid about my future, although I do not know what it holds for me. Naturally, I wish to remain in a research career."

"I am most unhappy that the GDR has come to an end. I was foolish enough to believe our problems were all political, and now I see that we had fundamental economic problems as well. Still, the Turn has been disturbing. My education in the GDR was special; I am not ashamed of it like some of my colleagues. I cannot explain it other than to point out that I had many special experiences in my education that I consider uniquely East German; and I will miss that kind of solidarity."

"Money was not that important in the GDR; now it is everything. I am trying to say that money is an obsession with West Germans, with capitalist society. Its meaning goes far beyond the ability to purchase life's necessities. Frankly, it's an obsession or fetish in capitalist societies."

"You miss the GDR, then? How so?" I asked.

He sat with his head down and then turning side to side slowly. "I am not a political person. In fact, I am morally conservative. I have a strong sense of right and wrong. Do you see what I am saying? I am an East German, not a Marxist. When I applied for a passport some weeks ago, I looked at the application form and it gave me an odd experience to admit to myself that now I am a 'German' citizen."

I thanked him for his time and asked if there was anything else he'd like to tell me.

"I want to stress that money is not important to me. I need it to live, of course. What I mean is that I do not regard money as a sign of success or status, as I think too many in the West do. I note that in my studies I have

spent much time thinking about the meaning of money in society. Finally, I wish for you to know that world poverty should be addressed and that the pollution of our environment should be halted."

He took me to lunch in the building cafeteria before my next interview. We continued to talk about the changes that had overwhelmed his society since November of 1989.

"I live quite close to the Wall—where the Wall once stood, that is—and I remember the protests and demonstrations in the fall of 1989. I would stand by my window and look out at all the people in the streets and I knew that the Wall had to open soon. I thought that a decision would be announced to allow people to visit and travel more freely; this would have been welcomed earlier in 1989 as a great victory for the people."

"What about the night the Wall opened?" I asked.

"Ah, that night my former girlfriend came to my apartment after the announcement on the television and said, 'I want to go to the Wall to see what is happening, please take me there.' I wanted to go also, so we went out around midnight. What a night that was: so unreal, like a big technicolor, three-dimensional dream."

"The March vote ended the dream for a third way in the GDR and the future began to look like a nightmare. I realized my career at the Academy would not be anything like I had expected it to be. It was certain the Academy would have to expel many people, at the least, and perhaps even close. I sensed this much before the *Rat* panel came, and they confirmed it for me. You have heard all this, have you not?"

"Yes, I have heard it, but it is a slightly new story each time I hear it. Everyone has a nuance or personal detail to add."

He then told me, "You will never know the uniqueness of East Berlin; it was a special place, a very special outlook was here. We had solidarity as East Germans, not as Party members, but as East Germans. It is already mostly gone; the pursuit of money destroys solidarity."

After lunch, we returned to the conference room where Frau Doctor Monika Kalbaugh was waiting for me. She too was uncertain about why we were meeting, although she settled in quicker than had Doctor Zuckerman.

"What are your research areas?" I inquired.

"I study banking and financial history. You would be surprised at how many documents there are in the archives in Potsdam."

I nodded and she went on. "It was not easy to have access to these records. If one knows the how, where, and when of the flow of money one has insight into the use of power and political/economic organization. The

Stasi never allowed me to examine all the documents they had; this was detrimental to my research on German banks. There were some GDR officials who gave scientists at this institute trouble; we were not as conformist and pliant as they wished intellectuals to be."

"Can you give me an example, Doctor Kalbaugh?"

She asked for a moment to organize her thoughts. "There are several topics to sort through and present," she said. "First, I was allowed to travel before 1968, and I spent three months living in Egypt. Then my husband's brother fled the GDR at the end of the seventies and we were no longer allowed to travel until recently, the end of 1988. Do you understand why?"

"I suppose you were considered some kind of security risk."

"It was more as a form of punishment," she stated.

"Since being allowed to travel again, I have been to West Berlin many times—on day trips—and to Paris."

"None of this is directly connected to this institute, but what I want to tell you now is about this institute. Have your heard of the *Sputnik* magazine incident?"

"I think so. This is where the Soviet magazine *Sputnik* was banned here in the GDR because it had articles encouraging Glasnost and Perestroika?"

"It was a particular article, but close enough. We here at this institute circulated a petition requesting that this issue of *Sputnik* not be banned in the GDR."

"And this was not appreciated by state officials?" I asked.

"No, it was not," she said as she paused, her eyes glistening with tears. "They, the Party and government officials, told us that if we did not withdraw the petition we would lose our positions as scientists. We would not work anywhere in the GDR as scientists, you see. And so, under this great threat, we relented and collectively withdrew the petition. And do you know that the English edition was available at the main library on *Unter den Linden* for anyone to read?"

"It was?" I asked.

"Yes, this added to the absurdity. But our main complaint to the Party was, 'Why do you forbid us to read something written by the Soviets, our comrades?' Some here at this institute left the Party over this incident, for them it was a final sign of how closed-off the Party was and the widening divide between Mr. Honecker and Mr. Gorbachev."

"There is one other incident to tell you about; it concerns the director of our institute informing me not to work with a Western colleague. He did this for my own good, I am certain, but nonetheless it was a blow. He said to

me, 'Do not apply to work with this Western scientist; your request is sure to be turned down. Why should we go through the bother when I know it will not be allowed? Let us save our requests for cases where we have a better chance of approval.' This is what he told me. He was correct, I think, but I was disappointed at missing this chance to work with a Western colleague."

"Do you think it was because you were working in this area of the history of banking?" I asked.

"Probably, one never knew what topic could become of interest to the Party. There is at least one scholar at this institute who switched research topics because the Party became interested in her work. Most of us did not want such interest."

"What about the benefits of working at the Academy?" I asked.

"We have fine scholars at this institute, a situation not found in every institute at the Academy. We have supported one another and now our future looks dismal, at least in terms of carrying on here as we worked in GDR times. I greatly enjoyed working with colleagues in the Soviet Union, also. And I have been able to have a few of my articles recognized in the West by scholars in my field. This is very satisfying."

"You always spoke your mind?" I asked.

She replied, "One could speak freely in this institute. The Stasi were more a threat in the outside world, not here in this institute."

I asked her assessment of the *Wissenschaftsrat* panel's visit. "I was unhappy with their entire process, and other colleagues here were even more unhappy and aggressive with the panel members. The evaluation panel said nothing about our work and it was clear they were here to pretend to examine us, not to solicit our viewpoints as equals. There was simply no dialogue permitted—they made this quite clear. I met alone for fifteen minutes with one member and he seemed embarrassed and strained, especially when he told me that perhaps a few project teams from the institute would be reassigned to other institutes in West Germany. He implied that the rest of us are to be dismissed when the Academy closes at the end of this year."

"They had no right—in terms of science—to evaluate us. They had the power to pretend to evaluate us. They were unprepared and not all of them were in our fields of study. I thought to myself as this charade was playing out, what expertise or moral right do these West Germans have to review our work?"

"The West Germans reviewing us spoke in a different way, you know; using German words and grammar assembled in another universe of

discourse. We do not understand one another, this much is certain. I always thought they had more intellectual freedom that we did here in the GDR, but no more. I cannot explain it adequately other than to say that they, the West Germans, live in an intellectually authoritarian system. I observed this phenomenon at work in the evaluation panel. It works so well that the West German intellectuals do not notice the system of control they inhabit. How ironic for me, an East German intellectual, to observe this, yes? This is my evaluation of the West Germans sent to evaluate me!"

"I see that you believe this," I added.

"Yes, I know it is true. It is because I am from another kind of controlled system. It is easy for me to see control in action. The West Germans are blind to their jail cell because it is subtle—ours was crude and clumsy—and they get big rewards for their compliance. Our system was based on severe threats and occasional modest rewards."

"What of your future? Do you think you will work again?" I asked.

"At my age, fifty-three, no I do not think so. The younger ones will in time find work and I am happy for them. The older one is, the more difficult it is in the new Germany. The *Rat* panel made it clear that those few of us who survive will be under forty years old."

"Some are saying my generation had a life that was lived in vain, but I think not. Despite little hope for our careers now, we had experiences no generation before us has had. In the future we must fight personal depression, work to correct social problems, and appreciate that we are intellectuals capable of reflecting on our social circumstances. This is my attitude as I look ahead at the rest of my life."

"And for now you continue to work on a project?" I asked.

"Certainly, our work continues until we are officially dismissed. This gives us almost a year."

She said goodbye and went to fetch the next person on the list.

She returned and introduced her colleague, Professor Doctor Herbert Baum, who was very much the stereotype of a stoic, humorless, and focused German intellectual. He announced to me, "I hold a statistical view of the world, in terms of patterns and probabilities of human conduct. I strive not to let sentiment get in the way of accurate observations and conclusions."

He wanted to talk about the evaluation that had occurred and began before I asked any questions. "They came to our institute in mid-October, days after unification, and it was tacitly communicated through their behavior that the only ones of interest to them were those of us who are under forty years. Their first question for everyone was, 'How old are you?'"

"As someone in his late forties, I was of course angered by this bias. Forty to fifty years old is a prime time for an intellectual; and some do their best work in their sixties and seventies. The panel members kept saying, 'those of you in your twenties and thirties have a good chance of being employed somewhere in the new system.' The rest of us were told nothing about our chances. Their questions were vague and lazy; they were polite but not genuinely interested in our work. I think they knew there was no hope for our institute and they had to go through with this pretense to make it official."

"They must have asked you something, professor. How did they carry on, even if in their pretense?"

"Of course they were formal, as Germans are; they sat down with me and the other project leaders in a collective meeting. They did not meet with me alone—why bother?—and they would not allow me in the room when they met with the members of my team, the team I lead. They wanted to know from the team leaders how all the projects at our institute were connected; they wanted to be able to conclude, I presume, that we did not have, as they told us, 'overall focus and integration.' From these exact words I took their message to be this, 'You must stop insisting that your work at the Academy can be continued.'"

"Their message was you are to be shut down?" I asked.

"That is correct. They said nothing conclusive that day, other than to be quite pessimistic with our director. So we sit and wait. It is a situation where we speculate but know there is no chance for most of us."

"Professor, what things did you find most constraining about the Academy as it was before the Turn?"

"As an intellectual, I was concerned with learning how to get my views expressed in the context of censorship. There were ways to write that could make criticisms in a subtle or suggestive manner that the censors, who were sometimes not very bright or insightful, let pass. I hasten to state that at this institute one could say what one wanted, all ideas were welcome here if one was willing to argue for them. On the whole, most serious policy issues in the GDR had to be approached with the utmost cleverness and deftness in one's written work. It was, however, a relatively easy matter to be critical of other socialist countries, and this opened up an opportunity for indirect criticism of the GDR. You must know that the leaders of East Germany held fast to the view that everything in the GDR was fine, other countries could learn form our shining socialist example. This made an intellectual's task formidable. Also, keep in mind that Mr. Honecker was anti-intellectual, as

were many of his Party associates whom he had known since the Nazi times."

"And what did you like about intellectual work?"

"The GDR state archives are a treasure trove of information. I also enjoyed the possibilities I had to publish my work. Censorship intruded here, to be sure. Some editors took risks publishing certain materials; this is not to be denied. I am nonetheless not at all sympathetic to those who cry out, 'Oh, the Stasi kept me from doing and publishing my work.' This is not accurate; most of these complainers did not want to work. Now they offer this excuse for their lack of productivity. We have one such person at this institute; he is now claiming that he was hampered from publishing his work. I say it is not so, he was not productive, period. One could find a way to publish if one chose to struggle for it."

"What about the Stasi? You seem to feel they were not a serious problem or threat."

"They were a threat if you violated their boundaries. Look, what do you want me to say? They were present; they asked questions; they would interview scientists; they were a part of life in the GDR. That said, I had a benign view of them. Every state spies on its citizens. I did not know who each and every Stasi informant was and I did not care as long as I moved within the boundaries. And do not forget that we could discuss any topic openly in this institute. Trouble came if one made criticisms too loud in public, in speeches, or in writing. I never felt controlled in my intellectual pursuits. I can imagine if one had one of the staunch, old-guard Party member as institute head, then my view would be different; but that was not the case at this institute."

His demeanor told me that he felt my questions along this line were overwrought; this surprised me because others I had spoken with found this matter of deep significance.

"Do you miss the GDR, professor?"

"What an odd question," he said with an emotionless stare. "I suppose that you must ask such a question given all that has taken place in the past fifteen months. I will admit that I now see GDR times in a different way. There is no going back; let us acknowledge this fact."

"We need to learn about this new FRG system quickly. I was a member of the Party and I am proud of that affiliation. I refused to leave the Party as so many did in an effort to pretend they are adapting to the West German ways. Still, we East Germans need to know how the West German system works so that we can survive and not become thoroughly obsolete."

"In fact, the West Germans should help us learn how their capitalist system works instead of just throwing us into it and saying, 'Now do as well as us or fail; we don't care to be bothered by the fact that you come from another system.' Presently, they exhibit, most of them exhibit, a 'We are right, you are wrong' attitude."

"And what are your expectations for your personal future?" I asked.

"I fully expect to be excluded in the new Germany. A few days after the Wall opened I realized they would take us down; we are of no positive value to them, we intellectuals. We do, however, pose a potential threat to their worldview. That is why they are bringing us down."

"When did you have this feeling of exclusion?" I asked.

"I saw in mid-November, after the Wall collapsed, that the world was no longer in order; that we East Germans would be cut down by the West Germans."

"It all happened so quickly. Mr. Kohl made his speeches, listed his ten-point program for unification and promised a no-pain solution and the D-Mark to replace our *Ost-Mark*. And then public opinion was turned around in a few weeks time."

"On unification day, I did not want to look out my window; looking out into the same streets I had known before the Turn was to acknowledge that the GDR no longer existed."

"You were disappointed as an East German, as a socialist, and as an intellectual?"

"As an East German and a socialist, definitely. As an East German intellectual, I am nothing to the new order. Worse than nothing, I'm counterproductive, a reminder of what they want to forget or ridicule."

"What does it mean to be an intellectual, professor?"

"To be an intellectual is to support the state in some fashion. Even if you are critical of it, the state supports you; this fact of existence cannot be avoided. Do you see the contradictions involved? The West German intellectuals, even the ones doing social critical theory, depend upon the hand that feeds them. The FRG government wants to take the young East German intellectuals because they are most easily brainwashed, reeducated or re-socialized, if brainwashing is too strong a term. That is why there is no hope for those over forty as a class of people; we are too set in our ways, our life experiences are not erasable; we cannot be reliably reeducated. Some of those over forty are gladly pretending to be capitalists now; this is a pathetic self-delusion or a cynical ruse. Both sides know this even though it will not be said openly."

"What now?" I asked.

"I will remain at this institute until it is officially closed and I am forced to leave. I want to continue my work more than ever; I want to speak out, to show them in the West that we have our dignity. We did not live and work for our dreams in vain; we can illustrate this by how we conduct ourselves in the rest of our lives as, as . . ."

"Members of history's dustbin?" I blurted out.

"Yes, Trotsky's famous rebuke fits us." He sat rubbing his chin, contemplating what to say next.

"On a personal level, perhaps you should know I wish to show my wife that despite the poverty we face in our future, we can bear it and resist the despair that is all around us. Also, I am looking for another country to emigrate to; it will not be easy to do, but Germany is no longer my homeland."

I nodded and he seemed to know that I had heard this sentiment before. He said, "Thank you for your interest; I have nothing more to tell you," rose, shook my hand, and left the room.

The afternoon was fading, and in Berlin's northern latitude, the mid-winter sky was nearly dark as I walked through the empty field, using the rhythm of my shoes crunching in the semi-frozen clay as a meter of meditation on the day's conversations. I pondered Doctor Zuckerman's comment that I could "never know the uniqueness of East Berlin" that for him had largely passed from existence. His thoughts were given added poignance because he defined himself as "not a Marxist."

I then reached the end of the fields and walked along *Vinetastraße*'s several long blocks of old apartment houses, where many people were out walking their dogs, to the *U-Bahn* stop, which was located at a small bustling center of sidewalk commerce. The silence of the walk through the field and the apartment-lined street was replaced by the screeches of streetcars on *Berliner Straße* and vendors selling fruit, vegetables, clothing, watches, food, t-shirts, and cigarettes said to be "American" to throngs of people.

I walked down the steps to the *U-Bahn*, this was the end stop, entered one of the empty cars, and sat on a plastic orange seat waiting for the train to begin its short trip to *Alexander Platz*, where I then would switch to an *S-Bahn* headed to western Berlin.

The next academic I met was Zygmunt Bathke. We met at his apartment in the heart of *Prenzlauer Berg*, just off the *U-Bahn* stop near *Senefelder Platz*.

"I am informed that you have talked with many people at the Academy, especially at 10 *Otto Nuschke Straße* where I worked in the early eighties."

"Did you like it there, Zygmunt? Why did you leave?" I asked.

"I stayed only for a short time. I found it confining and highly political in the sense of power struggles and so forth—unimportant things that do not contribute to an intellectual life. Also, one had to be, with very few exceptions, a Party member to get anywhere in one's career. You certainly know that on the whole in the GDR intellectuals had to be connected to the Party or you were virtually of no importance."

"I found an isle of freedom at the Academy of Arts, where I was able to transfer after my short and unhappy stay at the Academy of Sciences."

"Why did this switch make you happy?" I asked.

"I worked with fascinating people in the theater and greatly enjoyed doing so. I taught about civilization—do you understand?—the sociology of knowledge, esthetics. I had great freedom to teach the works of Norbert Elias, Karl Mannheim, Max Weber, Emil Durkheim, and so forth. My students and I could discuss openly what it means to be civilized and a responsible member of a civil society."

"Why do you think there was such a contrast in your experiences at the Academy of Sciences versus the Academy of Arts, Zygmunt?"

"Quite simple: because the Party did not concern itself with how artists were trained. The Party would censor a play or novel for the most ignorant or trivial of reasons, but the training of performing artists, as I observed it, was unregulated. Training in the performing arts took place in a setting that was not considered public, so it was considered non-threatening. Like I said a moment ago, the Academy of Arts was an isle of artistic freedom in the GDR. I stress that politicians paid no attention to arts training, whereas in my areas of interest, philosophy and the social sciences, the Party had immense concern about what went on at Humboldt—where I received my doctoral degree—and at the Academy of Sciences. Philosophy and the social sciences were ideologically 'hot' areas tightly controlled by the Party. There was dogma to propagate through these areas—particularly at the universities—and people such as myself were not reliable to always go along with the current Party line of propaganda."

"You thought too much?" I offered.

"That is one way to say it, yes. If one thinks, one may reach his own conclusions or ask a further question that unmasks what those in power do not want revealed."

"This leads me to inquire about the Stasi; you seem to be saying that they were not involved at the Academy of Arts," I inquired.

"It is difficult for me to say anything specific about the Stasi. They were around, definitely, everyone knew that; and I imagine everyone thought about what could happen if one violated their boundaries. I have since the Turn learned that some of my colleagues, ones who were not so good or awkward at their work, were in fact with the Stasi. I also note that we all had contact of some kind with this agency of repression; you spoke to them or you did not have a job. The question—have you heard this yet?—was the nature of your contact. There were ways of acknowledging their authority without being enthusiastic or seeking personal gain from contact with them."

I nodded and said, "I have heard this."

"State security, the Stasi, had six categories of reliability or trustworthiness; being allowed to travel was perhaps—I do not remember for sure—the highest category."

"Did you travel?" I asked.

"I was allowed to travel. My father was a Party official and I'm sure this helped place me in the appropriate category. Why insult him? They were certain that I would return and not defect. They were quite repressive in the seventies and less so in the eighties, when, in my view, their power began to slip. They had too much to control, too many dissident or suspicious 'enemies of the people' and groups to monitor, even ten years ago."

"Although I also think some of the Stasi, in small groups, are still active. I received a phone call several weeks after the Wall opened—when it was assured that it would not close and that the GDR would soon be finished—that I suspect was from the remnants of the Stasi."

"Would you explain? I don't understand," I remarked.

"I will, but remember I am not a paranoid; this really happened."

"Okay."

"I received a call one night from a man who said, 'We know you very well and we are watching you and what you say. You will see that this is true.' I never heard or learned any more or saw anything more to make this a credible threat."

I reacted, "Zygmunt, let's assume you got the call. I know you publish essays on the GDR and the consequences of the Turn that stress how the old system created many distortions, deceptions and corruption of intellectual life. Maybe they did not like what you were writing about the GDR; they—whoever called you—found it disloyal or opportunistic, perhaps."

Zygmunt said, "That is a reasonable guess because I have written that GDR intellectuals were in many instances corrupted by leading relatively privileged lives; most of them had no interest in being self-critical or social gadflies. They were living in what Michel Foucault[35] calls the intellectual's self-made prison. Too many intellectuals here in the former GDR now see themselves as under attack from outside forces, and this makes them passive and unable to access their internal power. To be an intellectual is, in my opinion, to engage in a self-dialogue that never ends. The process of self-clarification has not yet begun among GDR intellectuals."

"Well, I can see why someone might call you to say you are being watched." I commented.

"I am reporting what I see; yes, it's more complicated than 'these are the facts,' but this is how I see what has taken place. Most GDR intellectuals had no vision of policies they wanted to realize—whatever the Party wanted, they supported. They adapted, period. This is not what intellectuals should do with the gifts of high intelligence and time to think. You must hear quite the opposite in your talks with others, I suspect."

"Yes, I do. They feel threatened by the West Germans and powerless. Also, they did not welcome rapid unification and most of what the Turn has brought them."

He went on, "Most GDR intellectuals had no grasp of the wider world beyond the Party. Nearly all were against unification; that is correct. Nearly all of them will lose in the new system; they feel second-class and that is what they will be because they have no concept of their possibilities beyond this confining self-concept. They simply will not see the new world they live in—they did not really see the one they previously lived in. They have memories of a false past and this cannot bring them into reconciliation with their present circumstances. You see, they—as a collective I mean—did nothing of substance to bring about reforms. The simple souls of the GDR working class had had enough of the Party leadership. These common people led the changes here as most intellectuals looked on."

"Zygmunt, may I ask what country are you a citizen of?"

He thought for a few seconds and said, "I would like to reply with a strong, 'No comment,' to this question. The question of German identity cannot be addressed with a simple answer. I point out, however, that there are real social, economic, and ecological problems to solve, and they will only be solved in the context of capitalism. I realized this with certainty two months after the Wall fell. We cannot go backwards to socialism."

We then kibitzed about his work and my journey of conversations with intellectuals. He informed me, "I'm much too serious, judgmental, and abrasive. I hope you have met more sensitive, light-hearted discussants in your encounters with East German intellectuals."

We exchanged salutations, and I decided to walk to busy *DimitroffStraße* (now returned to its previous name of *DanzigerStraße*) and then to board the *U-Bahn* at *EberswalderStraße*. The street was a mixture of east and west, whereas *Unter den Linden* was virtually all westernized. I saw a few abandoned Trabbies, stripped of parts or badly damaged from collisions, on side streets. On *DimitroffStraße*, virtually every storefront was occupied by a business. There were bakeries with the unadorned look of East Berlin interspersed with a few a hair styling salons with neon lights flashing and photo displays of smiling, thin, stylishly dressed young people boasting the latest coiffure creations.

The next day I exited the *U-Bahn* at *KochStraße* and walked along *Friedrichsrtaße* past the memorial *Haus am Checkpoint Charlie* to enter what had been East Berlin. Stefan Feuchtwanger, a playwright, lived near *Leipzigerstraße*, just a few blocks from the Academy building where I had first visited East Berlin six months earlier.

He lived with his son and spouse, Sigrun, who, as the interview progressed, turned from observer to active participant. "You may want to interview Sigrun in her own right," he observed as we began. "She told me in 1987 that the GDR could last at most another four years. I thought she was badly mistaken."

Sigrun demurred and said, "This was obvious to me, but please do not let me interrupt your interview of my husband."

Stefan laughed, "She is much more clever and insightful politically than I am." He then took a breath and told me, "I came to East Berlin in the late seventies to train as a playwright, poet, and director. I was in my late teen years and Sigrun and I were recently married."

"How difficult or frustrating was it to be a playwright in those times?" I asked.

"I can say that coming from a rural setting to Berlin was a thrill for me. The relative differences in freedom were noticeable immediately. In my rural hometown censorship was heavy and crude. Although there was censorship here in Berlin, it often was muted by a higher level of intellectual life. You would see things in plays in Berlin that you would never see in a small town. There were influential people here who at times would protest about the stupidity of the censors."

"For example, for a time during the mid-eighties I was running a small theater outside of Berlin to gain experience. At any rate, there was a scene in one of my plays where a person throws the GDR flag onto the floor in a rage. From the context it was obvious that this person was emotionally distraught, but the censors would not allow this scene into the play. It was categorical: no scene with the GDR flag being thrown to the floor would be permitted. I was enraged by this stupidity. The dramatic effect, which was to reinforce patriotism, was dismissed as improper and misguided. There was no appeal available to this ruling. This is one example of how censorship could be crude and inhibiting."

"For me, the situation changed completely in Berlin. My director was politically connected and I often worked with the Berliner Ensemble Theatre. I experienced a kind of 'repressive tolerance.'"

I interjected, "This term is used as a paradox in the West, Stefan, to refer to situations where people have an illusion of freedom that ultimately is repressive because it has no power to be critical and transformative. It is swallowed-up and politically castrated by an 'anything goes' attitude."

"Yes, I know the concept from the writings of Herbert Marcuse,"[36] Stefan said. "I mean it in another way; let me describe it for you. I know my telephone was tapped, my mail was opened and that there were letters I never received—this was repression in action. But here in Berlin my plays were not interfered with; this was invigorating. Do you see what I mean? Despite the general social repression, this—being in Berlin—was a genuine, or relative, reward for an artist."

"There were aspects of my lifestyle, that of an artist, that were appealing and even liberating in the GDR. For example, artists in the GDR did not have problems about funding that plague artists in the West; you know, about always looking for a patron and the next pot of money to support their work. The state subsidized artists in the GDR, and this nurtured a sense of artistic freedom. It provided time to be creative within the larger context of political repression. Another example: I was able to write children's radio plays without any concern for their ability to make money; their commercial appeal, as you would say, did not concern me."

"On the other hand, I must say that one never forgot that one was a member of a controlled political system in the GDR, with its boundaries one dare not violate. We artists were economically free and politically indentured. We attempted to be as subversive as we could get away with being. And the literalness and ignorance of the censors sometimes worked to our advantage."

"You would communicate in abstract ways?" I asked.

"In subtle, textured, and layered ways and not just with the intellectuals; we wanted to communicate hope to the masses, who are not so dumb, you know, just undereducated."

"So what about the Stasi?"

"They were in the theatre, that is undeniable; and if a play became a political issue, they would move in, make one live in fear, and do whatever they wanted to 'correct' the situation. They were fond of totalitarian tactics and show trials, heavy-handed clumsy measures. I stipulate, though, that on the whole I have never had any fears of them; nevertheless, they would be brutal if they felt justified."

"My biggest grievance was regarding travel."

"You were not allowed to travel, Stefan?"

"For a time, I was not allowed to travel, and then in 1988 I was finally allowed to travel to the United States in an exchange program. The Americans had complained that they wanted 'real artists' because some of the so-called artists sent through our exchange program in earlier years were Party apologists and feeble artists. Believe it or not, I could go to the United States but not to West Berlin, and Sigrun and our son could never go with me, that is, we could not travel together."

He interrupted his train of thought to observe, "I must ask you to speak in some detail with Sigrun about her intuition that the GDR was finished. I hope you can appreciate how remarkable this was."

I agreed and asked her to elaborate on how she reached this conclusion.

"My training is in economics and from my job at a government economic trade commission, I saw data on the poor state of the GDR economy. We had significant pollution that was seen as a necessary evil to the development of the economy; but this was an enormous price to pay. Are you familiar with the environmental pollution in the south of the GDR? Some of the scenes there are catastrophic. The equipment in the factories was constructed before the Second World War and there was no pollution control possible with such old equipment."

"Further, the economic data I reviewed in my work made it clear the economy was in grave danger. There were several more reasons the GDR failed: the refusal to go along with Gorbachov's reforms; the economic fiasco created by Honecker's badly managed attempt to create an East German high-tech revolution; and the general cultural climate of 'why bother to work hard?' Finally, there were the comparisons East Germans

made to the standard of living available in West Germany—patriotism and sacrifice for socialism were worn out justifications by 1989."

"Sigrun, someone told me that the GDR was actually doing things like selling cobblestone from its streets to the FRG to raise hard currency. I thought this person might be exaggerating but he said this to me as we rode the *S-Bahn* near *NordBahnhoff* and *Gesundbrunnen* and he pointed to a place where a street had been cut-off by the Wall. He said to me, 'Look, here is one of the places where the GDR dug up the cobblestones and sold them to the West Germans.'"

"This is not surprising," she said, "I know of similar examples."

"Another factor that is important was the corruption of some high GDR trade officials. They made sure their pockets were lined."

I asked, "Did this shock you Sigrun, to realize this?"

She laughed heartily as Stefan grinned and shook his head. "You mean like so many GDR citizens were shocked when they learned of how many houses Mr. Honecker and other Party officials had? Also, when they learned about the other excesses they indulged in with the people's resources? No, I was not shocked—they are politicians, Socialist Party or not, they are politicians. I saw them up-close in my work and you know what they say about how the hero's servant sees only a flawed human master."

"You remind me of the Who song, *Won't Get Fooled Again*, Sigrun."

"Well," she snickered, "now the West Germans are the 'new boss, same as the old boss.'"

"Did people deny the corruption or did they simply not know of it?" I asked.

She replied, "One had to make a decision as one entered the adult world in the GDR. The decision was about being two-faced, which way to go? Eighty percent of my co-workers at the economic council were Party members and they regularly gave the, 'Yes, but you know' answer."

"Explain that, Sigrun."

"They knew the problems, and most of them did not believe in the Party, that is, that the Party had any viable solutions; yet they went along. They played the game as if the Party knew what it was doing and as if it were populated with honest people. Thus they slid into hypocritical adaptation."

Stefan joined in. "When I was a young boy, about seven or eight, I remember sitting at the dinner table with my parents. We had many deep conversations over dinner. I asked them why what I observed and felt in society was not in accord with the official portrait of reality I was receiving in school and from GDR institutions. I told them it was discomforting to have

to pretend things were one way when my senses told me they were another way. They were loving parents and they became shaken and worried as I spoke of these matters. 'Do not speak of this with anyone but us, Stefan,' they warned me, 'not your teachers, friends, no one. We will explain this to you, but for your safety and ours you must not discuss these observations and feeling with others.' That was the beginning of knowledge about hypocrisy in the GDR. I know that this was a widespread experience. I was fortunate because my parents did not silence or punish me; they listened and explained the repressive nature of the government."

Sigrun asked, "Can we tell you about the night the Wall opened? I think you would enjoy our story."

"I was out drinking with a friend," Stefan said. "Sigrun was here at home waiting for me after our son, who was twelve at the time, had gone to bed."

"It was a quiet night in East Berlin," Sigrun noted. "Nothing going on tonight, I thought, after the days of protest and demonstrations we had been through in October and early November. And then the announcement was read on the television in the early evening. It was a confusing announcement, but it seemed to say that we could visit the West if we got a pass. I could not believe what I had heard. Stefan was not home yet when I heard from some friends that the *Bornholmerstraße* checkpoint was open. Since he was not home, I walked out into the street alone and it was eerily silent, very few people were about. It was about 11 PM and I decided to walk to the nearest Wall crossing point, where about twenty people were standing around. We discussed what kind of pass we needed to go through the Wall, when we might be allowed to go through, things like that. This was the first time the guards were ever polite to the people; they actually were talking to us like real people. At about 11:30 I noticed that there were more people arriving and the guards just came to us and said, 'Okay, you may go through,' and we walked through the checkpoint into West Berlin."

"At about that moment," Stefan said, "I arrived at our apartment, drunk, so I went to bed! The streets were deserted when I arrived home, by the way. Only a few minutes later the word spread that people were passing through the Wall and the celebration began. I slept through it filled with alcohol."

"I walked to the front side of the Brandenburg Gate," Sigrun said, "This was a special event for me, to see it from the western side. I remained in West Berlin until 4 AM, and more and more people kept coming, they were everywhere. It was a holiday in the middle of the night; strangers acted like they knew each other, the normal formalities and inhibitions of interaction

common to Germans were abandoned. I remember thinking that the GDR was at its end, that Germany would be reunited."

"The next day was a total atmosphere of celebration," said Stefan, "and it went on for nearly a week. I went out into the street and a West Berliner stopped in his car and said, 'Can you tell me how to get to *Alexander Platz*?' What a silly question, he doesn't know how to get to *Alex*, I thought, but I immediately realized how could he know? He had never been in East Berlin! I got in his car and showed him around *Alex* and East Berlin and then he took me to *Kreuzberg*—where I had never been—for a tour. This was common; you will meet many people who had such experiences at that time."

"I want to say something about the guards and police, because Sigrun noted how friendly they were the night the Wall opened. I remember how shamed they were in October and November, just before the Wall opened, when they beat people at the demonstrations. Some of them beat women, old people, and children, and at one point, while we were demonstrating, I noticed some of the police in their barricade lines looking directly at us, which they typically did not do. They usually looked past us or through us. They were embarrassed, you could see it in their eyes; they were ashamed because they had been ordered to attack their countrymen, even those who were defenseless. They knew the people were right and their leaders wrong. I saw how trapped they felt even as they were chasing us with their clubs. And some of them would stop pursuing and beating people when their officers looked away."

We three sat looking at each other.

"I joined the roundtables," said Sigrun, "and that is when I knew that we would get fooled again."

"How so?" I asked.

"How could it be otherwise? The December '89 to March '90 weeks were chaotic, so much was taking place, and it came down to the people voting their material interests and the West Germans filling the political/economic void with dreams of prosperity and good times. This is what the Party had always told East Germans was their future in a socialist world! The movement for a third way—which would have required hard mental, economic, and emotional sacrifice—quickly became a minority fantasy. Why have more sacrifice? West Germans already had the good life. Unification sentiment grew among East Germans and carried the election."

"All this happened in less than four months. Think about that: from mid-November to early March the Wall fell, the government of GDR lost

control and collapsed, and the people voted to unify with the FRG. We went from *Wir sind das Volk* in early November to *Wir sind ein Volk* in late January."

"This was important, yes, to go from saying 'the people' to 'one people'?" I asked.

"It marked a major shift in understanding who East and West Germans were," Sigrun explained, "It was the excitement of the historical moment; unfortunately, in reality we had become in over forty-five years of GDR versus FRG, two different societies."

She said nothing more for a few seconds and then looked at me and asked, "Do you know that people from the GDR who are over fifty will have few or no chances at a second life? I am convinced of this."

"I've heard the age forty most often at the Academy." I replied.

She said, "I think it is fifty in other cases, but the younger one is, the better one's chances. There are thousands who will be set aside; they will be deemed socially useless and inconvenient to West German society. The truth is many of them have so much to offer. Realistically, there is much duplication and redundancy when a merger takes place. There is no doubt as to who is expendable and who is valued in the new Germany. These kinds of subtleties are not in vogue with our West German cousins."

I asked, "Stepfan and Sigrun, tell me, what did you two do on unification day?"

Sigrun answered, "We had some friends here for a gathering the night before. It was a quiet coming together of friends. We were not sure why we held this observance, yet it seemed appropriate to mark the occasion, even though not in a festive atmosphere."

"Perhaps it was a requiem for your country?"

They agreed that it was.

I left Stefan and Sigrun and walked along *Friedrichstraße* headed for *Unter den Linden* to meet Lothar Gaus, a self-described "Marxist weather forecaster." Christa Fuchs had introduced Lothar to me, and at his request, we decided to meet for an in-depth conversation in the same posh restaurant near Humboldt that Christa had found decadent and unsettling.

"Why are you a Marxist weather man? You're lampooning the Party, right?" I asked him.

He smiled and replied, "Yes, it was our little joke at the Potsdam weather institute, 'we are the brave, vanguard Marxist weather forecasters. Our weather forecasts are grounded in a dialectical-materialist grasp of meteorological reality.' We liked to joke because weather forecasting is weather

forecasting, it's based on scientific measurement and predictive modeling; that's it."

"Lothar, did the Party ignore you or was there some use weather forecasters could be to them?"

"One did not have to be a Party member there, and we were not spied on by the Stasi. They asked me to join the Party three times but I refused; it was important only if you wanted to be the head of the institute, otherwise Party membership was irrelevant."

"There were no Stasi around?"

"There was one but we did not take him seriously. This was a pathetic assignment to monitor weather forecasters! We said whatever we wanted about politics and the Party without concern. It was as if he was not there. The Party cared nothing for the views of weather forecasters. However, if we had such critical discussions in public, I am certain the Stasi would have punished or silenced us."

"Christa told me you are a student at Humboldt working on your PhD in mathematics and computers. So this is a past career to which you are returning?" I inquired.

"No, I am on leave for three years from the institute in Potsdam. I wish to finish my studies here and find work where I can explore and develop my theories of weather prediction. I do not want to return to Potsdam, where I may not have a job after the West Germans complete their so-called reforms. Many of the East German weather forecasters have already been dismissed. It made sense for me to take a leave of absence and ask no questions, because to do so might have exposed me to instant dismissal."

"I feel I should be at a world class center with the latest computer technology. I am convinced I can develop models of weather prediction that really are predictive."

"Really, Lothar?"

"You are doubtful, and I understand why: because I am confident. But let me explain it to you . . ." He gave a simple and elegant mini-lecture.

"I must tell you, Dan, that with the right computer technology that is now becoming available, weather forecasting can be improved. I am in my early-thirties and I have spent two years in Switzerland as a trainee in weather forecasting. I hope they will hire me when my studies here are completed; that is where I want to do my major work. I have a wild dream of controlling the climate so that food productivity can be increased and world poverty finally can be ended. There is no use in thinking the rich nations will voluntarily give away food, it is not in the nature of capitalism. I accept that

capitalism is now and for the long-term future the only way to organize society, although it, too, has many problems. So if I can make my wild dream come true, I can contribute to the solution of world hunger, even in a capitalist world."

"Wow, Lothar."

"I spent last summer in the United States, in New York City. I saw the rich and the poor physically close to each other and I wondered—I am an atheist but not a communist—how it is a nation such as yours, where religion is so important, where people go to church and pray to God, allows such extremes of poverty and wealth as I saw in your country? I think it is because of capitalism, because many Americans believe that acquiring large sums of money is the right course in life. They think, 'If I have more than you, then it is because I deserve it and you do not.' I have never wanted all I can get. I want an interesting life and work I enjoy; but hunger cannot be forgotten."

"I see, Lothar."

"I believe in God somewhat like Einstein did, like in the I-Ching. I want to help the world become harmonious. I am one limited but nevertheless important contributor to the harmony of the world, otherwise I contribute to disharmony—there's no neutral ground."

"Is your family religious?" I asked.

"My father was born into a religious family in Estonia. We have religious relatives there who have told us that everything in the GDR was wrong from their point of view."

"Because people were not sacred to the Party?" I asked.

"Human life may be holy, but I do not like this term, sacred. As for the Party, they wanted to replace God; I think this is my relatives' main criticism. They feel the Party ruined our spiritual lives. I understand their point of view; nonetheless, life was more nuanced here in the GDR than they could imagine from a distance."

"Lothar, if I can change the subject, were you at work the night the Wall opened?"

"I was. We were sitting around watching the developments on television and an old discussion about the future of socialism ensued. The consensus among us was that the Soviet Union and the GDR were seriously flawed systems. We desired a third way and it seemed possible that night, and for some time afterward, that the chance had finally arrived. I clearly recall us agreeing that night the Wall opened 'A third way is now possible.'"

"You seem certain in your views but not deeply disappointed that the GDR ended," I noted.

"That is the way it is. You know, we had something special in our Marxist weather forecaster group at the weather institute; and now I see that it began to come to an end that night the Wall opened. Nothing was ever the same after that night. It was not long before we were told many of us would lose our jobs."

"The Wall's opening was a desperate 'reform' made to placate the people—'Here, go visit the West and come back in two days.'—The Turn has let loose economic, political, social and psychological powers that could not be contained. Do you know that the Wall was built to protect the East German economy?"

I replied, "I have read that there was a black market that was draining East Germany."

"There was, and put together with the ever larger numbers of East Germans who were leaving for West Germany in 1961, the Wall was built to insulate the East German state and its economy. It was built to give socialism a chance to survive capitalist economic subversion. That night the border opened the dreams of so many East Germans actually ended, although at that moment I and most of my friends took it as a sign of long-awaited opportunity."

Lothar and I met several more times as he introduced me to more students and gave me his insights into the GDR and answered my questions. He also introduced me to his father, whom he described as a "highly qualified engineer forced into retirement soon after the Turn."

A few months later, he informed me that his "dream job" had been offered to him, and although he did not want to leave Germany and Humboldt before finishing his doctorate, he felt this opportunity should not be passed up.

We met for a last cup of coffee and I observed, "You seem at peace with this, Lothar. No regrets or conflicts?"

"I think there is little to stay for in the former GDR these days. I wish all the best for my comrades who have lost their jobs. This is a great concern of mine and I have some guilt about my great fortune, but, yes, this is an ideal position, the work environment that I seek. I will be able to combine my interests in computers, mathematics, and the weather. One day I hope to return to Germany. It would be an empty gesture of solidarity to remain here given the hard times that are coming in the next two or three years."

"Well, Lothar, it's too bad you don't have a model to control the political/economic climate in Germany."

"Now you make me feel ashamed," he said, "even though you are joking with me."

Before we said goodbye, he told me of his downstairs neighbor. "She lives with her young son in the apartment below mine. We have had long discussions about the Turn. I have told her about you and she wishes to meet you, because you are an American with a different point of view. Would you please speak with her? She is very intelligent and also articulate in her description of the GDR and the current situation."

I met Klaus' neighbor, Andrea Kuhrig, at an outdoor coffee shop near *Bahnhof Friedrichstraße*.

"Why do you want to speak to me, Andrea?" I brazenly inquired.

"Lothar has told me that you listen to him instead of telling him what he should feel and think. I want to tell you about the pain I feel here."—she thumped her heart—"I am living in two worlds and this is making me ill."

"You mean the Turn has done this to you?"

"No, I did not put it properly. The pain has been with me for eighteen years; I remember first feeling it when I became a teenager. It has changed only a little since the Turn. When I was thirteen I began to feel this pain, this sickness that told me I was not free, that something was wrong in the GDR, that other young people around me were not free, and that they were fearful instead of hopeful."

"And what did your parents say about these feelings? Could they help you?" I asked.

"Oh, God. My mother did not understand. She wanted to talk about something else, never this. I came to see she could not grasp the situation in the GDR. My father was in the Party; he cautioned me not to speak of these feelings, to push them down and conquer them. He knew what I meant, yet he would not help me other than to say, 'Forget about this, my dear. What good will come of it?' He died when I was twenty and we never resolved this great disagreement. I told him he was corrupted by his desire to advance in the Party. That is where we left this dispute before he died."

"Then how has it changed—if at all—since the Turn?" I inquired.

"It has and has not changed. Before the Wall fell, when I worked at the foreign trade bureau, I would leave my apartment each morning and ride the bus on *Scharnhorst Straße*, and—do you know this?—one could look out the window of the bus and see the Wall. Each morning I tried to imagine what life was like on the other side, and I asked myself why I was not allowed to cross through the Wall. Living in this residence close to the Wall caused me to think about these painful feelings of being a captive. It is

different now; I can go to the 'other side,' yet I cannot say it is better, only that it is different."

"I am very, very, glad that my son, Felix, will grow up in a different Germany. Of this I am positive."

"But not for yourself?" I inquired.

"There are two German mentalities, Felix will grow up with the one of the West Germans, I think. I have the two inside me. The West Germans—not all of them but most—do not accept the East German mentality. They think they are superior to us in intelligence and sophistication and demonstrate it by telling East Germans, 'Oh, you poor dear, I must show you in great detail how to do this job.' This has been my experience in my new job working with West Germans. They laugh at us, at our customs. They consider us old-fashioned, too polite; we shake hands too much; use the formal form of address; and do not know how to dress. They ask ignorant questions about our sexual activities; and criticize us about going nude on beaches. They also go nude, but they cannot see this obvious contradiction!"

"They do not realize how closed-minded *they* are. They won the East-West economic and political struggle; that is all."

"I have a few West German friends and they are not as difficult as the typical *Wessis* I have just criticized. But most West Germans are obnoxious; they feel that everything they do is right and everything an East German does is wrong, incompetent, in need of correction."

She paused as if to realize she'd been open and bitter with a stranger and then continued.

"What do you think about what I have just now told you? I wish to know your outlook on my opinions. That is why I wanted to talk to you."

"Andrea, can I be candid with you? I think this is what you want, a reply from an *Auslander*."

"Yes, Lothar said you would be honest if I asked you to be. I do not want another East German or West German view."

I went on, "Now you understand all I can offer is my opinion—one person's opinion."

She said, "Yes, yes, do not be apologetic. I want to hear from a non-German."

"Okay. Someone gave me a book recently by an East German psychologist. His thesis is that many East Germans have what he calls blocked feelings that cause them great psychological distress. A more fancy term is 'repressed feelings.'"

"Yes, this is correct. *Das stimmt!*" she said.

"I bring this up because I want to make an observation and then ask another question."

"Go on."

"I guess that in GDR times there was not a great deal of emphasis placed upon what we in the West call psychotherapy."

She smiled from ear to ear. "Psychotherapy, as I think you mean it, was rare. You know we had a perfect workers' state. Who needed to talk to Doctor Freud in the workers' paradise of the GDR?"

"Right Andrea. My suggestion is that perhaps you did and still do. What you've described, your pain in the chest and your parents' inability or refusal to give you guidance makes me say this. I hope I'm not insulting or belittling you . . ."

"I told you I wanted your outlook on my situation. I see what you are saying. Regrettably, I do not know what to do. The sickness was in the GDR and I felt it because I would not close my eyes to the truth. I had many girlfriends who laughed and pretended to ignore this sickness that swirled inside them."

"Do you know that I had guilt about the German legacy of militarism and fascism? These topics were not dealt with honestly in the GDR; it was always the West Germans who were the fascists and militarists. As these contradictions and hypocrisies got inside my heart, they became my problems as well."

"Andrea, I would add the obvious point that even though the GDR is gone the sickness and pain are, as is to be expected, still with you. I'm sorry that your parents were unable to help you when you began to see the contradictions. I'm guessing that the lack of comfort and validation of your feelings you got from them is at the root of your pain."

She paused before saying, "I shall give this consideration. As a practical matter, how many East Germans have money to pay a psychotherapist? Where do I find a competent one? Among the West Germans? An East German? Maybe this psychologist who wrote this book? Give me the title of the book, please." She leaned back and then forward to peer into and then stirred her coffee.

"You know, Dan, capitalism is not better than socialism. They are different, that's all; they are different, but both are unsatisfactory and very much the same for me. They are alike because so many people are dishonest and deceitful in both systems; truly good people are rare."

We met twice more, once on an occasion when I was near her office and again when Lothar was in town for a brief visit. She continued to speak of the pain in her chest but saw little remedy for it; psychotherapy was ruled out for economic reasons and, I suspect, because it implied weakness of character.

A few days after meeting Andrea, I got a call from Robin Osand, a young sociologist I had met in Lilly's class when I first came to East Berlin. Robin and I had had a brief conversation during coffee break at that time. "Can you meet with me, Doctor Bednarz? There are some developments I want to you to know about for your project. Things look much clearer now than they did in September of last year."

We met at a café near *Franzosische Dom*, just off *Otto Nuschke Straße*.

"With all the bad news you have heard I thought you should hear my hopeful news," she said, "Especially as I was so negative in my assessments of everything last September."

"Really, Robin? You've heard from the *Wissenschaftsrat*? I heard a rumor that some in your institute will survive and be transferred to West Berlin or Potsdam. Is it true?"

"Nothing is decided yet, but we have some hope that some of us will receive new positions. I suppose I should wait until I know my future for sure, but I am so excited by the possibility that I wanted to let you know."

"What are your possibilities?"

"Some colleagues and I visited an institute in Bonn last month. I very much want to work there, primarily because the director appears to be a good man. He—of course you realize he is a West German—tried to make us feel comfortable. He was joking in a good way with us, gave us his time with good spirit, and spoke of the future we might have working there. We even drank wine together like real colleagues. I am trying not to be euphoric because nothing is settled yet."

"That's encouraging. He seems a sincere man?"

"Yes, I think so, and you know my suspicions of most West Germans."

"So you are not likely to go to West Berlin or Potsdam?" I asked.

"Some of my colleagues may work in West Berlin, at the *WZB*, or at Potsdam University, or other institutes. My chances seem to be in Bonn."

I smiled at her as she grinned impishly and intermittently scowled, "However, some of my older colleagues have surprised me with their new found interpretation of sociology in the GDR."

"A bit self-serving for your tastes, Robin?"

"Yes. Two weeks ago we attended a conference of former GDR sociologists and the older ones, the heads of the institutes mostly, revealed what I consider this crazy conviction that they haven't any guilt about some of the work they did in GDR times."

"Why does this bother you?" I asked.

"Because it is not so. They talked about how sociology was 'only an empirical science' and in no way influenced by ideology and the Party. Can you believe this? Not connected to ideology?! I was astonished to hear such self-deception, especially from sociologists. Why can't they admit what they did? They will go on now to serve their new masters."

She carried on, "Seventy years of socialism in the Soviet Union, and what did it produce? What did over forty years of it produce here? There is no good socialism in the world. The actual styles of it we had in various nations were false. I now believe socialism is an ideal that in practice is not achievable. Why couldn't these older colleagues just say this? Instead they go on about how 'empirical,' not ideological, they were in GDR times."

She became contemplative. "I wonder how much of our situation in the GDR you, an outsider, can really understand. My West German friends do not know what I mean when I speak like this; they are bewildered by what I am saying. I tell them, 'Since you never lived in the GDR, you can never know what it was like.'"

"You think you have two vantage points?" I asked.

"Yes, and they have only one. Those *Wessis* I do not like, those who look down on us, I tell: 'You do not have the right to speak of us as if you know exactly who we are.'"

"You are one of the youngest persons I've met," I observed. "Does your youth give you hope for a new life? Obviously, you called me because you were optimistic about the institute in Bonn."

"Oh, I am enthused about this possibility, but angry and downcast at many things that have taken place since the Turn. This is confusing."

"You need time," I said.

"Yes, I need time to make sense of all that has happened."

I returned to the *Prenzlauer Promenade* Academy building housing institutes of history and continued interviewing. The next person I spoke with was Doctor Wolfgang Schenk, a specialist in "Arabic and North African history." He told me that he was working on a study of Algeria, but that the Turn had left him profoundly uncertain about his prospects because "it may be too late at age thirty six to start over under the West German system."

"Did you get any sense from the evaluation panel about what you could do to carry on your work? You are still young but near their cut-off point of forty years."

He answered, "I received no useful information from them. Some of them were kindly and attentive, you see, but not well prepared. Most of them were polite, but nonetheless hostile. It was as if, as many of my colleagues believe, the decision to do away with our institute had already been made. They visited us to-to . . ."

"To cool you out."

"What does it mean to cool someone out? I have never heard this expression."

"It means they are trying to give you the bad news slowly, a very little at a time so as to help you adjust to it, but also to minimize the chance that you will protest and resist or express outrage at them."

"That may be what they did; use a tactic to spread out the pain and anger."

"Our group submitted a summary paper outlining our projects to the evaluation panel. We are certain they did not read it because, if they had read it, they would have known some things we had to explain to them during our meeting. Also, a few of them were rude, and rather adversarial. They said things like, 'you are all Party members. How will you change to fit into the new system?' They also said they wanted 'new people' and they offered no suggestions to us regarding how to be successful in the new system. We concluded from their visit that we were 'old people' to be discarded."

"Just like in a colonial situation, we must wait for the masters to decide our fates. They learned nothing about our struggles here to do good, honest science. They spoke as if all Party members had identical opinions on all subjects. There was significant diversity among the Party members in the GDR. The leadership was, of course, dogmatic and mostly Stalinist."

"It was not easy for you to do your scientific work in the GDR?" I asked.

"No, it was not. In fact, I was not allowed to honestly report everything that I found in my research. I am sure you have heard from others about travel restrictions, the limitations of our libraries, and the occasional censorship we endured."

"Did you worry about the Stasi?" I asked.

"No, not really. I assumed they were everywhere; they were a constant. I never had an encounter with them, although I know some of my colleagues either reported to them or directly worked for them. I did not feel inhibited by them. One could be critical, even if one had to realize where and when to

be critical, and how far to go. As intellectuals, my colleagues and I wanted to engage in critiques of socialism aimed at improving it."

I asked him, "How do you account for the demise of the GDR?"

He laughed, "You don't know yet? It was simple: The economy stopped functioning and this led to political upheaval. People, most people, no longer supported the Party and how it managed the state. Most citizens supported the GDR through the seventies. In the eighties more and more people lost faith in the Party and the Soviets' ability to make socialism work for the people. The difference between what the Party said was real and what people experienced as real grew larger and larger. We asked ourselves, 'Why does it have to be this way? Why can't it be another way? Is it only the way of the Party that is best?' You see, by the eighties, many here in the GDR looked to the West and said, 'Why do we have to live this way in the East?' We came to see that the Wall was an unnatural situation."

"You did not want to emulate the West?" I inquired.

"No, the highly educated classes wanted another way. That was our dream. We East Germans have great differences from the West Germans; they typically think we must do all the changing. First, after 9 November 1989, for a short period of time we were all, East and West Germans, brothers and sisters. Then they, the West Germans, said they wanted to help us. Now, after unification, they say, 'You lost! We won! You must change! Not us.'"

"And what do you see as your future?" I asked him.

"As for me, I can say nothing with certainty. We in the social sciences are branded as ideologues, puppets of the old regime. I hope our children can adapt and make lives for themselves—this is most important. As for other scientists, those with training and scientific and engineering skills that are not ideologically tainted, they are already leaving the GDR, either for West Germany or other nations. At this moment I do not know what to do."

After Wolfgang Schenk's pessimism, I met a naturally optimistic professor of psychology from Humboldt University, Lothar Sprung. An American academic spending a year at Humboldt gave me Sprung's phone number, and when I called him to request a meeting, he paused to think and said, "I would be delighted to meet with you and tell you my perspective on what some of us call *die Abwicklung* now about to begin at Humboldt."

We met at his office off *Am Kpufergraben Straße*, virtually across the street from the Pergamon Museum. He portrayed a genuine interest in me and projected an unstated wish to inform my research in a fashion that would not define the East German intelligentsia as either buffoons, cartoon

ideologues, or a sophisticated projection of a self-serving Western misapprehension. I liked him because of his low-keyed ebullience coupled with the thorough sincerity of his formality.

Our first meeting was on a mild sunny day. His office was small and cramped, so we walked around *Museum Insel* and then sat on a bench, *Monbijou Park* behind us and the Bode and Pergamon museums in front of us across the canal that runs behind them.

"We have in many instances highly trained and highly competent faculty here at Humboldt, but the political process underway is not designed or intended to make fine distinctions between faculties and individuals within faculties. It is not an evaluation, as it is said to be—it is more like '*Mit gefangen, mit gehangen*.' We're all captured and convicted without regard for who we are as individual scholars and scientists or what we have done in our professional lives."

"Why don't you tell me your view of Humboldt? How would you appraise the faculties here?" I asked.

"Surely. Thank you for soliciting my opinion. First, the philosophy department in GDR times was not scientific; mostly it was composed of ideologues. In sociology there was a division between generations, with the older ones doctrinaire. They are from the earlier Cold War era, a hierarchical, Party ruled era. The younger ones are quite well trained and not at all interested in supporting an authoritarian party and a vulgar Marxist interpretation of society. Law had some very good people overall, especially in labor and international law. The international section of the economics department was also of high quality. It is almost a certainty most East German faculty will be cleared away in the march to root out every vestige of GDR socialist ideology."

"To be even handed, there are also economic issues intertwined with the political agenda of the West Berliners. For instance, Berlin now has three major universities," he counted them off on the fingers of his left hand pointing to each finger with his right index finger, "the Technical University, the Free University, and Humboldt. Moreover, there are *four* psychology faculties at these universities. The FU has two psychology faculties."

"I did not know."

"Yes, so why have four psychology faculties? This is not economically feasible for the Berlin *Senat* to support. And here at Humboldt we have approximately eight hundred faculty and twelve thousand students. So the economics of the situation are not good—some faculty must be dismissed for economic reasons alone. So much will change here in the next few years

and virtually none of it will be from East German initiatives, not that we have not attempted to make changes."

"You mentioned the philosophy department first," I said. "Does this mean the department and much of Humboldt was compromised or corrupted by the Party and ideology?"

"In some ways, yes, but we who were interested in doing real science knew this and were working to reform the educational system in the entire GDR and, of course, here at Humboldt. This process started before our soft revolution of November 1989, you see."

"You'll have to tell me about it, Professor."

"The Party mentality—control from above with no substantive public deviations in thought and expression—was in place and many of us saw it as a problem. Nonetheless, it was a problem we could reform from within. Some changes and reforms were underway in the middle of 1989."

"Really? Before the Wall fell?" I interrupted.

"There were reform efforts underway. But they were overwhelmed by the soft revolution of the autumn of 1989. After the Turn, we realized the opportunity to significantly improve Humboldt finally had appeared. Just as rapidly it slipped away. When the Wall fell, we took quick action and established a roundtable and began our work. We elected a new rector, Professor Fink; chose some new deans and department heads, and created commissions on various university issues such as curricula. We invited West German professors to teach here in the summer of 1990. Remember, these invitations were tendered before the vote on unification."

He looked across the water slightly shaking his head. "It has not been enough, of course. We East Germans will not be allowed to reform Humboldt. When one reads the West German papers, the consistent impression is that everything in the FRG is good and all that was in the GDR was evil or worthless and must be eliminated. It is that simple a dichotomy."

"I take it the West Germans think you are rearranging the furniture and merely attempting to preserve the old system?" I asked.

"Certainly. At the end of 1990, just a few months ago in time but a very long time ago in experience, the takeover process was officially created. We were negatively characterized by Barbara Reidmüller, who said, 'Humboldt has been asleep.' We invited her—in her capacity as the Berlin *Senat* science committee chair—and some of her colleagues to visit us to discuss the progress we had been making. It did no good."

"We had already developed new curricula in the ideologically and authoritarian controlled areas. In the natural sciences little change was needed

because in my view they were—in GDR times—similar to the sciences in the FRG."

I put this question to him, "Speaking only of this university, you still have your rector, Fink, and most of you still have your jobs. Do you have at least some optimism?"

He thought for an instant and said, "We must act as if sanity will prevail among the West Germans. Whatever happens, Humboldt will become an international university once again. You should know that many of my younger colleagues and the students are simultaneously happy and angry."

"Happy about the Turn and angry about its consequences, especially here at Humboldt as they are actually occurring?" I asked.

"Yes, to have such an opportunity to take control of your lives and throw off the old structure is a great joy—a rare event. Unfortunately, the West Germans know more about the French and American mentality than they do about us East Germans. We East Germans are, I believe, more like the pre-war Germans than the West Germans, who have been greatly affected by the West, especially the Americans. This topic of how each Germany was affected by its Russian and American conquerors is simply not on the table with West Germans."

"Further, what the West Germans see in our behavior is not who we East Germans were before the Turn."

"Because before the Wall fell this was your society?" I interrupted.

"That is correct. We are confused and uncertain about how to act and behave in a country that once was ours and now is not. This is especially true when we must interact with West Germans. This is why so many here think of the Turn as an imposition of a colonial occupation. That is why some are calling this an *Abwicklung*—a phasing out or shutting down of East German ways and institutions. Colonialism is a familiar concept to us that seems to fit our situation."

"It is not often that a people lose their country and have the foundation of their collective identity discredited. How could we possibly be now who we were only a year ago, before the Wall opened? Who we are stems from our GDR experiences, without doubt, but we are not now who we were two years ago—our power to control the present and determine our future is gone."

"The West Germans want us to feel ashamed of the GDR. If you explain this dynamic to a typical West German you will receive scorn, ridicule or disbelief in response. 'Just emulate us and forget your past,' they would say."

"To get back to a practical level, it seems certain that one way to solve several problems at once for the West Germans is to force most of us fifty years and older faculty into early retirement. This maneuver, they reason, eliminates much of the old guard mentality and creates favorable circumstances to develop young East German scholars who are less inculcated with East German ways. Also, it allows them to bring in West German scholars who have been unsuccessful at finding good academic positions in the FRG."

"Therefore you think you will be one of those forced into retirement?" I inquired.

"As a psychologist in his fifties, it is likely my future is to be retired before my time is up, so to speak."

We sat enjoying the balmy weather and small talk. As I looked across the water at the museums, the *S-Bahn* rolled by on its way to *Bahnhof Friedrichstraße*. I said, "Professor, I notice holes in the stone walls of many buildings that look like bullet holes. I've seen these holes in many places in East Berlin. What are they? Do you know?"

He replied lightheartedly, "Bullet holes."

"From World War II?"

"Yes, some have been repaired but many remain from the fighting. You know that it was house-to-house?"

"Yes."

"The Soviets lost fifty thousand men taking Berlin. They had to enter each building and engage Nazi soldiers who were following Hitler's order to fight to the death; this resulted in many bullet holes. There was never enough money to repair all the holes, so many remain to this day."

"How old were you during the war, Professor?"

"In the last months of the war I was twelve years old and I was taken prisoner by the Soviets. I spent one and a half years in a prisoner of war camp."

"At age twelve and thirteen? Why? Were you drafted into Hitler's army?"

"Correct, many of us young lads were drafted near the end. This experience was a major influence on my worldview."

I remarked, "You seem a rather optimistic and jovial man. Did you learn how to survive by seeing the positive in life in this prison camp or by thinking of a future that would be better?"

He pondered this for a moment. "I suppose I used these hope-generating gymnastics, but the main thing I gained was to realize the value in having varied contacts in life, a network as you call it. I reside in

the GDR but have colleagues and friends all over the world. Mentally, I wanted to live in the larger world. An American colleague put you and me in touch, you see."

"Did you think of leaving the GDR?" I asked.

"Not much, it was my country after all. Leaving was an easy thing to do physically until the Wall was erected. You just left, period. I had hopes of reforming the GDR; all through the sixties there was still a chance to do so. From the mid-sixties, I believe, little-by-little the possibility of genuine democratic reform slipped away. After the Helsinki Conference[37] on human rights I once again had some hope that the GDR would design reform policies related to all three main parts of the conference recommendations, specifically, the third part on the free exchange of information and people between nations. Instead, we got a crackdown on dissidents. I became convinced this was an absolutely false and doomed path for the GDR to travel. And then, of course, there was revival of hope after Gorbachev came into power and began his reforms."

"Yet the GDR, of all nations, resisted and rebuffed his reforms," I commented.

He agreed. "That was astonishing. The old guard from the war years still ruled and they would not follow his lead, which, once begun in the Soviet Union, could not be halted."

"What about the larger context, Professor? Are you disappointed the GDR failed?"

He said, "It had to fail given the way it was structured. It had an authoritarian hierarchy rooted in Stalinism. Socialism is a very old concept, but coupled to authoritarianism instead of democracy it creates all manner of contradictions; not that democratic socialism itself would not create problems."

He switched his train of thought. "I have so many memories of West Berlin friends from the fifties. You must imagine that we moved about freely in all of Berlin before the Wall was erected. In my head I now am living in two Germanys, plus I have also the old, pre-Wall Germany memories. This is an almost surreal situation for me."

"And as a psychologist you reflect intellectually on these memories and feelings?" I asked.

"Yes, there is that layer to add, reflection on the higher level meaning and how it all might be integrated into one's personality and identity."

"To get back to your question, I did not favor rapid unification. I thought that we had a grand opportunity to slowly re-integrate with the

FRG, both at a micro-level here at Humboldt and the entire FRG and GDR societies at the macro-level. That was approximately one year ago; and that was dashed by the people's decision for immediate unification."

We got up from the park bench and walked to a pub for a bite to eat. "Here is a place where many Humboldt students 'hang out' as you say. I like to come here to be among them, and they serve excellent Wurst here."

"I would like you to speak with some of my colleagues at Humboldt. This summer, in June, you can give an interim report at a seminar/conference we are organizing."

I also took his offer as a test of my sincerity, so I agreed.

"Excellent," he said. "Let us enjoy our Wurst."

As we ate, he said, "I spent time in America studying and doing research. In fact, I really got a sound grasp of English after watching American television. Hearing the language while observing the actors on the screen is an excellent way to learn a language."

He asked if it would offend me if we talked about the Gulf War then underway. "Go ahead, I'm curious about your views," I replied.

"I do not agree with your country's decision to launch a massive war without trying other means to remove Iraq from Kuwait. Here in Germany most people—East and West Germans—view war as a last resort. Moreover, your nation made no serious effort to negotiate."

He waited for a reply. "I left for Germany last August just after Iraq invaded Kuwait and the public relations/propaganda message to the American public disturbed me."

He looked at me waiting with an accepting expression.

I continued, "The military leaders were sent to the news programs and kept repeating, 'Saddam Hussein is like Hitler.' Regardless of the merits of the comparison, once Hitler was mentioned it meant that anything done to defeat Hussein was legitimate. Further, the only language Saddam understood, the generals told the American public, was military force. So in this sense my government was preparing the nation for war because you cannot leave a Hitler in power or negotiate with him."

"It is good that you speak openly of your country," he said, and then he dropped the topic.

"Do you know of the work of Kurt Levin?" he asked.

"Yes, he was a social psychologist, and he had a 'Berlin Group' that began the development of Field Theory, which could easily be applied to your situation here. I do not know him in depth, however, only from a few essays for a doctoral exam."

He replied, "Nevertheless, I'm glad you know something of Levin. He was quite modern and egalitarian in his views; unfortunately he died before he reached sixty. He treated women students as equals and did not exploit them; he was well ahead of his time with his emphasis on the social forces that shape and influence personality."

"Tell me, please, Dr Bednarz, how do you, the outsider, see our situation?"

"It's as if the East Germans are being extinguished psychologically and culturally. In one sense, the West Germans have only two options: invalidate the East German project or admit that West German collective identity—right now in 1991—is in large part a product of experiences with the Allies, especially the Americans. I don't think they realize these American influences. I see them everywhere: language and advertising to name two instances."

"Also, I have met a few West Germans who understand that there are two German collective or national identities, each deserving respect. Next, I've met many West Germans who are clearly of the opinion that the GDR was a dystopia and its people warped or deformed by life in this hellish society."

He remarked, "Yes, this is so. There are only a few West Germans who regard us as equals. We East Germans are overwhelmed by the social-psychological discomfort of confronting the fact that we—and by we I mean all Germans—were all one people when the war ended. The West Germans do not see this; they believe they are simply 'natural Germans,' if you like. The American influence is not appreciated or confronted. We Germans—all of us—have been plagued throughout our history by the question, 'Just what is a German?'"

I survived the lecture that summer—delivering it in German—with Professor Sprung's gracious help—along with that of Christa Fuchs. We also met regularly throughout the remainder of my time in Germany as his interest in this project grew, and he gave me many lessons in GDR history.

A few days later I returned to the Academy building housing various institutes of history and once again received reactions to the visits of the *Wissenschaftsrat* panels. Summarizing six interviews I conducted that day, the picture of the evaluation committees sent to review each institute remained constant. The panels were not prepared, had not read the institute's overview documents, had been formally courteous with a few obnoxious and hostile members, and offered little to no encouragement for future career opportunities.

Here are some of the comments these six interviewees made about the feelings they were left with after the visit from the *Wissenschaftsrat*:

"One of my colleagues is considering giving up her scientific career and becoming a hairdresser."

"How old is she?" I inquired.

"She is thirty-five, but feels the committee gave her no hope. I worry that some of my colleagues may fall into deep despair and commit suicide. There have been a few suicides already among them."

Another told me, "I wish that I could have had just one competent member of the committee evaluate my work. Most of them were not even in our area of research. I want to know how my work is regarded in the West because we are proud of the research we did at this institute. We tried to do good science, we really tried to write good history, not ideology."

"No one spoke to you on an individual basis?" I asked.

"They spoke to most of us only in a group meeting. The review was absurd and insulting. We know that only a handful of us will receive new postings at other institutes; and they pretended this evaluation was done according to scientific and scholarly standards. I wish it had been done so! We wished to be evaluated; instead, the committee said to us, 'Why don't you apply for a position at the universities?' This is what I would call cruel humor."

"Because this evaluation was for you actually part of a political action?" I asked.

"That is part of the case. The truth is that unemployed West German academics see the *Neue Länder* as a place of opportunity open to them. The Academy will be closed at the end of this year, making many scientists and scholars unemployed. So where shall they go? All to the universities, which are being purged of East Germans? There are not enough universities in all of Germany to take us."

The next day I moved on to another of the history institutes in the *Prenzlauer Promenade* building. I began with the institute head, Professor Hanno Kamphausen. I had heard of him from a colleague in West Berlin, "Kamphausen is well-traveled in the West, has a brilliant mind and is in no way lacking by any West German standards."

I entered Kamphausen's office and, for a second, he smiled coolly but cordially before peering inquisitively at me from his desk chair. "Welcome, Doctor Bednarz, I am gratified that an American would consider it important to speak to us here in the former GDR; this is a hopeful sign. Before you ask your questions, I have one or two for you."

"First, are you related to Klaus Bednarz?"

"No, professor, I am not, although we have corresponded since I arrived here in Germany. He encourages this study."

"Good. Then let us move on to my second observation and question. The thing that puzzles, really puzzles and distresses me," he said, "is what I read about the American public's reaction to the Gulf War."

"I'll try to help you, professor. What is your question?"

He nodded, "Tell me, does the American public really think the Gulf War victory you are enjoying vindicates your perceived 'loss' of the Vietnam War?"

"I feel like the African American who is asked what all black people think."

He said, "Of course, but you are an American, an educated one, and here you are in my office. I hear your caveat. What insight can you offer to me?"

"I'll give it a try. I have not been in America since last August, but I can understand this reaction setting in. Vietnam is for many Americans inexplicable, full of contradictions or lessons too grim to face. I recall that when the Vietnam War ended—and it's not even possible to get Americans to agree to when it actually ended—a national debate took place over the meaning of all the death and destruction. Many loved ones of killed in action soldiers would write letters to newspapers and appear on television inveighing, 'Don't tell me fifty thousand boys—or my son, my husband, and so forth—died for nothing!' I took this to suggest that, at the very least, these people entertained secret doubts that a loved one had died for any reason valid enough to warrant the loss of a human life. Also interesting is the fact that we have in America these organized groups, composed primarily of parents, wives, and other family members, who believe many American soldiers are still to this day being held captive by the Vietnamese."

"Really Doctor Bednarz? This is a truly guilt-ridden and irrational belief."

He sat and pondered for a moment and said, "But this interpretation, that the Gulf War alleviates the discomfort of Vietnam is, is illogical. I'm sorry if I insult you, but it's irresponsible, self-indulgent and self-centered. Your nation killed some Iraqis and this makes up for Vietnam? There is no symmetry, no logic, no humanity in this outlook."

I replied, "It is, I think, connected to the great inability of many of my countrymen to accept not defeat in Vietnam but the ambiguity of not winning clearly and morally like in World War II, a television western, or Hollywood movie. I can see how many would view this recent war as a

vindication. As for me, however, as an individual I ask, 'What about the deaths of two to three million Southeast Asians? What did they die for?'"

He glanced at me and said, "Alright, then, it is a shame a human society functions in such a fashion. Thank you for taking my impertinent question."

"My next question is actually an observation; react as you wish. It is my view that your system, capitalism, is better than the socialist system we had here in the GDR. However, it is not much better and it, too, may not last much longer. Accordingly, West Germany was superior to East Germany, only a fool could suggest otherwise. I am still in principle a Marxist historian and I have seen nothing to change this in these past months."

"My people are sinking down, down, down in self-confidence and self-respect, and this is unfortunate, even though it is to be expected in such circumstances. They do not know much about the West except in idealized television, newspaper, magazine, and movie formats, which are mostly propaganda or children's fairy tales."

"I would rather not comment on the relative merits of capitalism versus socialism, professor. I've come to solicit your views on these issues," I replied. "How are things here at your institute? Can we talk about that now?"

"That is acceptable," he said. "First, I should tell you that I have only recently been asked to come out of retirement to serve as director of this institute. The previous director was asked to leave by his colleagues here after November 1989."

"I see, Professor. He was unpopular and maybe running the institute with what I've been told is a military model?"

"Yes, you could say that. At present, the most important issue at this institute, as it is throughout the Academy, is reaction to the recent evaluation of the institutes. It was not done fairly in my estimation."

"Why not?" I asked.

"Do you know the origin of the evaluation?" he inquired.

"Maybe, but I'd like to get your view to see if I have it right." I answered.

"In July of last year the *Wissenschaft* ministers of the GDR and representatives of science policy in the FRG met to discuss an evaluation of the GDR Academy of Sciences. An even-handed approach called for an equal number of FGR and GDR scholars to conduct the evaluations of each institute. This did not take place."

"I was not aware that it began with this proposal of equal representation from each side," I told him.

He went on, "I am sure you know how it turned out. It was a ratio of twenty West Germans to every East German, if that. It quickly became a proposed scientific evaluation corrupted by politics; this was to be expected. Surely, one can see how disheartening and reprehensible this is when you realize how many careers, lives, and families were in the balance. We have some fine scholars here in this institute; regrettably, most of them will have to find another career, another way in their lives when this 'evaluation' process is completed."

"They were told they will not find employment in their disciplines?" I asked.

"It is most unlikely that more than a few will be given new posts. The FGR plan is to bring most research in history back to the universities. Only a few will survive the competition with the in-migrating West German academics that have been unable to secure good posts in the FRG."

"Remember that the Academy model of the GDR comes from the Russians. We should, I think, consider what I've said in more detail, because losing a scientific career is a severe blow to a German, more so than in the United States."

"What makes you think so, professor? It's significant in the United States, too," I offered.

He went on, "I spent some time in your country studying and giving lectures. I met a history professor, perhaps you know him, William Appleman Williams?"

"Yes, he wrote *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (1959) and freely uses the concept of 'American Empire'—Vietnam was no great mystery to him. He is outspoken and has what sociologists call a conflict—or Marxist—interpretation of American history."

"That is he. I met him during my stay in your country and we discussed what he would do if he did not receive tenure. He told me he would do honest work: drive a truck."

He sat and waited for my reaction, which was not forthcoming. "Okay, professor, I give. You'll have to explain your point to me."

"You do not see because you are an American; you have just illustrated my point! You would do what you have to do if you lost your academic position. Naturally, it would be a difficult transition and equally difficult to accept, but you would do it."

"Ah-ha," I interrupted.

"Here in Germany an academic does not 'disgrace' his education by doing manual work once he has earned an advanced degree. It is unheard of

in this nation, east or west; a German scholar might consider suicide first. Therefore, Williams' comment amazed me; he convinced me that he *would* drive a truck if it were necessary; and yet he would continue to do his intellectual work. The unthinkable now looms as the probable for many at the Academy. This is a severe insult to one's self-regard and I worry about the relatively young and productive scholars I know. What will become of them? They had an honest career as German historians, which the West Germans are destroying."

"Like being able to freely write about the Hitler-Stalin Pact?" I inquired with no irony or sarcasm.

"Yes, and you remind me about the other side of the matter. Rape, you see, is indicative of the quality of the victim."

"What? Would you explain that?" I exclaimed.

"You heard me correctly; a harsh assessment but accurate. Some here in the former GDR accuse the West Germans of being counterrevolutionary, colonialist, and so on. People holding these sentiments have a non-critical attitude toward the GDR's real history. Yes, the West Germans are taking over. Nonetheless, my guilt, and that of my fellow countrymen lies in the GDR, not in the FRG. This is why I assert that this new system is better than ours, albeit, pathetically, not much better. We, the GDR, did not deserve to go on, we failed in many ways."

"I can see the West German point of view; but theirs is not a perfect system. It too needs massive reforms the West Germans will not make because they see no reason to look in the mirror."

He replied, "I feel strongly about these matters of East Germans not taking sufficient responsibility for the failure of socialism in the GDR. I concede that it overlaps the imperialistic conduct of the West Germans."

"Let me ask you, professor," I continued, "What country are you a citizen of?"

Without hesitation—in contrast to almost everyone else I had asked this question—he replied holding his hands open, palms up, "I simply say I am a German. What else can one answer? I see what you are getting at—the two German national identities conundrum—but really, I think one must, to be honest, say 'yes' to German fatherhood—in a qualified way, of course. Perhaps you know that the German left has never had a close attachment to the idea of nationhood, of being a German. This has been the realm of the right, The Fatherland, *Das Volk*."

I added, "It's the same in America. Patriotism is a psychological malady to most on the left, while it is an awe-inspiring, invigorating elixir to the

right. The notion of patriotism is seen by most on the left as reactionary, inherently conservative and mystifying and, therefore, as an oppressive notion."

He then said, "Brecht wrote a poem related to these issues, a *Kinderpoem*,[38] I think he called it; and the stupid literalists in the Party rebuked him for writing it."

We paused a few seconds as he indicated he would take further questions.

"Can we speak about why you think the GDR failed?" I asked.

"Certainly. First, the GDR's fate was tied to the Soviet Union and the other Eastern European socialist states. The socialist nations were unable to cope with the social changes necessitated by the revolution in electronics and microprocessors. Gorby, however, gave many people such as me much hope. However, it was not to be, the task was too large, the effort too late."

"As for the GDR in particular, my opinion is that the people, the workers, wanted to finish it off—be done with it. Surely, the intellectuals and the real and so-called 'revolutionaries' wanted reform, but not the rest of the people."

"We should now speak about socialism itself, not just the GDR, I think."

I agreed and he went on.

"The basic idea of socialism is to liberate people from the oppressive structures and patterns of the previous system. This has never been accomplished in any nation that has called itself 'socialist.' The roots of socialism's difficulties do not lie in Stalinism; he died many years ago and reform efforts were made after his death. They lie in the theory and practice of Marx and Engels."

"Really? Can you elaborate?" I asked.

"We cannot go into detail in this discussion today, so allow me to say that the refusal of officials in the GDR and the Party to acknowledge and openly discuss the parallels between socialism and fascism was, in a word, idiotic. These parallels were there for all to observe, and had to be corrected if socialism was to succeed. This refusal accounts for the inability to adapt to the social consequences of technological change. This is why I made the indelicate reference to the GDR bearing some responsibility for its rape by the FRG."

"You are referring to, I guess, teleological delusions, personality cultism, authoritarianism, suppression of dissent as heresy, and misconstruing propaganda as education to build a better world, intolerance for other points of view and criticisms, and how these affected both personality and the operation of institutions?" I asked.

He responded, "You are in the general area of criticisms. Dogmatism was a central problem of socialism as it was practiced in the East."

The hour was late, and we agreed to meet again the next morning to finish up before I started interviews with members of his institute. We began the next day with the question of the Stasi's influence on intellectual life.

He thought for a few seconds and replied, "They were—despite being so widespread in their penetration of society—not the real issue. The Party controlled society; the Stasi served as an arm of the Party. It is vital to remember that they did nothing the Party did not want them to do."

"Did you find them a threat?" I asked.

"They could be in extreme circumstances. Most of them were inept people, not good at much more than spying. Most of them could not function on their own, as independent human beings; they needed control and direction from above. I could tell you many stories of their terrible deeds. In fact, the recent tragic murder of the head of the *Treuhand* is rumored to be the work of rouge former Stasi members. Can you imagine a man sitting in his living room and being shot dead through his window? And just this past week, I am told, some Stasi made an attempt on the life of a *Treuhand* official in *Prenzlauer Berg*, not far from here."

I told him I had been hearing severe criticisms of the *Treuhand* in my interviews and conversations with East Germans.

He responded, "I do not know this *Treuhand* office in depth; they have an impossible job. Do they sell off East German assets to attract outside investors and face the anger of East Germans who view this as theft? If they don't sell off the assets, they would face the wrath of the West Germans, I suspect. My view is they are trying to do their best at an impossible task."

"I do not want you to leave without an appreciation for the complexity of the Stasi question and intellectual life in the GDR. One could write volumes trying to get it right, to portray who they were and how they operated, why some people willingly cooperated and others literally were forced to cooperate with them. They caused the betrayals of friends and loved ones, and the variety of reactions GDR citizens are having to all that is coming to the surface. The records now being unsealed will help historians sort this out."

I asked him, "Before we end professor, is there anything from yesterday you want to go over or amend?"

"Yes, after saying that the GDR played a role in its rape by the FRG I feel compelled to say a few things about Marxism and Nazism or, more generally, socialism and fascism. The motives, ideas, and beliefs of Nazism were old prejudices in a new guise. They had no empirical validity, although this

does not discount their widespread social appeal and power in those times. Do you know the name Alfred Rosenberg?"

"No professor, I do not."

He softly replied, "It is no embarrassment not to know him unless you are a historian who studies the *Nazizeit*. He was a philosopher of Nazism; few will remember him or his ideas, and then only as matters of history, not for intellectual content. Marx will not be forgotten; there is something valuable in his contributions. Despite all the horrors associated with the application of Marxism in this century, I still maintain—easily and unashamedly maintain—that he offered a method of understanding and analyzing society that can contribute to a just social world."

"I submit to you that the ideas and beliefs of Marxism are not inherently despicable, reshaped old prejudices. They are insightful, analytically potent, and divergent from those of fascism."

We ended our talk by discussing whom in the institute I should interview. "Here is a list of our institute staff, please interview them at your desire. I will do all I can to pave the way. I suggest, however, that you interview Doctor Lange. He has spent time in America and his area of study is American history, and, most important, he is a professed Christian."

"Here at the Academy?" I replied.

"That is correct. His worldview should be of interest to you. Given his religious outlook, he makes for a good comparison along a number of dimensions."

Professor Kamphausen's secretary escorted me to the office of Doctor Felix Lange, and he agreed immediately to be interviewed. He opened with "a story" for me before I could ask any questions.

"In November 1989 I was at Stony Brook University in New York; I followed the rapid developments as best I could on CNN."

"Interesting," I said, "You were not here for the Turn."

"Correct," he said, "I was studying business practices in a private enterprise system."

"American capitalism, of course," I noted.

"Incredibly, I found myself in the United States studying capitalism when suddenly the Wall falls. I felt so close to my country in the United States, so much like an East German."

"Did my fellow Americans flood you with dinner invitations and questions about the GDR and unification?"

"A great deal of invitations," he chuckled. "They were hospitable and wanted to know all, especially about the possibilities of unification. I was the

resident 'expert' when actually I was more in shock than they could have imagined."

"You were allowed by the Party to go to America to study private enterprise, Doctor Lange? That seems curious."

He said, "Let me explain. I am a Christian, and along with my interest in American Studies, I thought it would give me needed experiential knowledge to see how private enterprise is done in America. You see, most East Germans are woefully lacking in experiential knowledge of the wider world."

"So are Americans," I jousted with him for a response.

He suppressed a laugh. "Do not toy with me on such an important issue, Doctor Bednarz. You know what I mean. Most of my countrymen had only indirect and distorted information of the world outside the GDR, especially about the West. It came primarily from the propaganda of the Party or the idealized unreality of FRG television and other media. Very few GDR citizens had direct contact with Westerners. You are aware it was against the law to speak to Westerners in the GDR?"

"I am. Tell me how you felt about the events of the fall of '89."

"I was happy and joyous that the people had finally lost their patience with the regime. That was my primary feeling. As for the workers, 'the people,' they were exhausted after years of false promises from above and pointless sacrifices for the future wellbeing of socialism and mankind. They realized that the methods of socialism led nowhere humane, not to any social, economic or spiritual benefit."

I noted he was speaking of the people separately from the intelligentsia and asked him if this was intentional. He agreed that it was, "The intelligentsia was shocked by the Sputnik incident—you know what I'm speaking of?"

"The banning of the German language edition of the Soviet journal."

"That is it." He went on, "I am convinced that Honecker was directly responsible for banning that issue of Sputnik."

"I have heard that Mr. Honecker and Mr. Gorbachev did not get on well," I commented.

He replied, "This is correct as far as I know from gossip and from all I've seen and read. Honecker regarded Gorbachev as a heretic, and as a Johnny-come-lately to the socialist struggle against capitalism."

"The East German intellectuals' reaction to the Sputnik censorship marked a change we can now see better than we did when it occurred.

Some in the intelligentsia were outraged and openly protested the banning of this issue of the magazine."

"Like some in history institutes here at the Academy?" I asked.

"Yes, you know of this, good. Most intellectuals, of course, kept quiet, said nothing in public, and acted as they had been trained to act, with patience or a false sense of being reasonable."

"Trained to be patient?" I asked.

"The patience to wait for the Party to correct itself. Waiting patiently was a popular activity in the GDR. If socialism is the true way, then it makes sense to be patient because all issues eventually will reach a dialectical resolution."

I thought for a few seconds and remarked, "Doctor Lange, you said when we began that you identified with the GDR and that you are a Christian. Tell me about this, since I'm assuming you did not feel the same as if you identified with the GDR and were a socialist."

"I did not care for the Party. However, and this is most interesting, there was—is?—an East German identity separate from the influences of the Party's propaganda and other efforts to control what people thought and did. It goes beyond the attempted totalizing influence of the state. I loved the GDR. I hoped Gorby's reforms would be adopted here, as did many of my colleagues."

"I underestimated, however, the 'We are one people' German sentiment after the Wall came down. To have a united German nation, this was a powerful appeal to the West Germans, I think. It was powerful in the GDR also, along with all the other incentives and benefits of having the D-Mark—and having the FRG economy. Unfortunately, the *society, the culture*, of the GDR disappeared along with the government and the Party. Only later did the workers of the GDR realize that the Party and their society were distinct entities. They had voted their national identity and way of life away."

"I want to tell you of the difficulty I had psychologically after the Turn."

With a nod from me, he went on, "Many here had a crisis of *Weltanschauung*, of their identity and worldview. The staggering pace of the changes, especially since I was out of the country for much of those few critical months, was astounding, giving me psychological problems I would not have anticipated. I am certain not being here intensified my discomfort."

"When I returned in summer 1990 the GDR was very different, like something familiar and taken-for-granted had been irrevocably altered

while I had been asleep. I felt a sense of missed opportunity because I had been away and had come home to a radically different situation."

"Like a part of you died and you had had no funeral, no memorial service?" I asked him.

"Like that, yes, but also the sense that perhaps things could have worked out differently 'if only.'—This is a hard feeling to shake off."

"Things are much easier for the young people; they have fewer and less intense experiences to rethink. At forty years I'm not old, nonetheless, I have been deeply influenced by the GDR. I have many years of memories—many good memories and bad memories—to ponder. This will take time," he exhaled,

"I have experiences from America, East Germany and West Germany in my head; and Christianity, capitalism and Marxism also in my head."

"Speaking of that Doctor Lange, did you find it difficult in any way to be a Christian at the Academy?"

He said he needed a minute to think this reply through. Stroking his red beard, he said, "It is not so easy to generalize about this question. In total, the situation at the Academy was superior to that in the universities; we should explore this question comparatively, I think."

He thought for another moment and said, "I have worked in both settings, a university and the Academy. Without question, I enjoyed the Academy far more than the university.[39] Oh, it is important for you to know that at the top the Academy was rigid and elitist, but one could find here a climate suitable to intellectual work."

"And not at the universities?" I asked.

"Remember this is a comparison," he said. "My work at the university in Dresden was more demanding because there were other duties that competed for my time to do research. At the Academy you do research; this is our objective—with no other duties. More important, the ideological pressure was greater at the universities than here at the Academy."

"Really? Why was that?" I wondered.

"One could get a position at the Academy without joining the Party; at a university this was unlikely. The Party allowed a more liberal atmosphere here at the Academy because it was isolated and cutoff from many contacts with society. It was possible to do one's work with no real interference from the Party. You see, with students at the universities the use of propaganda, a positive activity to the party, was routine and institutionalized. Students are prone to ask all manner of politically charged questions, and professors had

to calculate their answers to such student questions because the Party tightly controlled what went on in the educational institutions."

"And this was an issue you simply did not face at the Academy because there are no students?" I asked.

"That's right, and it made a great difference. I did not have to deal with the moral conflicts of propagandizing students."

He got up to stretch his legs and offered me coffee or tea. "I want to tell you about the hierarchy of the Academy because I do not want to leave you with the impression that this was a truly liberal, open work environment like you might have in some academic departments in the United States."

I also got up to pace and stretch and accepted a cup of tea before sitting down. "Sure, I see."

"You must know by now from your conversations that on the whole, social scientists in the GDR functioned to legitimize the system. Propaganda was a positive concept here."

"Okay so far, go on," I said.

"The cultural, educational, and scientific communities and institutions were of paramount importance to the Party and were primarily controlled by Kurt Hager,[40] who for the most part answered only to Mr. Honecker. Most of the high Party and government officials held these positions for many, many years, which contributed to the rigidity of the system. Also, most of them reported to or were controlled by Hager or Honecker."

"And the rejection of Glasnost?" I interrupted.

"It follows that they would say no to Mr. Gorbachev—the Johnny-come-lately," he answered.

"Consequently, we had this overarching structure of Marxist/Leninism to which most intellectuals paid homage and gave their uncritical support. However, beneath this superstructure, researchers could choose topics that were not a threat to the Party and, therefore, allowed scholars to avoid the dogma of Marxism."

"There was a path to intellectual freedom of inquiry under the right circumstances?" I speculated.

"Yes," he said, "I have colleagues who either chose topics of no interest to the Party or who designed their research so as to deceive the Party censors. Most of the low-level censors were not competent to judge our work except at a rudimentary level."

I queried him about the recent visit of the evaluation panels.

"The evaluation could have brought out the complexities in scientific work and organization in the GDR; regrettably, it did not. There were, as I

see it, only two options for the Academy, and both involved major changes. The first was to sift through and find the good projects[41]—good from a scientific inquiry point of view—and transfer them to other sites; the second option was to dissolve the Academy."

"Although . . ." I began to ask when he went on.

"Although, many more will lose their positions than keep their positions. For a few here at the Academy, there is absolutely no chance. They never did any scientific work; that is a truth. Most of us face, in addition to the questions about the quality and significance of our scholarly productions, a crisis of outlook, you know what I mean, yes?"

"Their symbolic worldview has collapsed and they are groping . . ." I interjected.

"Groping, that is what many are doing, groping. I must add that historians do have the advantage of using their disciplinary knowledge to come to terms with their personal situations, to have insight into what is occurring and to apply it to their lives. This can be psychologically and spiritually beneficial."

"Doctor Lange, in this regard what are people doing here about the end of the Academy?"

"Their reactions? You want to know their reactions and behavior? The fundamental problem is one of tying the past, present and future together, integrating them to make a sensible worldview. We are in this process now, so what I see is naturally provisional and dynamic. I see conservative Marxists, socialist reformers who loved Gorby, some who think the GDR was just fine and simply deny the past and the present circumstances. Only a few have, in my view, really accepted the Turn. But I assure you, I am assessing, not condemning."

I started smiling at him, and he asked the meaning of my grin. "You are an East German who loved his country, but—"

"I am not a Marxist, I am a Christian," he interrupted.

"Right, so that makes you interesting, layered in conflicting sentiments; and your comments have been both personal and analytic, up close and from a distance. You loved the GDR but you believe socialism is a failure, a destructive dead-end."

"I do. Socialism failed economically because it interpreted the mechanism of the market as harmful and the basis of exploitation. It failed to establish democracy—individuals had no real Bill of Rights in the GDR. Socialism rested on the illusion that it could create a new kind of person, a socialist citizen, who would love the state as a Christian loves God. Socialism

in practice could not have been more contrary to human nature. And many here still say foolish things, such as, 'It wasn't socialism that failed, Stalinism polluted the revolution.' For me, the story of Cain and Able is about the strengths and weaknesses in the person, each person's choice to do good or evil in this life. It is folly to think you can create a society of perfect people by manipulating the environment."

"This needs an example. The upper echelons of the Party proved their corruption and weakness for material comforts, and when the people found out about all their homes and privileges most were shocked. They thought such corruption took place only in the West. This tells you a great deal about the hypocrisy of the leaders of the system, but it also illustrates the naiveté of the people—the GDR was a cruel theatre of the absurd."

"Nonetheless, you loved your country," I said.

"I did, but not those who ran it into oblivion with an invalid theory of society. I see in my position psychological conflict but no logical contradiction. Do you know that several millions of East Germans belonged to Christian churches?"

"I did not know the figures were that high," I confessed. "I have been told that the Party frowned on Church members."

"These people often suffered discrimination for their beliefs and practices. The state had no use for religion, but many East Germans persevered in their beliefs. You will not find many among the intellectuals, as you probably are aware."

I asked him if he thought, because he was a Christian and not a Party member, that he would have an easier time finding a new position. This made him uncomfortable as he explained, "There is much talent here at the Academy. I do not want to imagine all of it going to waste. As for me, I am responsible to support my family and I hope that perhaps I will have a chance for employment at Humboldt or another university. I do not know my personal future, but, yes, for many West Germans it will matter that I was not in the Party and that I am a Christian."

I asked if he had any final thoughts to share. "I do worry about the former states of the GDR—you know, the new states of Germany. We could become like southern Italy, neglected and viewed as deserving punishment. The jobless rate will climb in the next two years, the economic transformation needed here is massive and I do not know if there is sufficient time for social and political stability to develop. Also, I will miss the spiritual and psychological heritage of being an East German; in two generations, I guess, the differences between East and West will disappear."

"It sounds like you want some things to be remembered, not destroyed but you want parity or equality with the West Germans too. Still, it is easier said than done to articulate what the East German identity you cherish is," I commented.

"That is correct," he said. "We East Germans must walk the psychological tightrope the West Germans have forced us onto."

My next meeting was with one of the Academy's top administrators, Ernst Wilf, at his office in the *Otto Nuschke Straße*. Lilly had introduced us on the street one day and told him of my research, whereupon he asked that I come to speak with him.

The halls were almost empty, with one or two people occasionally walking by as I made my way to his spacious office.

He told me he was dealing with two major problems stemming from the upcoming closing of the Academy. One concerned numerous formal administrative matters about devising short-, medium-, and long-term plans for all the employees at the Academy. The second was the human problem of helping his colleagues cope with the shock of the Academy's demise.

"On the one hand, I am trying to find employment for those here at the Academy over these three time periods of right now, the mid-term, and the longer term. It is—what can I say?—distressing and bleak. It looks as if there will be contracts for about 8,000. This is the most optimistic number; and 15,000 to 20,000 will be let go."

I told him I was familiar with these rough estimates and that those I had been speaking to thought the natural sciences would far better than the humanities and social sciences.

"This is the likely case," he said. "Most important to me, however, is the fact that our GDR structure of science is being taken apart in a frenzied manner and promises a very hard future for us here in the East. The West Germans say that dismissing two-thirds of those working at the Academy can be done efficiently and orderly, but the reality is that it is being done hastily and most unfairly. Most important, the West Germans believe that we East Germans have no real contributions to offer united Germany."

"You are referring to the *Wissenschaftsrat* panel recommendations and the upcoming closing of the entire Academy?" I confirmed.

He went on, "That's correct. The FRG offers *ABM* (*Arbeitsbeschaffungsmaßnahme*)[42]—do you know what this is?"

"Yes, professor, I do," I replied.

He continued, "Therefore you know *ABM* is not a practical or appropriate program for research scientists and scholars. They need new positions in their fields. There is no workable plan to integrate GDR science into the FRG, I'm so sorry to say. It's rush, rush, rush and we will address what the West Germans call the fine points later. The mood of despair here at the Academy could not be worse. First, because so many are losing their careers, and second, because we East Germans have absolutely no say in the matter."

"This raises the second problem I have. Many of my colleagues are depressed and I feel it is my duty to attempt to help them through this difficult time."

"What can you do?" I asked, "Also, what will become of you, your position?"

"You see," he said, "we have no collective action possibilities. The unification treaty states that the Academy will be reviewed and closed; this is a settled matter. I was discussing this topic with a colleague in Leipzig just last week. What else is there to discuss these days?" he joked.

"We agreed that under these circumstances there will be different reactions by those now working at the Academy as they hear that they are not recommended for a new position, or are accused of Stasi collaboration as grounds of dismissal."

"Some are planning to leave Germany for positions in other nations they have been offered. What I am most concerned about are those who become so depressed that they will commit suicide; a few already have done this. So it is important to keep up a good attitude; and it is most critical to talk to your colleagues and not isolate yourself. This is the message I am spreading: talk to your colleagues, look for chances to either continue your work—in another country if necessary—or to think about a new career."

"Inventing new career in a capitalist economy will be extraordinarily difficult. Furthermore, we must also face the reality that the West Germans want to force those forty and fifty years of age into early retirement."

He appeared emotionally spent after this description, and it was obvious there was nothing more he could say about the Academy. We talked about the way the Wall was opened and the roundtables active from November 1989 to early 1990, and then he summed up how he felt about the Turn. "In GDR times we were controlled by the dictates and interpretations of socialism by the Party. Now we are controlled by the dictates of the FRG and the necessity to survive in the capitalist market. This is easy for East Germans to see; I'm certain most Westerners do not see it—like fish in water, you know?"

It was late spring 1991 and everyone at the Academy I had spoken to about the evaluation panels had expressed disappointment—or condemnation—in how these panels had performed.

I decided it was important to interview Academy workers who were in the natural sciences to see if their experiences with the *Wissenschaftsrat* differed from the experiences of those in the so-called hot disciplines of the social sciences. I sought to establish contact with scientists at the science and technology Academy institutes located in *Adlershof*. Also, I was able to arrange interviews with someone who was at the Berliner Ensemble Theatre[43] and three members of the East German media, East German television, East German radio, and East German print journalism.

On a crisp morning, I exited *Bahnhof Friedrichstraße* and walked 400 meters across the Spree River and around a few corners to the Berliner Ensemble Theatre, where I met Fritz Seifert, a set designer who had been working there since the 1970s.

"Dieter," his friend who had sent me to him, "tells me that you have been speaking to people at the Academy and Humboldt and wanted to meet someone from the performing arts."

"Yes," I replied, "thanks for meeting me. It's quite an experience to be in this building with all its history. May I be a bit gossipy and ask if you knew and worked with Brecht?"

"Oh, your curiosity is understandable," he said softly, "No, I came to Berlin—but not yet to this theatre—just after he died, a year after, in fact. After all these years I feel as though his spirit is still present. So much of the history of Berliner Ensemble is tied to him and Helene Weigel."

"How will the theatre continue on now, after the Turn and unification?" I asked.

"It is not certain, but I think we will go on, due to our worldwide reputation and heritage, and not suffer the fate of my friends and colleagues at Humboldt and the Academy. The Germans—even some in the East German socialist Party—have great respect and enthusiasm for good theatre. Theatre in the GDR did not have to beg or grovel for monetary support; it was simply supplied by the state."

"Of course," I said, "what about censorship? What was that like? I know a little about Brecht's often tense, strained, or even imperiled relationship with the Party about censorship."

Fritz smiled and said, "So let me tell you a short story about this. In the 1950s—remember I was not here then, so I'm repeating a legend of this

theatre—Brecht put on a play the tone or implications of which the Party censors found objectionable because it was not sufficiently propagandistic."

"I'm sure you know that Brecht himself, and Frau Weigel as well, were committed communists. Much more important, however, was their immense popularity with all classes of the GDR, even Party elites. Furthermore, Berlin was not a *Dorf*, a small village, where buffoons usually served as cultural censors and arbiters of what could be seen in a play. Also, there was no Wall in the fifties, so Brecht and Weigel could have left at any time, for America, England, the FRG, wherever."

"They had leverage we Americans would say," I offered.

Fritz nodded, "Assuredly, they had power at their disposal."

"So what did the Party do?" I asked.

"They were clever. They ignored the play. By this I mean their mouthpiece newspaper, *Neues Deutschland*, never reviewed the play. Can you imagine? Brecht and Weigel open a new play and *Neues Deutschland* does not review it?"

"This brings up a comparison you may find of interest between other places in East Germany and Berlin. There was far greater possibility for criticism and expression in theatres here in Berlin than anywhere else in the GDR. This difference amazed me when I arrived in Berlin from Saxony, where the severity of censorship in the theatre was strong."

"Working here has been wonderful because Brecht established a special way for collaboration to produce excellent performances. This sounds idealistic, I know, because of how egocentric, petty, and treacherous people in the performing arts can be. Nevertheless, it is my experience that we have a unique manner of working together for higher artistic purposes in this theatre. Of course, we had our share of nastiness and disagreements, but the creation of art for the people has been our paramount goal."

"Fritz, how did censorship work here? Was it similar to the periods of tight censorship and liberalization I have been told of at the Academy, for instance?"

Fritz replied, "Oh yes, there were periods of repression and liberalization from the Party. Here's how it worked. A concept of the play must be provided to the censors at the Ministry of Culture for their approval. This went through stages to actual approval of the script itself and, of course, a special viewing for the cultural censors before the play could be performed for the public. A time I recall is when the censors became obsessed with one line, one line in a play that read, 'You are going to the trade unions.' They

did not like the possibility that the audience could interpret this as subtle or sarcastic criticism of trade unions."

There was a huge debate over this line, but, in the end, it was left in the play.

"In the fifties Wilhelm Pieck, the GDR's first president, would come to the theatre on opening night. Did you know he was born in 1876?"

"No, I did not. Are you implying that he was out of touch with the modern era and a dogmatic Marxist?"

Fritz replied, "That and more. Some leaders, not just Pieck, came to the theatre to show the world that the GDR was cultured and sophisticated. In reality, they had no interest in the theatre because they did not understand its artistic and spiritual dimensions. It was about propaganda and competition with the West Germans, the sentiment of, 'We are as refined as the FRG.' And, of course, 'we have Brecht.' Let me say, however, that there were a few high-ranking Party members who appreciated and supported the theatre for the right reasons. They understood artistic expression and why artists are independent minded and that one can be a socialist and also stand up for one's right to artistic self-expression. This belief in the right to self-expression is what the Party feared most about artists."

"So," he went on, "I never wanted to leave the GDR even though it was at times an idea to entertain. My struggle as an artist in the GDR was how to stay honorable to my art and bear to look at myself in the mirror each morning."

I said, "I think artists face this dilemma in all nations, Fritz, if they are in touch with themselves. Maybe it was more intense here, but in America we have a term, 'selling out to commercialism,' that seems to come close to what I believe you are saying."

"This is so," he said, "the task of an artist—well, my task as an artist as I see it—is to untie the knot in my chest."

I commented, "You feel this knot? That's what Buddhists discuss; this knot that pushes you to be creative and seek wisdom—and makes artists unpredictable to politicians."

"What about right now, Fritz, after the Turn and unification? What now?" I asked him.

"We lived with low-level fear of the Party and the Stasi in GDR times, but it was different from now, after the Turn. Now it is quite another kind of fear, a bundle of fears we never experienced in the GDR. What will happen to our workers and their factories? What will be done to those at Humboldt and the Academy, and maybe even those of us here at the theatre? There are

practical and survival fears now facing East Germans we never encountered in GDR times, like money, work, crime, rising rents, insurance, health care, among others. These matters simply did not exist as they do under 'normal' capitalism."

"I want to go in another direction now," he said.

"Which way?" I asked.

"What I'm about to say may not make sense to you, because it does not make sense to West Germans. I always felt a duty to remain in the GDR. I believe I could easily have found employment in the FRG or perhaps in America, the UK or Ireland, even Australia or Austria. I never joined the Party; that was for me the path of conformity and unsuited to my artistic outlook. Instead, I maintained hope for a better GDR and a better world. My friends and colleagues shared this outlook. We would make fun of the Party in private and revel in our sense of solidarity with one another."

"By the way, West Germans do not understand this feeling of solidarity; they think we are naive or duplicitous with our talk of comradeship and the brotherhood of all peoples."

"Do you know that neighbors took care of one another, of our children, our pets, and our elderly? This is significant because among the West Germans we are portrayed as everyone spying on everyone else and constantly cringing in fear of the Party and the Stasi. This was not so, not how it was most of the time."

"Now, to my sorrow, all around me I see people who have lost hope for a better world. When the Wall opened I was overjoyed and celebrated for several days."

"Our hopes were catapulted to the sky. Finally, I told myself, we have our chance."

"And then?" I asked.

"And then the people—the workers—decided for immediate unification. It is what they desired. I cannot condemn them; now, one short year later, there are opinion polls indicating that people here in the East are feeling bewildered and even betrayed by what unification has brought them. You see, the hope I had was for a socialist world. The workers of the GDR justifiably said, 'No, we tried that and it failed. Give us the D-Mark and the capitalist way of life.' Now, both hopes are destroyed—the workers' hope for a better life under capitalism and mine for a better world with some form of socialism."

"Fritz, let me guess that if you could go back to the GDR times you would not want to do so."

He looked down at his coffee and then up at me, "Never, never, never would I wish to go back, even though I miss the solidarity of the GDR. At the same time, I am deeply disappointed at how the West Germans have behaved towards us East Germans. We, East and West Germans, need an absolutely new way of thinking and talking to each other about Germany, what it means to be a German; and what happened to us after Nazism was defeated. Who can begin this discussion, however, when we do not understand or trust each other?"

Next I had interviews and discussions with three members of the East German media. All were candid about the censorship and Party control they were under, although they stressed that self-censorship and control by their immediate supervisors was the typical way the media functioned in GDR times.

Johan Büttner, who had spent much of his career in radio, commented, "Actually, we in the GDR media had an advantage over West German media that arose from our need to be keenly attuned to the strong media censorship in the GDR. My impression is that there is a great deal of media in the West that is merely junk or of poor quality and serving no social purpose other than to distract the people and sell goods. Western media does not really inform the public about issues. Their kind of news is superficial or indirectly government controlled, so there was no need to censor it."

"This is an interesting take on things, Johan," I noted, "Because in the West—as I'm sure you know—the East German media is regarded as a crudely performed puppet show of the Party."

"Of course," he replied, "this in some ways cannot be denied; we were controlled, but mostly we monitored ourselves because we knew—as members of this society—the limits, our borders not to cross or violate. And there were times of liberalization and times of crackdown about what issues could be examined and what had to be avoided or kept silent or discussed in only the most subtle and intricate ways."

"We knew that our radio station—which was listened to in West Germany—was fighting the Cold War, and that this ideological struggle had connections to the conflict between Churchill and Stalin, and, also, the Americans versus the Soviets. In addition, we cannot forget the West Germans stood against us East Germans."

"Johan, it sounds as if you are telling me you were involved in two struggles—or maybe three? First, to be loyal to the socialist principles of the GDR in the ideological conflict of the Cold War era; second, to pursue

the principles of journalism—which amount to an ideal of pursuing the truth and critiquing political power—even though this ideal is always compromised to some extent in any nation-state. Finally, perhaps—let's put this as a question instead: Did you wish to show the West Germans—and yourselves—that you were better than they were at the craft of journalism?"

He gathered himself and replied, "Socialist principles and the actual management principles of the Party and the GDR government were not always aligned. With that said, I say yes to your first question. We knew we were in an ideological struggle with the West Germans and Western world, led by the United States. As to your second question, we—you and I in this moment—are having a one-sided discussion about this because both sides, East and West Germans, were often deceitful and engaging in propaganda for what we thought was a greater cause. On the other hand, we here at our radio station felt we were struggling to go around the censors to present the news subtly so that we could analyze important issues."

"Mr. Honecker once or twice criticized our programming for its lack of ideological purity and also for its music—often rock and roll—that was westernized and—according to him—hindering and corrupting the socialist struggle."

"To answer your third question, of course we wished to show the West Germans that we were as capable as they were. As I said, we found their news coverage mentally lazy because, when all is said and done, Western news agencies repeat what their governments tell them. How often does a Western news agency really criticize its government? Or, more to the point, it is a rare event for a Western news media to tell its audience, 'our government is not telling the truth about this particular issue. Here are the facts.'"

"Therefore we would need to discuss how the media were controlled in both German states, not just the GDR, to have a full discussion. This is an indication of the larger problem of West Germans judging East Germans as if journalism in the FRG was totally free and fulfilled the ideals of journalism while everything in the GDR was the opposite, corrupt, and compromised. I reject that interpretation as factually untrue."[44]

Next I met with Hans Grass, who had been a foreign correspondent for East German television. He was still on the payroll but no longer working as he awaited the West Germans' decisions about East German media outlets. Further, he emphasized that West Germans considered his colleagues and himself as crude propagandists for the GDR government.

Describing his career, he said, "I was at times sent to, as a GDR television news correspondent, Western European nations. I enjoyed the personal freedom of movement and expression available there. Overall, however, as I spent time in the West covering stories I observed how capitalism was not a better system than socialism. I saw stark examples of capitalism's hidden face of exploitation of the weak. We had a slogan here in the GDR about capitalism. We called it 'the two-thirds society,' where the labor of one-third of the population is exploited so that the other two-thirds can live adequate to opulent lives."

"Socialism as practiced in the GDR had many bad outcomes and built-in negative features; this is undeniable. It is the major reason why the people voted for immediate unification with the FRG. The buying power of the D-Mark was an aphrodisiac—and why not? The Party wore the people down."

"Therefore I'm not critical of the people for seeking to reunite Germany without waiting. Nevertheless, I do not think unification will work out as the East German people hope."

"Living outside the country gave you not only another view of the GDR, but a close-up look at capitalism. Am I right in thinking the more you learned about capitalism the more you rejected it or were critical of it?" I asked him.

"I think this is true," he said. "Capitalism is not good for the world. I saw the two-thirds society as a journalist. This was my judgment from visiting Western nations; the two-thirds society is not just a slogan. In my view, overall nothing is done better in the West if one considers all the members of a society as having equal rights to a good life. But this is now a minority opinion. The West Germans would say to us, 'How dare you, an East German, say such things about our system when your socialist system failed miserably and capitalism and the FRG have so obviously succeeded.'"

He said he wanted to explain the current [spring 1991] situation at East German television. "At this time my colleagues and I await the decisions of the West Germans about each of us individually and the station itself. I cannot see them funding us to carry on, even though we understand East German culture and can contribute our special knowledge of the new states. Perhaps they will keep the station open under new management and a few of us will survive; this is a remote possibility. Also, we may be permitted to reapply individually for our jobs later this year. I think this is similar to the situation at the Academy of Sciences."

"It sounds similar," I noted.

"You see," he went on, "Even though I saw the fatal flaws of capitalism and favor in my heart a world based on socialist principles, I admit that the GDR has failed. I did nothing to prevent this failure and I can admit that my ideals have been destroyed. I do not know what the future will be, for me as an individual, for the world, for the East and West Germans as one nation."

"Most of my friends and colleagues believe we had a sense of absolute freedom and great opportunity from 9 November 1989 to March 1990. Our viewership at the television station was near 100% in the fall of 1989. Everyone was watching the television all the time because the news was really 'news.' So many changes were taking place so fast and we informed the people without censorship. It was exciting, like a dream come true, this feeling of personal freedom and the fate of our nation in the hands of the people."

"But," I quipped.

"Ah yes, this big word, but," he smiled. "But it was a dream, an illusion to think we—the East German people—were in control, or could really take control of our land."

I interrupted him, "Well, in the West people will say, 'Hey, you held a vote—that's democracy; you East Germans don't understand democracy,' because that is how most people in the West see democracy—it means holding a vote."

"I understand what you are saying," he said, "In January last year I knew that Mr. Kohl's words were just empty promises to buy off and deceive the people. Perhaps he and his party members believed their own propaganda. Do you know that as soon as the vote results were counted the GDR ceased to exist? Oh, it was still legally alive, but the West Germans began to disassemble or takeover all GDR institutions directly after the vote. And there was no resistance from the East German government—none."

"Hans, can I switch topics and ask you about censorship in your work?"

"Alright, here is how it worked. The television and newspapers were the biggest source of Party controlled information in the GDR. First, you must understand that most reporters and journalist were trained at the Karl Marx University in Leipzig. The university had a journalism program; many called it 'The Red Lady' because it was in a red building and rigid in Marxist-Leninist doctrine as explained according to the Party. This is where you studied to become a 'socialistic journalist.' When certified you were considered safe—that is, a committed socialist—to be allowed to report news stories and, as in my case, to travel to other nations as a GDR journalist."

"It is clear, then, that 'socialistic journalists' were trained to know how to report the news in an appropriate manner to the GDR people?" I inquired.

"Wait a minute," he insisted. "You must understand that the Party regarded journalists as extensions or agents of the state, meant to spread belief in the struggle of socialism against capitalism, not as independent-minded or public-minded reporters as you think of them in the West. This is not just about being a propagandist for the state, although that is how journalists were expected to function—as good soldiers of the Party feeding soothing stories and even false news at times to the people."

"What was it about?" I asked.

"It was unspoken that journalists must be self-censoring. That was part of being a good socialist journalist and loyal citizen of the GDR. The problems for me and some friends and colleagues arose from trying to think critically as a socialist and as a journalist who wanted to contribute to make the world more just, to improve society through criticism. That's a dialectical process, you see. A journalist must be critical to be a genuine journalist. Therefore, we GDR journalists were plagued by this conflict."

I commented, "Okay, here's an illustration from my nation. If you are a socialist, there is no place for you in the mainstream media in the United States. It's taken for granted that capitalism is the natural state of the universe. There are layers of what I would call automatic filtering that would not permit a socialist to attain the job of television correspondent."

He nodded and said, "You are describing a system of self-censorship, are you not?"

I agreed.

He went on, "This was the East German journalist's dilemma as the GDR stumbled to its pitiful and painful end. My colleagues and I were well informed about the state of the nation. We knew that as a journalist your highest obligation is to report the facts truthfully. Meanwhile, as socialistic journalists we were obliged not to report the actual state of the nation to the people. However, because of how we were educated to be good socialistic journalists we told ourselves the Party would in time address the social problems we were not presenting to the citizens. Further, it was comforting to the enemies of socialism to hear internal criticism of the GDR, so you had this incentive to keep silent about problems."

"Now, after the Turn, it is easy to look back and say I should have spoken out about these problems."

"I can only give account for my inaction. You see, in GDR times the power of the Party and their arm, the Stasi, seemed everywhere and eternal.

If you became disillusioned, what were your options? One was to try to leave the GDR. This was dangerous and for many not considered. I wanted to reform the GDR, not leave it. A second option was to speak out and be an internal critic; this too was dangerous, especially for a journalist. Someone like me, a journalist, would be silenced, maybe placed in jail as a traitor or given some menial job in a remote village. This feeling of powerlessness was widespread. In response, we journalists took the easy path and conformed. Looking back it is obvious the GDR could not survive, but when you are living day-to-day you do not think this way. You have your work, family, various plans, and always the silly hope that things will somehow work out. Only when it has ended do you feel regret and reproach yourself for your silent cooperation. Finally, you must ask yourself the terrible question, 'Why did I not do something?'"

Soon after this, I interviewed Roland Grau, who was a magazine journalist and editor. We met at a small café just off *Unter den Linden*. He began saying he wanted to tell me two things he found quite different about media in the FRG versus the GDR. First, he observed that, "Reading is now expensive for us East Germans. The price of *Der Spiegel* is 4.5 D-Marks, a tidy sum for an East German to pay."

I commented that I would have never thought of this, and he said, "Many things you, as a westerner, are accustomed to are startling to us East Germans. Everything in the West is tied to one's access to money."

"A second observation I want to make, which also surprises me, is that East German journalists never had to trouble themselves with who their readers were, what their concerns were, or what the general public was thinking. Not caring about your readers' opinions now seems very strange to me, a journalist, to confess. In GDR times journalism had to please the Party, not the people."

"And that crowded out the concerns of the people?" I asked.

"This is hard to explain," he said, "we just assumed that the people were passive or, on the other hand, aware that the Party's interpretations and propaganda were all that was allowed to be presented in the media."

"That's interesting," I said. "Was this so because the people were regarded as child-like, all of one mind and in agreement with the Party? Or was it because there was no way for the people to communicate with journalists without the Party monitoring these communications? Journalists were, after all, employees of the state, not supported by the people."

"These are possible reasons," he said. "Now it seems remarkable that this situation existed and was considered normal by GDR journalists."

I asked Roland how aware he thought East German journalists were of the economic and political problems in the GDR.

"We knew very well these many difficulties and contradictions facing the GDR. We knew about the serious environmental problems, from brown coal and industry pollution in general. No matter, though, these many problems could not be mentioned directly in print, television, and radio. It was unpatriotic and counterrevolutionary to do so unless in some way this information could be presented as not critical of the Party or the government."

"Our central dilemma—as journalists—was how to write about real problems and still please the Party without risking reprisals. I know most of the people—at the end in 1989—no longer trusted what GDR journalists told them. They could watch FRG television and at times have western newspapers and magazines to read, and this allowed them to make a comparison: 'Look how differently the West Germans are covering this story!' or 'Why is this story on West German television news and not mentioned in the GDR media?' These types of observations were made. The sophisticated among us knew both sides—the West and East Germans—were not telling the entire story. Clearly at the end, however, the West German media were far more trusted than media in the GDR."

I asked, "How did things change after the Turn?"

He replied, "Many of my colleagues and myself, too, thought in those early days after the Wall fell that this was a great event that gave us the possibility of pursuing a third way for East Germany, and eventually all of Germany. I suppose we were uncertain whether it would be a united Germany or remain two German nations. With rare exceptions, GDR journalists saw the fall of the Wall as a blessing enabling us to reform socialism, of this there is no doubt."

"In those remaining days and weeks of 1989 we journalists talked among ourselves. We agreed, 'Now we can travel freely, gather more information and communicate this information to the people in our stories; we can read whatever we wish; have open debates and discussions, and so on.' We thought our work would continue and no longer be censored by the Party. My colleagues wrote many proposals, drawing on socialist and capitalist ideas, to reform the GDR and plan how to slowly integrate with the FRG. You must realize that at first the fall of the Wall gave the people great inspiration, it renewed hope in the GDR, I thought."

However, this was not the case. This wish for a renewal of the GDR was confined to the literary, scientific, and artistic classes. The people, the

workers, wanted none of this; they wanted capitalism. I believe most former GDR citizens now are disappointed, or beginning to be disappointed, by how the Turn is actually working out.

"I had to become realistic and admit that the East German people had no patience to build this third way in the GDR. They were tired of the Party and all its false promises and lies; and West Germany looked very attractive to them, especially from the television. Remember, they knew the FRG through television, not real experience."

"What did you want?" I asked.

"I wished for a two to three year period for the FRG and GDR to discuss unification; for the FRG to ask how it could change itself for the improvement of all Germans. A stronger Germany could have come from this slow approach to unification, I believe. What I failed to recognize was that the fall of the Wall created a whole new relationship between the GDR and FRG. We went from being ideological rivals to economic competitors."

"But this is not quite all there was to consider. Many of the workers here were feeling as if they had been separated from their brothers and sisters in the FRG. After all, we were all Germans until the defeat of Hitler; furthermore, many East Germans had relatives in West Germany. There was this simple notion when the Wall came down that we were a family reunited. This was the feeling the night the Wall opened and for some time afterwards."

"The common people longed for the West German lifestyle without understanding that they now had to compete—and also pay from their earnings—for things they saw on the television: a job primarily, but also health care, insurance, a nice automobile, clothes, child care, vacations, a Mercedes, and so on."

"After the March decision it was clear that there would be no third way, no three years to unification, no reform of the GDR, and definitely no reform of the FRG. What shocked me was the decisiveness of the people in rejecting socialism."

"I think that by the year 2000 the former GDR, the new German states, will be like Scotland is to England: a little brother or maybe even worse. East and West Germany are not being reunited as equals—of this there is no room for discussion or debate."

"You have not spoken about what you think will become of East German journalists," I remarked.

"Ah, we have much to overcome, in ourselves, and in trying to find our way now, to prove that we are journalists. Most of us will be branded

propagandists who benefited from the GDR system. We will have difficulty finding work as journalists, that is a certainty."

He told me there was not much more to say on this topic.

Then he added, "It is clear many well-educated people here in the East are going to the West German side or other nations to find suitable work. You know the situation at the Academy and the universities. There is little here in the former GDR for these educated people."

"Plants and enterprises are closing—actually being shut down—without concern for the workers or the local economy. I know of a sugar beet factory here in the East that some West German competitors, other sugar beet enterprises, have been able to convince the Bonn government to close down."

"To reduce competition?" I asked.

"That seems to be the case, to eliminate competition. I ask, what of the workers at this factory? The West Germans do not ask this question. In general, questions about closing factories should not be made by bureaucrats in Bonn responding to the pressures of business interests."

"Why call that democracy or capitalism? Actually, it's more like fascism. No, these decisions should reside with the people who live in the region. This sugar beet factory, in my opinion, could have been renovated—it was old by Western standards—and continued to produce sugar. The workers and management are there; the crops are there. But, no, some competitors from West Germany wanted this factory eliminated; so it was closed. Why make people unemployed when they could be employed? Why force people into poverty to please West German competitors? East German workers will suffer greatly from unification; this is already underway. Then the West Germans will say, 'My God, you East Germans are so backwards; we have to support you.'"

"You should know that all of Mr. Kohl's grand campaign promises are being revealed as deceptions. The East German people are shocked at how the cost of living is rising while many of them become unemployed."

"The major problem, however, is one of attitude or outlook. West Germany is not a monarchy, but it is acting like one. And East Germany was a sovereign republic, although the West Germans always regarded the GDR as an illegitimate state with no rights except to be absorbed into the real Germany, the FRG."

In July, I was able to arrange interviews with scientists working at the Academy location in Berlin *Adlershof*. Two institute directors agreed to individual interviews; the rest wished to speak to me in workgroup

interviews at their respective institutes. These institutes at *Adlershof* comprised such disciplines as physics, astrophysics, biology, biochemistry, and "*Automatisierung*," a branch of engineering, among others.

The descriptions they gave of the *Wissenschaftsrat* panels that visited them were somewhat different from the ones with historians, philosophers, sociologists, and economists at other Academy institutes.

Here is how the first scientist, Professor Ernst Fraenger, whose discipline I am not identifying[45], described the meeting with the *Wissenschaftsrat* panel. "They did not evaluate our work. They said we were doing good science because they knew our work before the Turn. The hard questions of this meeting were about how many of us could be integrated into the West German institutes doing similar research."

"Am I correct in assuming that they felt you and your colleagues were worthy scientists and that the real issues concerned funding and duplicating the work West German scientist were doing?" I asked.

"You are correct. That was how the panel approached this so-called evaluation. They said, 'We want to help you as long as no West German projects will suffer to accommodate you East Germans.' They just told us this straight out. For instance, at our entire institute, which is large, we were told that about half of the scientists would be kept on; the others would have to find new work and would be given a positive evaluation from the *Rat*. In other cases, I know some institutes where entire groups—small working groups—are being transferred to West German institutes. Also, this facility, here at *Adlershof*, will be kept open after the Academy closes and many scientists from various fields will continue on in their work under West German supervision."

"Still, many will lose their positions?" I asked.

He told me, "Even now [July 1991] discussions continue about the future of many scientists here at *Adlershof*. There is uncertainty, but I do not think as many will lose their careers as is happening on a mass scale at other Academy institutes. We conduct basic science, and that is of value."

I asked, "Would you elaborate on why you believe things will work out for most of your scientists? What gives you hope?"

"You must remember that these meetings with the *Wissenschaftsrat* panels and the work groups at this institute have not been adversarial. In our work here in the East we had limitations of equipment, Party interference at times—but it was relatively minimal—and budget constraints compared to the West Germans. Nevertheless, we had comparable scientific results to the West Germans. The West Germans do not dispute this fact

that we are more-or-less their equals in scientific matters. Our work here was of high quality, to state it bluntly."

"No ideological struggles or tensions, then?" I asked.

He said, "I see what you are asking. What you in the West call natural science is, of course, not ideological—it's an empirical science, so we had no conflicts with the West Germans in this regard. We at this institute want to continue our work and the West Germans will help us do so as long as it does not compete with their ongoing work at their institutes."

"As for those who will be let go, most already have one or more invitations from other nations or private industry here in Germany."

"Really, can you tell me about this?" I inquired.

"Well, there's not much to say except that scientists in other countries have become aware—or already were aware—of our work here and they have been communicating with us—freely since the Turn—and have invited some of our scientists to come to their nations to work with them, either permanently or for a period of time as visiting researchers. You will have to ask each scientist for details."

At the next institute I visited, the director, Professor Konrad Acker, recounted, "At the first of two meetings with the *Rat* panel they sent five or six members to visit us. They gave us a positive rating of our work and all appeared well for this institute's future. Our spirits were quite high. Only during the second meeting did we experience the panel's political motivation."

"What did they tell you? That some of your scientists would be dismissed regardless of your qualifications?" I asked.

"Not in those words; you state it too directly. What they said was, 'Yes, your results are of high quality, but you must understand that there are not enough resources to go around, so your numbers must be reduced.' Then they informed us that 80% of the scientists here would be dismissed and our institute would be dissolved."

"We at this institute were greatly disappointed by this news and the politics behind it. It was of secondary importance that we were doing good science. The real reason was, I am sure, that there was a similar group of researchers in West Germany that wished us to be reduced in numbers, not for scientific reasons but because we would be competing with them in future years for funding. Those who will be let go must look for positions in other nations, private industry, or possibly the universities—which is not good because the universities are for teaching primarily, not to support research."

"You look outraged and disappointed," I commented.

He smiled and sighed, "We thought the Turn was our chance to have a new beginning for this institute. Naturally, we have gone from hope to dismay."

"Have you visited any of the medical institutes at the Academy?" He asked me.

"No, I have not."

He went on, "I have colleagues in medicine at institutes that are being shut down by the *Wissenschaftsrat*. Some of the medical researchers at these institutes are known throughout the world for their contributions to medical science, but they refuse to renounce socialism, so they will be dismissed. They find themselves forced to seek positions in other nations if they wish to continue their life's work. There must be a better way, some alternative to this kind of brutal process. It's like a brain drain that no one dares to speak of; the West Germans are driving excellent scientists out for political, not scientific, reasons."

"There is one more thing I want to say to you, an American, since you have come to speak with me at this critical moment."

"Yes?" I asked.

He asked me to reassure him that his comments would be anonymous and that no reader would be able to attribute them to him or his institute. I did so and he told me, "As a Westerner you may not trust in my words, you may find them exaggerated, but I tell you that it is more dangerous now to speak your mind than in GDR times."

"Because your possibilities for a new position are at risk?" I asked.

"This is so, I deeply believe this is so. We have no voice in determining our future; and those who hold the power to employ us have their own conflicting interests to protect."

Finally, joint interviews were arranged with two four-person groups from two of these institutes. The age of the members of these groups ranged from late twenties to early thirties. All of them were winding up their work at their respective institutes and looking forward to moving on in their research careers.

When I asked each group about the *Wissenschaftsrat* panels, they dismissed the question as irrelevant and gave blithe responses, such as, "Yes, the older members here are upset, but what can be done?" or "It's unfortunate our institute will be broken up and many of the scientists here dismissed, but this is unavoidable." It turned out that all eight of these

scientists were looking forward to leaving the Academy before it officially closed.

A physicist, age twenty-eight, told me, "I'm excited because I have three offers to choose from: one from a corporation in Houston, Texas; another from an American university; and one from a firm here in Germany. I am almost certain that I will accept the position at the university in America." The others gave similar accounts of their options, and none of them expressed any regrets about the passing of the GDR or—to be direct—interest in the fate of their fellow East Germans.

They were eager to discuss their research interests and proud of their accomplishments thus far in their scientific careers. One observed, "We know our scientific work is recognized in the West and we now realize that our training in the GDR was excellent."

When asked about the Stasi and the Party, they were blasé, one saying, "We did not concern ourselves with the political situation here, nor did we worry about the Stasi. Only a few people understood our work and it had no ideological content. We merely wanted to do science and the Party let us alone to do our work. Our major problems were in obtaining the resources and having contact with scientists in the West. I suppose one could say that lack of contact with colleagues in the West is one manner in which the Stasi and Party did interfere in our work."

Here were two groups of scientists who were looking forward to fulfilling careers and, to be blunt, showed little interest in the ramifications of unification.

Summary

After these interviews at the Academy institutes, in the middle of August, located at *Adlershof* Berlin, I returned to the United States.

In Part II, I summarize the interviews I conducted twenty-four years later, in 2014, with approximately one-fourth of the East German intellectuals I originally interviewed in 1990–91. Before turning to these quarter century later follow-up interviews, here is a summary of the reactions of GDR intellectuals to the Turn in 1990–91.

The modal response of GDR intellectuals to the Turn and unification is easily encapsulated in several nearly unanimous perceptions and interpretations of the Turn and how unification was playing out.

There was widespread displeasure with how the GDR functioned under the Party's control. This displeasure ranged from contempt to frustration to

hope for reform, but virtually everyone I spoke with felt that the GDR was unsustainable. Its sudden demise was a shock to many, but in retrospect, easily understood as inevitable.

The GDR intellectuals I met readily admitted that socialism in the GDR had failed and that the FRG capitalist system was "better" by virtue of having outlasted the GDR politically and besting it economically. They were bitter or dejected about the West German's refusal to acknowledge that GDR culture was legitimate—as opposed to a continuation of Nazi totalitarianism—and had scientific and cultural contributions to make to a reconstituted Germany.

Nonetheless, with only a handful of exceptions in the scores of East German intellectuals I met in 1990–91, they characterized West Germany and capitalism as inherently exploitative. In all my encounters with East German intellectuals after the Turn, I met only a few who saw any merit in capitalism. I met three, possibly four, who expressed any faith in capitalism, two of whom indicated their membership in or support of the East German CDU (the West German counterpart was the conservative Christian Democratic Union Party of then Chancellor Helmut Kohl).[46]

The description of capitalism as "a two-thirds society" was repeatedly invoked. The overwhelming sentiment among GDR intellectuals was that capitalism was an exploitative system that they viewed with immense suspicion and distrust.

As for the viability of socialism, confusion and multiple interpretations abounded. Even though they acknowledged that the GDR had failed politically and economically and grudgingly and stoically admitted that the capitalist FRG had "won" the Cold War ideological struggle, GDR intellectuals were adamant that the FRG was a critically flawed society.

Indeed, most were perplexed and searching for an answer as to how and why this exploitative system—capitalism—had prevailed over their socialist ideology. Some placed blame on the East German Socialist Party's rigidity and inability to adopt Mikhail Gorbachev's reform agenda for the Soviet Union. In a slightly different interpretation, others saw the failure of Gorbachev's reform efforts in the Soviet Union as the distal reason for the failure of the GDR and the socialist project throughout Eastern Europe. In other words, as went the Soviet Union, so went the GDR. They were divided about socialism's future as a political system, questioning the viability of socialism as an economic and political organizing principle for a modern industrial society.

A third and closely related interpretation is that the aging leaders of the GDR clung to a "Stalinist" perspective, which was viewed by many GDR intellectuals as a perversion of "real socialism."

Others were "anomic," as in experiencing identity crisis and generalized disbelief caused by an erosion of their deeply held socialist-rooted standards, beliefs, and values. In other words, they did not believe in capitalism and had seen socialism fail—what socioeconomic and political system was there to believe in?

Paradoxically, almost no one I met rejected a Marxist understanding of how the FRG was behaving toward the GDR. That is, the interpretation of "internal colonization" was nearly universal among GDR intellectuals, even those few I encountered who were not Marxists. This sentiment was intensified and given empirical grounding in how the West Germans were dealing with the Academy of Sciences and the East German universities. The evaluation and closing of the Academy, the vetting and purging of East German university faculties, and the society-wide shuttering of East German institutions came to be characterized as *die Abwicklung der DDR*, the phasing out (shutting down, dismantling) of East German institutions.

A great disappointment to them was the failure of what they at first perceived as an historic opportunity to create a "third way" reformed socialist democracy in the GDR. This reformed GDR would eventually unify with the FRG. They quickly came to realize that this hope was exclusively confined to the East German intelligentsia and rejected by the rest of the GDR's citizenry.

Despite their deep dismay about the March 1990 vote for immediate unification, which was also a rejection of a reformed socialism, GDR intellectuals were sympathetic to "the workers" who had voted for unification. Indeed, they characterized their hope for reforming socialism as their collective delusion. In this regard, they spoke of the workers as justifiably enervated by forty-five years of lofty and unfulfilled appeals to the grandeur of the "Workers' State" and the future benefits to mankind of socialism.

Finally, those intelligentsia I spoke with took a modicum solace from the fact that as unification took place, polls were indicating that a plurality of East Germans already—in late 1990 and early 1991—were regretting their decision for immediate unification.

Notes

1. This cafe closed the next week; the center early in 1991.
2. To East Germans, "The Party" meant the ruling Socialist Unity Party, in German the *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*, *SED*.
3. October 3, 1990, was unification day and celebrations were held in Berlin the night before as well as that Wednesday. Some—perhaps many—East Berliners held subdued gatherings to commemorate the passing of the GDR.

A few weeks after meeting Lilly, she invited me to visit her and her husband, a member of the Academy, in their apartment on Frankfurter Allee. She suggested that I come on unification day. She and her husband took me for a walk through the neighborhood. Our first stop was the central Stasi building. It was quiet and locked, a contrast to the near riotous scenes that had taken place there after the Wall opened and GDR citizens demanded their files be handed over so they could learn who had informed on them. The weather was in the fifties with bright sunshine as we walked along the streets. About every fifth apartment window had an East German flag flying from it in defiance of unification. We walked past *MainzerStraße*, where a large contingent of young squatters recently had taken over run-down buildings in the name of "The People." They did not want this empty housing rehabilitated into upscale, gentrified apartments. The East Berlin police had done nothing to remove them. Several days later, after unification, the Berlin police forcibly evicted them as Berliners argued over whether these young squatters were mostly East or West Germans.

4. Since this conversation, recall it is taking place in the fall of 1990, unified Germany has legalized the practice of turning right on a red light.
5. This is an abbreviation of Trabant, the now iconic, inexpensive, two-cylinder, highly polluting, and uncomfortable national automobile of the GDR.
6. "When the Wall opened many East Berliners hurried into West Berlin. I chose not go that weekend because I was embarrassed. Most East Berliners went to the banks to get their *Willkommen Geld*, welcome money, also called *Begrußungsgeld*, a gift of one hundred D-Marks given by the FRG to all GDR citizens. The cues were so long that they were regularly shown on the television. Even worse,

all the bananas in West Berlin were bought by East Berliners that weekend and a West German newspaper showed a trashcan overflowing with banana peels with the ridiculing caption below the photo, 'Banana Republic.'"—An East Berliner.

7. This was the fall of 1990 and the metaphor of *die Abwicklung* had not yet entered into common usage among East Germans.
8. A large, opulent department store in West Berlin.
9. I came to the building one Monday morning in April 1991, five months after the unification, and saw several Academy members standing at the doorway examining a polished brass sign that had appeared at the main entrance over the weekend. "What is this? It says a French business is now occupying a part of the first floor?" I heard them say to each other. "It's really happening, the Academy is being closed down," one of them said. "I wonder if it's my office they are taking over next. No one told us this was going to occur, no one told us anything about this . . . Do you think the terminations by the *Wissenschaftsrat* have been rescheduled and we will be the last to know?"

   The French firm was converting some classrooms on the first floor, one that Lilly had used the previous fall, and for a time, the building was occupied simultaneously by lame duck Academy members and the new businesses. The Academy was kept open until the end of 1991.
10. Erich Honecker, who went on to be leader of the GDR until his forced resignation in October 1989.
11. Mr. Schabowski was thought by many to be a master of rhetoric and Orwellian doublespeak. Several East Germans told me that his initial reading of the announcement was uncharacteristically confusing and ambiguous. Some told me that they wondered if he had lost his composure and could not believe what he was reading. One East German commented, "He read the announcement in such a way that I could not tell if he was saying 'you may visit' or 'we are thinking about allowing you to visit the FRG.' By midnight that Thursday November 9, East Berliners were streaming into West Berlin. However, some checkpoints, such as the Glienicker Bridge in Potsdam, did not allow passage to West Berlin until the morning. At most checkpoints in the central city, confused guards, with no orders from headquarters, let their fear merge with reason and stood back as potentially aggressive East Berliners turned peaceful and

joyful and passed through to West Berlin, even joking with the guards."

12. A tiny cabin on a small plot of land.
13. The D-Mark was the West German currency at the time and had become the currency of united Germany.
14. The Dutch Quarter.
15. Berlin is approximately 45 km by 35 km (30 × 22 miles) and is 883 square kilometers or 335 square miles. The former West Berlin accounted for 55 percent of the city. The Wall was approximately 176 kilometers, or 110 miles, in length.
16. For an in-depth journalistic account of these roundtables, see historian Robert Darnton's eye witness account (1991).
17. Kohl served as Chancellor of West Germany 1982–90 and of unified Germany 1990–98. He was the chairman of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) from 1973 to 1998.
18. East Germans often used this abbreviation for *Wissenschaftsrat*.
19. Only one person I interviewed fit this profile of the groveling, obsequious East German intellectual willing to renounce socialism to survive in West German academic system. He was a director of an institute of philosophy. I have not included this interview in this book because this director presented himself as someone who had always opposed the Party. Throughout the interview, he seized every opportunity to tell me how wonderful the United States and West Germany were and how awful the GDR had been. It is axiomatic that an Academy institute head fully supported the Party.
20. "The German word *Begrüßungsgeld* means 'welcome money' … The idea of 'welcome money' is a concept that was created by the West German government in 1970. *Begrüßungsgeld* was a monetary gift from the Federal Republic of Germany to visitors from the eastern side—the German Democratic Republic" (Welcome to Germany.info 2014).
21. Commemorative bricks and markers were installed to indicate where the Wall once stood.
22. "Chris Gueffroy (June 21, 1968–February 6, 1989) was the last person to be shot while trying to escape from East Berlin to West Berlin across the Berlin Wall" (Wikipedia ND).
23. Inga Markovits (1995, p. 4) notes, "The Unification Treaty provided that on 3 October 1990 … West German law would become the law of the land." However, special "transition rules" were

instituted to deal with the changeover from GDR to FRG laws. East Berlin was denied this transition period and extant (East Berlin) cases were sent to existing West Berlin districts after October 3. Markovits (1995: 5) dryly points out, "East Berlin judges would be offered course on West German law to re-tool while awaiting review by judicial selection committees … Few were expected to pass."

24. In Germany, the Habilitation is an advanced research post-doctoral thesis. Some call it the second doctoral thesis; others see it as a higher quality book written after the doctoral thesis.
25. The Social Democratic Party of Germany (German Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands).
26. *Rosa Luxemburg Platz and Karl-Liebknecht Straße* are adjacent to each other in what was East Berlin. In Berlin, it is common for street names to change every few blocks because the Germans employ Berlin street names to commemorate people, events, and other towns in Germany. *Karl-Liebknecht Straße* runs from what was the *Palast der Republik*, the parliament building of the GDR, at the corner of *Breite Straße*, several long blocks past Alexander Platz, to what was in GDR times *Wilhelm Pieck Straße* and is now on one side *Torstraße* and on the other side *Mollstraße*. Before it became *Karl-Liebknecht Straße*, the street was called Unter den Linden. Earlier that—in what was West Berlin near the Brandenburg Gate—it was *Straße des 17 Juni*, and before that, it was *Bismarck Straße*. In the former East Berlin, *Karl-Liebknecht Straße* ends and becomes *Prenzlauer Allee*, which then becomes some blocks later *Prenzlauer Promenade*.
27. Gregor Gysi was a popular politician and head of the party, the *PDS*, Party of Democratic Socialism, that succeeded the East German socialist—*SED*—party. He was one of the few lawyers who had taken on the daunting role of defending political dissidents in the GDR.
28. Free University of West Berlin.
29. The *Gauck-Behörde* (a public authority) was established to expose and remove from public office persons who had worked for or with the Stasi during the GDR. It had the authority to ban such persons from holding positions of authority and public trust in unified Germany.

30. The airlift of goods and supplies to support West Berlin during a Soviet blockade that ran from June 24, 1948, to May 12, 1949.
31. Wolf Biermann is a German singer/songwriter and former East German dissident.
32. The *Treuhand* was established by the FRG to deal with the vast property "owned" by the GDR in the name of the people. Factories, plants, and other holdings of the GDR were sold off under the rationale of stimulating business development. The East Germans saw this as an undemocratic and colonialist expropriation of their national assets while, from the West German perspective, the decrepitude of the GDR was so massive that selling-off East German assets at low prices was necessary to attract foreign capital that would eventuate in the development of the economy in the former GDR. In the spring of 1991, the head of the *Treuhand*, a West German businessman, was assassinated while sitting in his living room one evening.
    Langenscheidt's Dictionary defines *Treuhand* as "trustee." The English translation of Gunter Grass's novel about the unification, *Ein Weites Feld* (*Too Far Afield*), terms the *Truehand* as the "Handover Trust."
33. A reference to Martin Buber's *I and Thou* (2010).
34. "*Vitamin B*" indicates B for *Beziehungen*, meaning relationships or networking contacts.
35. This is a reference to Michel Foucault's (1977) *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*.
36. This refers to the book Critique of Pure Tolerance (Wolff et al. 1960).
37. Helsinki Accords (1975).
38. I think the professor was referring to Bertholt Brecth's *Kinderhymne* (1950).
39. Dr. Lange's view of the Academy is similar to Wolfgang Thierse's (Torpey 1995, p. 141), another Academy historian. The Academy of Sciences "was distinguished from the university by virtue of the fact that there was no teaching going on there, so the ideological pressure was not as severe as it was at the university . . . In political and ideological terms . . . the Academy was an idyll by comparison to the university."
40. Kurt Hager was an East German official and member of the ruling Socialist Unity Party of East Germany. He was for most of his official

tenure in charge of cultural and educational policy making in East Germany.

41. This mention of projects—as opposed to individual scientists—is an important point to highlight. In the GDR Academy, most research was done in teams, not by individuals. The breaking up of their research teams became an added dimension of distress for Academy scholars.
42. This refers to a government program of "Job Creation Measures" to help unemployed person secure a job.
43. Helene Weigel and her husband, Bertolt Brecht, founded the Berliner Ensemble in 1949.
44. Udo Ulfkotte, a former editor of *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, has written a book (2014) in which he argues that politicians, government intelligence agencies, and high finance steer Germany's mass media.
45. This institute director asked that his institute not be directly identified.
46. Of these three, one was a politician who had been a member of the East German CDU Party; another was a Lutheran priest. The third was a director of an Academy institute whose interview I discuss in this endnote on page 176. A careful reader could ask, "What about Professor Lange, the Christian historian at the Academy of Sciences?" (See his interview on page ___.) While Lange found socialism a dead-end, he expressed concerns about how West Germans were dismissive of East German collective identity that Lange said had developed separately from Party ideology and propaganda.

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Part II: Twenty-Four Years Later, July 2014

In July of 2014, a quarter century later, I returned to Germany to conduct follow-up interviews with approximately one-fourth of those I had spoken with informally or interviewed in 1990–91.[1]

Only a handful[2] of those I had met in 1990–91 rejected the notion that the unification of Germany could be described as a takeover of the GDR by the FRG. I was unable to locate any of those who had in 1990–91 expressed some level of confidence and belief in capitalism.

In sharp contrast to all the other East German intelligentsia I met and interviewed in 1990–91, this tiny minority saw the Turn and unification as a logical, appropriate, and fair process of supplanting an experiment in communism that had produced a fearful, heavily propagandized and in many respects culturally warped and emotionally stunted people. In their opinion, their fellow GDR citizens had endured four decades trapped in a Soviet Russia–dominated repressive society. Therefore, they were deeply pleased to unify with the FRG, which they considered, apropos to that 1980s to early 1990s era in time—virtually an ideal "End of History"[3] capitalist society. It follows, they saw little of value in GDR institutions; so what looked like a dismantling to the vast majority of those I had interviewed was for them a liberation from tyranny and a chance for east German *Entwicklung*, that is, development as part of re-unification with the thriving FRG "German" capitalist state and economy.

I contacted two former East German scientists[4] who held this minority view and were working as scientists in contemporary Germany; as noted above, neither granted me an interview. What follows is a summation of the

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2014 views of what I surmise is the dominant East German intelligentsia's reaction to how unification has unfolded.

Question 1: Do You Think Unification Is Best Described as the *"Abwicklung"* of the GDR?

Of the twenty-eight interviews I conducted in July 2014, twenty-four of which were with original interviewees, there was agreement by all that the term *"Abwicklung"* is an acceptable way to characterize the actual mechanics of unification. Most objected to the use of the term unification, feeling the word falsely implied a parity of power relationships and respect for the institutions and accomplishments of the people of the GDR. Also, it implied—again inaccurately in their collective view—that a new German identity and institutional order, a synthesis of east and West Germans, would arise from unification.

These twenty-eight interviewees are divisible into two sub-groups. First are the twenty-six who believed in the "intentional dismantling" interpretation of the *Abwicklung*. Second, there were two who, in contrast, held a "good West German intentions" view while not denying that the GDR in fact had been dismantled and unification badly mishandled. They took a "mistakes were made" position by a well-intentioned West German government, primarily due to the political necessity of rushing into unification.

The twenty-six "intentional dismantling" adherents enunciated differing degrees of awareness among West Germans that unification in fact had been a systematic imposition of a capitalistic economy, accompanied by dismissing the idea that East Germans had developed any scientific or cultural knowledge of value to unified Germany, and an invalidation—stigmatization—of East German collective/cultural identity.

A couple, who had been dismissed from their positions as university professors in mathematics and statistics and, in 2014, were working in private industry in Berlin, put it this way:[5]

"Definitely, it can be called an *Abwicklung*. The majority of East Germans had voted in early 1990 for a total surrender of the German Democratic Republic to the Federal Republic… [T]he Turn became a capitalist takeover … carried out by the West Germans as if the GDR were an insolvent business enterprise."

An economist from the Academy told me, "As you know, the Academy was shut down at the end of 1991, but the West Germans could not for

appearances sake simply dismiss all Academy members at that time of official closing. So they did it—and this was rather clever, I must say—over 3–5 year periods by not renewing many of contracts of the 1/3 they gave positions to in 1992. This tactic is essentially invisible and stifles the possibility of collective resistance that might have occurred if dismissals had been handed out to everyone at the Academy at the end of 1991. What I'm suggesting is that with each new contract cycle a few more East Germans were let go. That is in fact what has taken place these past two decades."

I observed, "Well, dismissing 2/3 of those employed at the Academy when it was closed at the end of 1991 was significant in itself. But is there systematic empirical evidence of this pattern you describe regarding the other 1/3? That is, are there any studies showing that this tactic played out in many locations?"

He nodded and added, "I know of no such studies. Why would the German government want to document this? I suppose one might be able to laboriously seek out records to expose this procedure. However, who would fund this research? It serves no positive purpose for the *Bundesrepublik*."

I asked him about his professional opportunities and activities after the Academy closed.

"I have done consulting, I continue to do research and publish in journals. I have traveled to other countries to lecture, and so forth. For some years afterwards I applied for numerous positions here in Germany, of course, but always with the same result: 'No thank you.'"[6]

"So you have never worked in unified Germany after the Academy was closed?" I asked. "Yes," he said, "that is the case, but you must see this in its context, not as my personal tragedy. I have colleagues around the world; as I just said, I publish, do research and so forth. As you Americans put it, 'I have a life.'"

"Okay," I replied. He went on.

"I'm a Marxist economist. We were at the top of the list for a deathblow from the West Germans, and the Turn and rush to unification provided that opportunity and justification. I have observed impressionistically that the most ideological of the institutes at the Academy received the heaviest losses of positions. So while physics and chemistry, for example, faired rather well—at first, mind you, recalling my comments about contracts not being renewed over time—economics and philosophy, for example, were dealt this sudden deathblow by the *Wissenschaftsrat* in 1991."

He paused for a moment and went on, "Further qualifications are in order. First, East German Marxist economics had been a thorn in the side of West German academics for decades. Many of their—the West Germans'—doctoral students, studying history, philosophy and economics mainly, read Marxist literature and the works we here in the East were producing. Some of these students even came to meet with us at the Academy. You see, these students were never taught Marxism in their classes in the FRG and often complained to their West German professors about this situation. This is a complex history, but you get the gist, I hope. Second, as always, the money to fund East German scholars and East versus West German personality conflicts and rivalries played an important role alongside ideology. Then you also must consider the West Germans' obsession with connections between our intelligentsia and the Stasi; this, too, is a complicated matter."

"If a proper scientific evaluation of the Academy had been undertaken I would have supported it. This evaluation, however, would have required about 3 years of largely ethnographic research and cooperation between East and West German scientists. This, of course, was not a possibility the West Germans would entertain."

"I knew a few West German professors who recognized that we at the Academy were being taken over and purged; on those grounds they refused to participate in the *Wissenschaftsrat* evaluation charade. They were called all sorts of names by some of their West German colleagues, for example, unpatriotic, which is a very interesting word choice to characterize their principled stand."

"Another dimension is that many unemployed West German PhDs came here to take positions in universities as GDR university faculties were dismissed in a fashion similar to what took place at the Academy. Then we have those of us intellectuals in the GDR Academy not sufficiently repentant or deferential to West German academics, attitudes and outlooks, such as myself. In addition to being in ideological fields we were, quite naturally, unlikely to be given new positions due to our unbowed heads. Finally, I knew several Academy colleagues, especially in medicine, who chose to emigrate rather than renounce socialism. Oh, and there were a few who became despondent and took their lives; and I also know of many whose only viable option was to take private sector jobs, like working in one of the new insurance agencies that opened throughout the former East Germany states; and some with technical and mathematical skills went on to work for private enterprises."

As for the better fate of those in the natural sciences, this seems correct but it was nonetheless difficult for many of them. I re-interviewed someone who had worked in chemistry at the large Academy assemblage of hard sciences institutes located in the *Rudower Chaussee,* Berlin *Adlershof.* He now works in private industry as a software engineer.

He recounted, "At that time of the *Wissenschaftsrat's* evaluation of our group I had planned to spend my life doing research. Our group, which numbered approximately 70 members, was at first pleased to learn that the *Wissenschaftsrat* had given our institute a positive evaluation. I thought, 'Oh, this is very good, I can continue my research career.'"

"But then later my institute chief called me in for a discussion and told me, 'I'm so sorry, but the *Wissenschaftsrat* has informed me that the positive evaluation is one thing, and finances are another. I have been instructed by the *Rat* to dismiss half of my scientists. The other half will get 3 year contracts.'" "I stared at him and asked, 'I am one of those to be let go? Why?' He again said he was sorry, and told me what an excellent scientist I was. Then he explained that he had decided to keep the older scientists because their age would prevent most or all of them from finding new employment. 'You are young and talented,' he said, 'you will find your way.'"

"So the positive evaluation meant little—and nothing to me—as half of us were to be dismissed and the rest would receive a three-year contract. Research requires much time, and a three-year contract was a short amount of time. Therefore, I decided that this life of scientific research and probably—I did not know with certainty what was coming—having to acquire a series of contracts was not for me. I decided that I should seek my way in private industry where I hoped that I would have more stability and possibly make more money. I was married shortly before the Turn and we desired children."

"Did you see your personal experience with the *Rat* as part of the dismantling of the GDR?" I asked. He thought for a moment, "Yes, certainly, the Academy was dissolved as one part of the takeover of the GDR—what happened to me, losing my position—was occurring everywhere in the GDR, not just at the Academy."

Another person I re-interviewed, a historian from the Academy who was able to continue on in his career, pointedly said to me, "As you are a sociologist interested in our collective identity, let me be clear: The *Abwicklung* is not an interpretation or social construction of reality. It is a matter of fact that the West Germans took over the GDR. This is not open

to discussion; it is what happened. For instance, as the Academy came to its end as part of the terms in the unification treaty, our workgroups were broken up. This dismissal of many of those at my institute and the scattering of others to various institutes was detrimental for our intellectual careers. To our regret, we were all treated as individuals by the *Wissenschaftsrat* process—some kindly, many unfairly and rudely."

"It is most important to point out that we from the East were socialized to do research collaboratively in groups. . . When this work sharing arrangement we had at the Academy came to an end, those of us who received contracts had to adapt quickly to the Western model of the individual competitive scientist."

"I personally cannot complain because I was offered a good position in a West Berlin institute and accorded respect and intellectual freedom by my supervisors and colleagues. My supervisor said to me, 'Please carry on the research you were doing.'"

"Some of my work from GDR times was well regarded among the West Germans and I'm not an abrasive person—this was critical, I think, to my survival. However, many good people I know were not as fortunate as I have been. The important point, to say it again, is that the GDR was brought to an end as a matter of policy. A relatively small number of individual academics and scientists were folded into, and even welcomed into, the West Germany system."

"By the way, I believe that the workers suffered greater economic hardships and displacements than did the intellectual class.[7] I'm sure you know about the massive industrial and manufacturing plant closings, the *Treuhand's* activities, and the resultant high unemployment rates which persist to this day."

I then took a risk and asked him if he believed that *Ampelmann*[8] was one of the few contributions the GDR was allowed to make to unified Germany.

He laughed and said, "Yes, *Ampelmann* and not much more, perhaps nothing more."

The *Ampelmann* illustration came up frequently among these former East Germans as we spoke of the refusal of the West Germans to consider the GDR's potential contributions to unified Germany.

Another original interviewee, a sociologist, told me, "It was an *Abwicklung*; of this there is no doubt. Every institution of the GDR has been closed down; we were allowed to make no contributions."

I replied, "Except *Ampelmann?*" He chuckled and said, "Well, *Ampelmann* is so entertaining that even the West Germans had to confess

they liked him more than their stodgy pedestrian traffic signal. The humor in this example exposes this question, 'What else did they accept from us East Germans?' There is nothing I can think of in this moment. . . There was such haste to obliterate the GDR, as if it was nothing more than an animal carcass in one's yard that must be burned or buried."

"Let me stress that I'm not nostalgic for the GDR. I'm glad it's over; still, I have wonderful memories of my life there with real friends, a sense of great purpose, hope for a better world and solidarity with others. West Germans typically do not understand this outlook. Many of them think it foolish or a rhetorical ruse that humans would say they wish to strive to create a world where we treat each other decently."[9]

"As for my fellow East Germans, I know many who mourn for the GDR, but I do not understand this nostalgia and their desire to return to GDR times. In the end, the GDR did not serve the people; some of my friends and colleagues have forgotten this in their despair, and this leads them to idealize the GDR. Perhaps I do not understand what we call *'Ostalgie'* because, unlike many of my colleagues, I was not thrown aside by the *Wissenschaftsrat* in 1991. I was not quite 40 years old then and was given a chance to continue on in my sociological career."

I asked everyone at some point in these 2014 interviews, "Do you know how many were dismissed from the Academy and the GDR universities?" Here is a summary of their responses.

None knew of any studies or data sources amenable to investigating this question of what happened to those two-thirds working at the Academy who were dismissed, those let go from East German universities, and various GDR media institutions such as radio, television, and print. They all reported with certainty that about one-third of those working at The Academy of Sciences were offered contracts in 1991 or shortly thereafter to carry on their careers in West German institutions. The remaining two-thirds were left with what in their eyes were second- and third-choice options. One was to enter into ABM *(Arbeitsmaßnahmen)*, a program for the unemployed; another was to enroll in one of the so-called integration programs, where the loosely conceived idea was to allow GDR scholars,[10] academics, and scientists to apprentice[11]—at low pay and typically low or ambiguous status—with West German academics for a period of time as a sort of retraining and acclimation or acculturation program. Others, some of whom were either highly sought after by colleagues in other nations, or disgusted at their treatment by West Germans, or faced accusations of collaboration with the Stasi,[12] emigrated to find work and a new life.

A few took up the daunting challenge of beginning their own businesses. Some unknown numbers—probably a tiny minority—committed suicide (most of those I interviewed in July 2014 had a tale of someone who had taken their life). Still others felt forced into early retirement or denied scientific or governmental positions because they were formally accused of moral turpitude for in some manner collaborating with the Stasi. Those with various technical skills found work in private industry; others, typically those with good spoken and written German language skills and deft at logical thinking and social interaction, found work in business offices as low-level managers or sold insurance.[13] And some drove taxicabs to earn a living.

A historian who was positively evaluated by the *Wissenschaftsrat* that reviewed his Academy institute reported, "I felt treated fairly by the *Wissenschaftsrat*, but disadvantaged when I had to compete for academic positions. A central reason was that I was in competition with the oversupply of West German PhDs from the FRG. East Germany presented an unprecedented opportunity for this oversupply of West Germans to receive positions in former GDR universities and become full professors—or at least receive full academic appointments. They would then establish their careers here in the East and attempt to return to a more prestigious university in the original FRG states."

"It was a very uneven process and it is difficult to generalize for you except to say that we East Germans were typically discriminated against in our pursuit of career opportunities."

"Can you give me some examples or criteria of this discrimination?" I asked him.

"Well, a critical factor is that we, GDR academics, had no social networks and, therefore, no power to access these positions. The West Germans of course had the networks and, therefore, the power to control to a great extent who would receive these jobs. For instance, if a professor supervises a student's doctoral studies he, this professor, has an interest regarding his prestige in seeing to it that the student finds a good academic position. To illustrate, I was for a time at Bielefeld [University] and I can assure you that it was unthinkable that an East German could rise to a full professorship. The general attitude there was that we East Germans were 'rural' and more or less primitive. This was subtle, not openly displayed and not all West German academics shared this view—some did not know they held it. They just exhibited it in their expressions and conduct."

"Nonetheless, I count myself as one of the fortunate ones who was able to have an academic career after the Academy was closed. In this moment,

however, looking back, in some ways it might have been better if I had simply been dismissed like so many of my colleagues at the Academy. It has been a very hard twenty plus years in the FRG academic system."

A sociologist recounted her institute's unpleasant treatment when visited by the *Wissenschaftsrat* evaluation panel as if this incident had occurred recently rather than twenty-four years in the past.

"I was a practicing sociologist, and still this panel treated me as if I was a naïve or somewhat ignorant schoolgirl, asking questions as if I did not know the basic principles of sociology. They also showed no collegiality towards my fellow Academy colleagues. It was all top-down, 'We West German sociologists know and you East Germans do not know'—that type of situation. And then, to my surprise, they gave several of us a positive evaluation and I was given a contract to come to this university, where I've survived numerous contract renewals over the past two decades."

The academic couple mentioned above gave this account of their adaptation to the German capitalist economy, "The Turn arrived when we were mature professionals [in their thirties], and we both set out to re-orient ourselves to the new economic reality. In the GDR we had received strong technical training, and an education grounded in systems thinking, which we felt encouraged independent thought and action. . . On the other hand, . . . we had limitations: . . . insufficient Western European language skills, and a lack of . . . personal computer skills and knowledge of how to engage in what we call self-marketing."

"We felt professionally on a par [with West Germans] and were generally treated well by western colleagues. . . We observed and experienced first hand that [East Germans] could find employment on the basis of sound scientific-technical, medical or linguistic skills. However, it would be in a low-paying entry-level position, even if you had many years of professional experience."

"Interestingly, we also met West Berlin or West German colleagues who felt disadvantaged because of . . . the sudden . . . flood of technically and otherwise competent East Germans who could be hired at low wages."

Paradoxically, I found a rare—possibly unique—instance of a small group of historians at an Academy institute that was incorporated—without any interruptions or dismissal of staff—into the scientific system of one of unified Germany's states. This was possible because the *Länder*, the equivalent of states in the United States, could create separate, non-federally supported Academies of Science.

A member of this group, he had not been interviewed in 1990–91, told me, "We were a small sub-group of six within an institute at the Academy. We were doing historical/cultural research of no ideologically controversial or contemporary political relevance. Our work was about Germany's cultural heritage, so you see, there were no disputes to sort out with the *Wissenschaftsrat*."

"As there were disputes in many instances of the *Wissenschaftsrat* meeting with Academy members, especially in history, sociology, economics and philosophy?" I asked.

He replied, "Quite so; our experience with them was rather perfunctory, even pleasant. It was obvious they felt rushed and under great pressure."

Next I asked him, "So you never were unemployed? You even got to remain in the same offices you had been in during GDR times? You must have felt like the luckiest people in the world—and maybe a bit embarrassed or guilty, too—for your good fortune?"

"Yes, all around us our colleagues at other institutes and the universities were losing their positions and experiencing great stress and anxiety. My colleagues and I had taken it for granted—because we were historians, especially—that the same fate awaited us. We knew unofficially that the West Germans were only prepared to take 1/3 of us from the entire GDR Academy. We never could have imagined that somehow all six of us could survive—and then, as well, that our workgroup would be kept intact. The continuation of our workgroup, in that context, still astounds me. However, looking back on it, it makes sense. We were small; our work was noncontroversial and actually valued by the West Germans. Also—this is critical, I think—the *Wissenschaftsrat* assignment was so enormous, controversial and conflict-ridden and pressed for time that—paradoxically—it all came together positively for out little group. It was as if they thought, 'Okay, this small group can be dealt with efficiently by just allowing them to carry on, so let's make this simple and move ahead.'"

"So how, exactly, did this unfold?" I asked.

"As I noted, we were a small group and we knew some of the evaluations at other Academy institutes and the GDR universities were brutal, insulting, condescending, and condemning of GDR intellectuals and scientists. For our group, as I said, the *Wissenschaftsrat* panel was almost benign and even supportive. I know of cases where, for instance, there were some West German *Wissenschaftsrat* members who tried to help their East German counterparts by finding places for them at other institutes or by obtaining funds to take one or two into their own institutes."

"In any case, back to my situation. All of us here thought the best we could do would be to save our jobs individually and be reassigned to other existing West German institutes. Therefore we expected two or three of us to be reassigned individually; this is what we hoped would be the best-case outcome."

"On the day we were summoned by the *Wissenschaftsrat* to receive their decision we conferred amongst ourselves and agreed, 'Whatever is to be our fate, let's show a stiff upper lip.' When we sat down for the meeting we were told, 'Well, your work is good and of value to Germany, so here, sign these contracts, all of you are being kept on as a group.' Then they said, 'Congratulations, just sign the contracts, we've got lots of other work to get on with.'"

"Fascinating," I noted.

"It remains amazing," he said. "That was all there was to it, except that we did get a West German leader of our group and we have kept signing new contracts every few years since then."

"That was my next question, whether a West German was assigned to lead your group," I said.

"But he was a good man, not heavy-handed, haughty or snobbish," this historian assured me.

As mentioned above, East German universities underwent a similar but not identical process as took place at the Academy. An administrator at Humboldt University told me that approximately 60 percent[14] of the faculty and administrators working there in November 1989, when the Wall opened, were replaced over the next several years.[15]

In regard to understanding what occurred at Humboldt and other GDR universities, it is critical to repeat, as already pointed out in an interview recounted above, that many West German PhDs who could not find work in West Germany secured university positions vacated as East German academics were dismissed, were forced or chose to go into retirement, or emigrated.

A former professor at Humboldt University told me of how her career ended with her dismissal and appearance before "the university's Integrity Committee."[16]

"I was summoned before an integrity commission and accused of Stasi affiliations. After the Turn, as the West Germans were taking over, some of my colleagues at the university became anti-communist and renounced the GDR. They were shielded by West Germans from accusations of Stasi collaboration. That's how this vetting process was done; if one became

subservient to the new order, then one's Stasi connections would be covered-up; otherwise, it could be used against you as a pretext for dismissal."

When I put the *Abwicklung* question to an East German intellectual who since unification has pursued a career in politics, he replied: "Unification played out as an *Abwicklung* because it was premised upon the destruction of the GDR culture, economy and nation-state. How long has it been? About a quarter of a century? And nothing has been settled."

"Please explain this to me in some detail so I understand you. What's not been settled?" I interrupted.

"Okay, the list of items is long but the motive underlying it is the obliteration of the GDR. I take it I you know of the pay and pension disparities between East and West Germans?"

I answered, "I do. Right after unification it was something like 2/3 pay to East Germans for the same job, as in a *U-Bahn* or bus driver living in East Berlin was paid 2/3 what a West Berlin driver was paid for the same job. This was supposedly because the cost of living in the East was less than in the West, primarily the rents in East versus West Berlin. I never fully understood this situation because almost everyone I met in East Berlin was terrified about how much rents were increasing after unification. But weren't these pay disparities supposed to be phased out over a few years? You mean they still exist?"

"The disparities persist to this day. Let me give you some information on the rent situation. After unification the rents in the former East Berlin began to rise and this was a hardship for the former citizens of the GDR living there. There was a proposal to do what was done in Russia when the Soviet Union collapsed. Specifically, to allow East Germans to purchase for a nominal fee their dwelling places, their apartments. This would have been a significant boost to East Germans as it was in Russia when the Soviet Union collapsed. Even though the Russian economy was in ruins the people were assured that they had a place to live. This was a critical mental and physical health and economic anchor for them. Here is the best example of what took place: Most of the residents of *Prenzlauer Berg*—obviously, all of whom were East Berliners before the Turn—were force to move out as the rents increased. *Prenzlauer Berg* is today inhabited by only 10% of former East Germans."

"Another example is the fact that the unemployment rate remains—a quarter of a century later—twice as high in the five former GDR states as in the original FRG states."

"These examples—and I could give you more—illustrate the two-tiered nature of the unification process. This was not a family reunion; there were the victors, West Germans, and there were the vanquished, we East Germans."

"Another example you know well, I think: West German scientists and academics evaluated East German scientists and academics. To do this evaluation together and consider reorganizing both the West and East German models of scientific and academic scholarship was unthinkable.—East Germans evaluating West Germans? Contributing to the reorganization of scientific inquiry jointly?—This would have been regarded as ridiculous by the West Germans."

I said, "I recall that Mr. Kohl and his CDU colleagues claimed that rapid unification was necessary because of the potential for a Soviet backlash and even a re-conquest of the GDR, as Soviet troops remained garrisoned in the former GDR. This was, I think, the main reason offered for the rapidity of unification and all that it entailed. Chancellor Kohl claimed there was no political space or time for gradual procedures leading to unification."

He answered, "Sure; that was the argument at that time: 'Beware of those Russians!'"

I replied, "I've never understood this because Gorbachev was absorbed with Glasnost and Perestroika, and so many other Eastern European nations had already broken away from the Warsaw Pact. It just seemed counterintuitive if not downright surreal that Gorbachev would interfere in any manner in the unification of Germany. He was, if I recall, actually negotiating the post-Cold War environment with European governments and the Bush administration. But I'm an American and perhaps I'm missing something."

He smiled wryly and said, "Okay, you're close to the truth. That argument was total bullshit,[17] a ludicrous claim made by the CDU to frighten people to justify hasty unification on Kohl's terms. As I said, unification was carried out as a two-tiered strategy of more-or-less colonizing the GDR; and the faster this was accomplished the better because major institutional actions could be taken in crisis mode without much deliberation or consideration."

"Like the so-called 'Shock Doctrine' (Klein 2007) some speak of in the West these days?" I asked.

He replied, "The same pattern Naomi Klein discusses, yes. This was not a real unification because the best of both nations was not considered to create a new Germany—that's what we East Germans wanted from

unification. Decisions and policies were taken in secret and enacted without question or public discussion. The Russian threat was nonexistent, something we now know with certainty. However, it sounded persuasive to most West Germans and many East Germans at the time—and we East Germans who were aware of this subterfuge had no ability to expose it."

"Let me say that when more East Germans realized what had happened—came to see that they had been taken over—they turned to nostalgia for the GDR instead of turning their frustrations into political action. You know, the workers were hit particularly hard as industrial and agricultural cooperatives were liquidated; their plight was even worse than those at the universities and the Academy you are focused on."

"So I say again: Here we are 24 years later and these basic issues remain unresolved. The media will not touch them or they frame them as the irrational complaints of ungrateful and ill-informed nostalgic *Ossies*. There is this pretense that the German nation and its people were successfully re-unified and all is well."

"Allow me to say it another way: These examples I have offered only make sense if you examine them through the lens of a form of internal colonialism. Yet to the West German mentality this is an utterly inconceivable, simplistic or outrageous proposition. They will shout, 'We have spent billions of D-Marks on the East Germans.' This is true, but it is an apples and oranges observation."

In contrast to the still extant GDR worldview expressed in these July 2014 interviews, here is an excerpt from a *Der Spiegel* article titled, "Goodbye Ossi: The Demise of Eastern German Identity" (Berg 2013). The author, who I assume is from western Germany, contends, "The old eastern German issues have been dealt with. The adjustment of pensions to western German levels is almost complete, and hopefully a uniform minimum wage will clear away some of the absurd differentiation into east and west."

Then he writes, "The end of a country is on the horizon, a country that never formally existed: East Germany. A demographic group that also never formally existed is coming to an end, as well: the East Germans. It's time for an obituary."

This assessment is a negation of the lived experiences of most former GDR citizens. And it is factually incorrect—think of Willy Brandt and *Ostpolitik*—to assert that the GDR did not formally exist. It reminds me of the two young historians I met in the hallways at the *Prenzlauer*

Promenade Academy building in 1991 when they made a joke of themselves by telling me the GDR was "an invalid nation."[18]

In my view, this *Der Spiegel* article expresses the author's ethnocentric wish to finally put an end to the GDR identity,[19] as opposed to acknowledging its historical and cultural grounding and exploring the reasons for its persistence. Even more astonishing—or perhaps merely illuminating—is the fact that his editor at *Der Spiegel* allowed this "never formally existed" thesis into print.

For context, the author's warrant for claiming the GDR never formally existed lies in the fact that during the Cold War the FRG, West Germany, took the empirically absurd yet propagandistically productive position that there really was only one Germany, the FRG. The existence of the GDR was acknowledged, but defined as a temporary aberration. This goes some distance in explaining why it seemed natural for this writer to deny the "formal" existence of the GDR.

As well, it helps us understand the West German view that there was no *Abwicklung* or colonization of the GDR; rather, it was a natural—admittedly rough justice—ending to its temporary non-formal existence as it was merged into the real Germany.

In contrast, the Party, which controlled the GDR, had put forth the idea that there were two German nations.[20] The GDR nation was the progressive, antifascist embodiment of historical forces, whereas the FRG was an historically regressive capitalist nation destined to fail (Kattago 2001).

This *Der Spiegel* article is reflective of the tortured and convoluted history of German identity (Fuchs et al. 2011). A riposte to the *Der Spiegel* article from a commenter, who clearly is a former citizen of the GDR, employs a reversal of perspectives strategy that provides us with a transition to the second question I explored, that of national and cultural identity.

The commenter writes, "Since the east remains an economic wasteland most of the better-educated youth went west and is [sic] now living in places like Hamburg or Munich... But what I see here (in the southwest) is that former typical east-German opinions have taken over a good part of the entire society. A critical view of the USA, a critical view of free market economy, a critical view of the western role in the history of the last 50 years, a 180 degree change of the view about bringing children up at home or the work life of women. Just to mention a few... believe me, we tell our children where we came from, why we could not continue on our own soil, but had to move over 1000 km in order to find work and why that work

only gives so fragile social security, why there's always a war somewhere... Over the last years some long hidden truths came to light, like the real reason of the *Wirtschaftswunder*—brain drain of the young GDR... The East might be almost gone, but the big problem to build a fair and human political system is STILL NOT SOLVED."

Clarke and Wölfel (2013, p. 9) discuss the ongoing conflict over how to define the GDR in the historical memory of Germany.

> Broadly speaking, we can say that the conservative politicians and commentators, as well as activists who were victims of the Party regime, have tended to favour an approach to the *Gedenkstättenkonzeption* [National Memorial Sites Concept] which equates the 'two German dictatorships' in the standard phrase; whereas those on the Left have insisted on the priority of remembering the horrors of National Socialism while taking a wider view of the GDR's history, ... which would encompass the relative normality of life under Party rule, as well as placing the socialist dictatorship in the context of the Cold War.

Question 2: How Do You Think Your Sense of Yourself as a German Has Changed Over the Past Two Decades? Did You Then, in 1990–91, Have Trouble with the Question of Cultural and National Identity? If So, How Have You Resolved This Question?

Recall that with few exceptions, the GDR intelligentsia I met and interviewed in 1990–91 had great emotional and cognitive difficulty answering the question, "What country are you a citizen of?" We can think of their conflict as a struggle to come to terms with three dimensions of German national and cultural identity:

First, they were coping with the various dimensions and layers of psychological reaction associated with their loss of national identity, which included the end of the GDR and their dashed aspirations regarding the creation of a socialist state. Further, this included extending socialism to societies throughout the world and, particularly, seeing socialism replace capitalism in their "rival" German state, the capitalist FRG.

Second, they were attempting to redefine themselves—rethink the answer to the "Who am I?" identity question—in light of the unique situation of their forced incorporation into the FRG, a nation they had been socialized to see as profane, as in atavistic, corrupt, proto-fascist,

economically exploitative, decadent, debauched, historically destined to fail, immoral, or degenerate.

Third, they had to reconcile the fact that the FRG's citizenry was simultaneously alien yet in important respects familiar—if not identical—to them. Indeed, they shared language, history, and a cultural heritage with the West Germans; and possibly two-thirds of "East Germans" had relatives who were "West Germans" (Niethammer 1990, p. 227).

Timothy Garton Ash observes (1990), "[T]he question of German national identity has provoked some of the longest, deepest, and most contorted answers ever given…" The disputes over the right to be representative of true "German-ness" remains with us today, as evidenced above by the *Der Spiegel* article asserting that the GDR never "formally" existed (Brubaker 1992) and, by implication, that a GDR national identity is a negative, perverse anachronism.

For instance, at the time of unification, the FRG regarded all "Germans"—including those from the GDR—as eligible to become citizens of the FRG—the "real Germany"—once they set foot on FRG soil. The question was what criteria qualified someone as German for the FRG? In distilled form, not only history, culture, and language but also—embarrassingly and contortedly so it turned out in the early 1990s—the factor of "German ancestry" or ethnicity was a fourth—or implied—qualifying factor. For East Germans, this was an atavistic and repulsive euphemism reminiscent of the Nazis beliefs that "German-ness" was rooted in "blood and soil" *(Blut und Boden)*.

Accordingly, when I spoke with them at the time of the Turn, many East German intelligentsia pointed to the FRG's definition of who is a German as reflective of its inability to come to terms with its Nazi past. Frequently, they would tell me that Turkish *"Gastarbeiter"* (so-called guest workers who arrived to help rebuild West Germany after WWII) and their children were not allowed to gain FRG citizenship.[21] Meanwhile, they pointed out, anyone who could prove a German ancestry—which smacked of *Blut und Boden* to East Germans—would be granted citizenship by the FRG.

For many of the East German intelligentsia unification was not defined as a reuniting of long-separated family. As noted previously, soon after the Wall fell—and overwhelmingly after the vote for unification—the prospect of unification posed a major confusion regarding national and cultural identity as the hoped-for collective discussion to create a synthesized German national identity did not take place.

Recall that Lilly Dieckmann told me when I first met her, several weeks prior to unification, that she and many of her friends were ambivalent about the celebrations planned for unification day. They did not know whether to join the celebrations or to seclude themselves and mourn the passing of the GDR or to experience both feelings simultaneously.

I visited her on unification day, October 3, 1990. She and her husband lived on *Frankfurter Allee* in the *Friedrichshain* section of what was now—on unification day—the former East Berlin. It was a mild and sunny early fall day and I asked her why, if a large majority of East Germans had voted for unification, there were so many GDR flags flying from apartments as we walked along the streets of her neighborhood. She explained that in East Berlin the support for unification was, in her view, far less than in other parts of the GDR and, most importantly, that there was growing discontent and disbelief with how the terms of unification were being implemented. The main examples she offered was the massive economic upheaval, closing of institutions, rising cost of living, and unemployment then emerging in the former GDR states.

In the aftermath of the Nazi defeat in WWII and the subsequent creation of East Germany by the Soviets and West Germany by the Allies, primarily the United States, both German states sought to develop their version of a new De-Nazified national and cultural German collective identity. Neither state acknowledged the influence of their occupiers on their respective efforts to recreate what each side called the true German cultural and national identity after the Nazis.

A central feature of the GDR and FRG efforts to claim the true German national and cultural identity was—logically enough—to do so by repudiating the "other" German state as an example of a failure to (1) confront the Nazi past and (2) to learn the political and economic lessons for Germany from WWII.

A major dynamic force at work in both German states, therefore, was the attempt to redefine what it meant to be a German by repudiating the Nazi past. This was partially accomplished by ascribing the remnants and vestiges of Nazism to the other German state, be it the FRG from the GDR perspective or the GDR from the FRG perspective. That is, the East German government told its citizens that fascism was a natural outgrowth of capitalism and that many Nazis fled to safe haven in the FRG, while the West German government told its citizens the East Germans had not "De-Nazified" and, moreover, that fascism and communism were in important

respects two sides of a coin, sharing a totalitarian foundation and subsequent authoritarian mentality.

Here is an example from the GDR point of view popular among East German intelligentsia at the time of the Turn. Turkish *Gastarbeiter*, many of whom had lived twenty years or more in the FRG, and their children, who were born in the FRG and learned the history, language, and culture, were denied citizenship on "ethnic" grounds. This was code to the East Germans for a "blood" definition of "German-ness." Meanwhile, so-called ethnic Germans whose ancestors had been living in other nations for generations, even those who spoke no German and lacked knowledge of German culture and traditions, could qualify for citizenship.

This is the larger context that created conflict over the question of national and cultural identity for the GDR intelligentsia I encountered after the Turn and as unification proceeded.

Returning to the 2014 interviews, one GDR intellectual I met with several times in 1990–91 has, after being unemployed for some months in the early 1990s, found a position at one of the scholarly institutes in Berlin. When we met in July 2014, I reminded her of how she several times had told me twenty-four years ago, "I do not want to remain in Germany. This is no longer my country. Even the familiar places of East Berlin feel strange."

"So here you are, still in Germany," I said, as we met near Humboldt University for cake and coffee. "Do you mind if I ask about why you have remained in Germany? It seems to me that this is now okay with you."

She replied, "It is okay. One of the good things about the end of the GDR was the ability for scientists to travel freely to meet with colleagues around the world. As you know, I had some travel opportunities in GDR times; but as you also know, they were few and restricted."

"The way I decided that I was a German and Germany is my home was by spending time in other countries. I came to see that I am a German and I'd miss Germany if I lived in another country. I have had offers of a position in other countries. I declined these offers because I wished to live out my life here."

"You realized you are a German after visiting other countries?" I asked.

"Yes, that is what happened. And I feel this way even though as a former East German I am underpaid and still looked upon by a few in the West with some suspicion or disrespect. I enjoy my work; the books I have published are fulfilling and I think I am at the top of my field. My meetings with other scientists in other nations lets me know this to be true, it is not an idle boast."

"You feel like this is your *Heimat* now?" I asked.

She smiled, "Yes, my country, despite all the things that are not correct."

She added, "I found your fellow Americans naïve and propagandized about what our lives were like here in the GDR."

"I can imagine," I said, "The image of the Iron Curtain where no one was happy, everything was grim and dark. This view of communism was a part of childhood socialization in the United States during the Cold War era."

She went on, "I met one American who was a sympathetic type of person, and she asked me, 'Did you suffer many hardships and deprivations growing up in the GDR?'"

"I told her I much preferred growing up in the GDR to growing up in Ronald Reagan's America."

"How did she react?" I asked.

"She looked shocked and then laughed and said, 'Touché! Please excuse me, I meant no insult. I don't really know anything your about life in East Germany, do I?' Then we had a good conversation."

These interviews began during the World Cup Football (soccer in the United States) finals in Brazil and the topic of the German teams successes came up often. Without exception, these former GDR citizens identified with the successes of the German team.

The question what country are you a citizen of?, that had distressed so many GDR intelligentsia a quarter of a century ago, has been resolved in two basic ways: The first way is to draw upon the portion of socialism that stressed solidarity with all human beings. This is expressed in the statement, "I am an internationalist," or "I am a European," which I heard frequently from those I interviewed in 2014. The second way is to speak of oneself as "a former citizen of the GDR now residing in the *Bundesrepublik*."[22]

These identities are not mutually exclusive. The academic couple that took jobs in the private sector after losing their university positions put it this way, "Of course, we have strong emotional ties to German culture and the locale where we grew up... Formally, we were GDR citizens, and now we are formally *Bundesrepublik* citizens. In our hearts we are internationalists."

They added, "Being simply a 'German' is far too unspecific, because it includes the possibility of terrible crimes" (committed by the Nazis).

Another person, who also was expelled from a university position, gave this reply:

"My identity is the same as before the Turn: I have a commitment to socialist ideals but obviously under radically different conditions in 2014. . . I would like to stress that my parents were GDR citizens, Party members and internationalists. Their commitment to an international perspective of socialism at times got them into trouble with the Party. I developed my political and ideological identity watching my parents' example of how they lived their beliefs without compromise."

"You know, it is important to point out that in my view there has been a failure of West German collective identity to change in response to events and historical developments, especially unification. The chance for a new German identity, along with new institutional forms was at least theoretically possible at the time of the Turn, but the West German mentality was that of the victor who does not learn, does not see a need for change."

An academic who survived in his university setting told me, "It was difficult or impossible then to say I was just a German. How could any East German say this? What did this mean when you had had two German states in competition? To be just a German had to be confusing because it really made no sense after forty years of the GDR and FRG rivalry. I am certain the Turn changed us East Germans a great deal because no one was prepared for the rapid events and subsequent demands of unification; yet the GDR was abolished and we had to make sense of this fact—we had no choice in the matter."

A historian who "survived" the *Wissenschaftsrat* evaluation at his Academy institute and went on to a series of contract appointments at several universities told me, "Frankly, I do not think about my identity. Although I note that I have spent 2/3 of my career in the capitalist social science system and it is drastically different from that of the GDR Academy system. In fact, my 1/3 time in the Academy seems much longer than my 2/3 time in the FRG system. Why? Perhaps because the GDR is not a mere memory for me; it is a past that took place; it is a part of who I am still after all these years."

"The experience of time is very different in the capitalist academic system. As a scholar these past 24 years I have spent time—wasted much time—searching for grants, a new contract, money for 'the next job'. You get a contract and finish up the work for the last contract because you spent so much time looking for this contract you just received. Then you do this over again and begin looking for the next contract. It has been a continual struggle and full of fear for me because I have a family to feed. After working in both systems I can say that the Academy structure—with all its faults—is superior. This way of doing research on contracts is bad for science; you do

what industry wants right now to earn your daily bread. I can retire in two years and I am happy that time is close."

A man who was a doctoral student when I met him in 1990 has built a successful statistical modeling consulting business in Germany. He explained, "In the second half of the nineties as I established my business I realized that Marxism was right about capitalism. Capitalism is based upon exploitation. Still, I knew that the reality of the GDR was bad, even if its original intentions were good."

"I thought many times in the early 1990s about how to view myself in unified Germany. First, I decided that we East Germans had been taken over by the Russians and the West Germans had been taken over by the Americans. Then I asked myself, 'Who are we Germans, really?' I am speaking of both sides; the GDR people were forced to ask this question of who they were. I do not think West Germans asked themselves this question. I concluded there is no real understanding of the German identity without discussing these imposed influences from the Russians and Americans. It troubled me that the West Germans wanted the questions to be only about how we East Germans went astray."

"I learned how to conduct a business in the capitalist way. That's part of who I have become, a kind of capitalist. But I also am active in the peace movement, which comes directly from my GDR experience in being an opponent of war, anti-fascist, opposed to nationalism. I am a believer in the solidarity of all peoples, the pursuit of justice and ending inequality, and preserving the environment."

"The peace groups I am active in hold rallies and marches regularly and we discourage national flags in our marches. We do not prohibit them, rather we talk to those carrying them and say, 'Our efforts are about all nations seeking a just world. Do you really want to carry a flag of any one nation? We believe that doing so diminishes our efforts because it introduces divisions among people that do not belong in the world. If you wish to carry your national flags we will not exclude you, but we want you to know our position.'"

A young academic in her thirties, not originally interviewed in 1990–91, spoke of her identity this way, "I had problems accepting that I was just a 'German.' I have many wonderful memories of growing up in the GDR. My parents loved my brother and me with all their hearts, so I knew this identity issue was not about an unhappy childhood."

"My father woke us up the night the Wall opened. We were youngsters and he wanted to talk about this momentous event straight away because he

knew it would change our lives. It is not the case that he fully understood what would come next, but he loved us so much that just talking to us about it immediately let us know we had his support and concern."

"I resolved part of my identity question by coming to think of myself as a European first, then as a German. . .I am still processing all those events and changes summed up in the concept of the Turn—or *Abwicklung*."

"What, if anything, troubles you the most in your thoughts back to GDR times?" I asked.

She said, "It troubles me a great deal that we had a different way of life in the GDR that is not at all appreciated in the FRG. It is as if it was all bad, but excuse me, please, I grew up in the GDR and it was lovely in many ways."

The historian who found a secure position in West Berlin said, "This issue of identity was a major question around which I had hoped East and West Germans would have had a dialogue to shape a new German identity. However, this was my illusion to think this was possible or would occur. For the East Germans I think the overriding questions were, 'Who are we now that our socialist system has failed? The West Germans were supposed to fail, but we failed, why?'"

"It was difficult to be with West German friends and family immediately after unification. We really were different from one another, yet we were all Germans. Some of my family members were in the FRG. This was disorienting. What was a German? Of course, we had lived for many years in different economic and cultural contexts, but this was only inadequate, intellectualized comfort for the reality of how different family members on either side were in attitudes, outlooks and values. . . The GDR system was the one that was stigmatized, besmirched, considered illegitimate by the winners in the FRG."

"Here's a short story about how East Germans were stereotyped by many West Germans. During a sea cruise my wife and I had several conversations with a West German couple. At some point it came out that we were former GDR citizens and the West German wife was astounded. 'You are from the GDR?' she exclaimed. 'But you are so sophisticated and knowledgeable! How did you manage that living in the GDR?'"

Another historian I interviewed in 1991 and again in 2014 had this to say about identity.

"Because of our age at the time, my generation's[23] collective identity has been less affected by the Turn than those who were not adults in 1990; and the next generation promises to be almost fully in the capitalist mode."

"Right after the Wall opened I was fortunate to have supportive colleagues in West Berlin who took steps to promote the scholarship of my colleagues and me. They organized a conference soon after the Wall opened and invited some of us to West Berlin to share our work with them. This was gracious and very helpful to me later when I attained an academic appointment after the Academy was closed."

"My identity as a scholar and as an East German was affected, of course when the GDR ceased to exist. At a time like that—when a state ceases to exist almost literally overnight—you must ask yourself, 'What is right and what is wrong?' Everything was turned upside down and you constantly ask yourself these 'Who am I? What has happened?' questions."

"But I was fortunate to have made contact with these West German colleagues who helped me to continue on as an historian. I had approximately 100 co-workers at my Academy institute and only a few of us secured new positions in our field. The *Wissenschaftsrat* gave negative assessments to most of us. It was quite humiliating for my colleagues. I know many depressing stories of their attempts to find new employment or to carry on their work without institutional support—just for the love of doing research. Their identities as scholars were badly damaged or destroyed and they had to make immediate decisions about earning money to literally survive in the capitalist economy."

"I, for instance, was asked by the *Wissenschaftsrat* to sign a document stating that I had not had contact with the Stasi; of course, this was a trick question."

"How was it a trick?" I asked, "Was it because everyone had at some point some kind of contact with someone who was working or informing for the Stasi?"

She replied, "If you signed they would disqualify you from future employment on the grounds that you were with the Stasi. If you did not sign they would say, 'You must sign or else you are disqualified for not signing.' And if you said 'No, I was not a Stasi informer,' they could always produce some evidence that you had had contact with the Stasi. They dismissed me from the Academy and told me they had placed a letter in my file stating that I was associated with the Stasi. I thought I was finished as an academic."

"When the possibility to become a university professor came I feared this letter would be in my file, but I went through with the application process because I had no other job options. I learned that the letter was not part of my file reviewed at the university, and, therefore, I became a professor. I do

not know why that letter, which would have disqualified me from the professorship, was not in my file or had been removed from the file."

Obviously, identity becomes problematic for individuals when the groups and institutions to which they belong undergo discontinuous social change or cease to exist. The unique sociological context of rapid upheavals in a society's institutional configuration—or the termination of those institutions—virtually demand that individuals examine their worldview and deepest held values and beliefs to reestablish a coherent, consistent, and self-and-other convincing answers to two primal questions:

1. What is happening to my (social) world?
2. Who am I (who can I be?) given my answer to the above question?

I speculate that the potential identity choices that emerged for East German intelligentsia after the Turn and subsequent unification were:

1. An abandonment or even repudiation of an identity that "worked" in the past sociopolitical context in favor of one that "adapts" to the new social context.

   (a) This is a choice none of those I interviewed in 2014 chose.

2. An inability to makes sense of oneself—an onset of permanent Durkheimian anomie and "identity crisis"—and, it follows, to find a place in the new social context.

   (a) The sub-patterns here range from the extreme of suicide to, as one respondent told me in 2014, "My mother cannot discuss the Turn; she sits at home and is unable to come to terms with unification."

3. Acceptance of the economic demands of the new system capitalist without abandoning the old values, beliefs, and identity. In essence, maintaining a GDR identity as a reserve or even hidden aspect of oneself. Those I interviewed in 2014 chose this option.

This brings us to consideration of Question 3.

Question 3: How Often Do You Think Back to GDR Times?

This question was asked as a complement to the identity question to establish whether former East German intelligentsia frequently thought about their lives in their defunct nation. I assumed in asking this question that frequent reflection on their GDR lives was a normal response if they actually maintained integral aspects of the GDR national identity based in communal values and socialist principles.

The responses from them indicate that they all frequently reflect back on GDR times, typically several times a week. Keep in mind that except for the one young academic I interviewed, who was a child in 1989, the twenty-seven other intelligentsia I interviewed are at least fifty-five years old. This suggests, as the historian above noted, that Karl Mannheim's (1952) argument that age cohorts that share historical experiences as they reach adulthood tend to develop a collective identity, especially if those shaping events are defined as monumental experiences by their generation.

As for the content of those thoughts about their lives in the GDR, they without prompting sought to separate themselves from the phenomenon of *"Ostalgie."* This is an opprobrious epithet, referring to a politically neutered and childlike nostalgia for life under the socialist system in the GDR that—supposedly—arose as a collective response to the inability of East Germans to "Westernize," that is, "grow up" and adapt to a capitalist way of life where personal responsibility—as opposed to overreliance on government to provide a living—is a hallmark character trait.

The consensus among those I interviewed was that *Ostalgie* was understandable as a psychological reaction that began to set in after the disappointments the East German people began to experience following the harsh economic and social policies implemented by the FRG after the unification vote in March 1990.

Not one East German I talked with in 2014 spoke of wishing the GDR could return, although I chose to not directly ask this question because I had decided in preparing for these interviews that this question could be misunderstood as insulting, given the negative connotations in Germany about *Ostalgie*.

However, I suspect that four of those I interviewed might have answered, "Yes," to this question. These four were markedly complimentary in their praise for the GDR compared to what they have experienced in the FRG. For example, two informed me that they were from "non-middle class"

families and that social class of origin was not a factor in the GDR. In contrast, they felt that had they been born in the FRG, their education and career advancement into the intelligentsia would not have been possible, not merely difficult but also impossible, they stressed. Also, they offered a recitation of the many benefits the GDR socialist state provided to its citizens as opposed to the harshness of the capitalist FGR.

Aside from them, the others expressed no wish for a return to the GDR. The Marxist economist dismissed from the Academy told me, "I do not mourn for the GDR. It had many problems it could not solve." And several others made a point of informing me that there frequent thoughts about GDR times were "not nostalgic" in nature, if that would mean a longing to return to what the GDR had become by 1989.

The historian who has had a series of university contract appointments told me, "These are not idle memories I think back on. The GDR is a major part of my life experience."

They found this question complicated, probably because it is both too vague and too emotionally charged. I did not press them and instead turned to asking them the next question, which is, upon reflection, a specific one.

Question 4: Advantages and Disadvantages of Living in Capitalist FGR

The one advantage cited by all but six of these intelligentsia was the freedom to travel to other countries. The historian who took a position in a West Berlin institute said, "The discussions of Marxism are freer and more open in my new institute than was possible in the GDR."

A sociologist informed me, "My children have had an easier life in the West German capitalist system and in some respects I am less—but only less!—fearful about criticism of my sociological research, which focuses on social inequality."

What is salient about this question is how few things—travel for many and a freer academic atmosphere for a few—were mentioned as advantages of living in unified Germany. In fact, the sociologist who said she was less fearful and found most of her West German colleagues "wonderful and supportive," then added a set of qualifications as she pondered the question.

"The organization of scholarly research on a contract basis is detrimental. You are always searching for the next pot of money and this interferes with the production of quality research in several respects, especially because of

the great job uncertainty this produces. I have seen many of my East German colleagues eliminated in the slow attrition process of contract renewal. There were approximately 230 East German colleagues who came here—to this university—in 1992. Now there are approximately 30 that remain; most of the rest have been slowly let go over the years—this attrition was not mainly due to retirement or finding other jobs. This created a context in which I felt discouraged in subtle ways from teaching certain politically sensitive topics. I can say that the path to a good research career in the West German system is very narrow."

The historian whose small group was left intact told me the opportunity to travel is much appreciated and he has met many kind and gracious West German colleagues.

"I would dream of visiting the United States when I lived in the GDR, thinking that this was only a wish never to be fulfilled. We were to some extent prisoners in the GDR and this inability to travel made this fact real to us. As a boy of 10 years I helped build the Wall. Then it did not mean prison or enclosure; it meant an opportunity to give socialism a real chance to succeed."

"Now, as I think back on these questions, I must say that after living under capitalism for these past 24 years I am more critical of the capitalist system than I was during GDR times. It is also strange in a sense that I am in the present less critical of the GDR than when I live under it. Why? Because I now have capitalism to compare it to."

One respondent critiqued this question as posing a false dichotomy. He reasoned that the "special experience" of having come of age in the GDR and then experiencing the unprecedented series of events associated with the end of the GDR and unification cannot be thought of in terms of what was advantageous about the GDR and is disadvantageous about unified Germany. He offered this example of how this question struck him, emphasizing that he remains a socialist: "You see, some of our—meaning my fellow East German colleagues and myself—biggest criticism came from West German leftists."

I asked him, "Because you did not follow or adopt their views closely enough?"

He answered, "Not exactly. We here in the GDR sought a third way, taking the few good aspects of capitalism and integrating them into a socialist framework. We actually saw some positive aspects for a new Germany to glean from capitalism. The reaction of West German leftists was to criticize us East Germans harshly because they, the West German

leftists, saw no useful elements in capitalism. They gave capitalism a total rejection, whereas our view was nuanced, I think, because we sought a third way. In fact, we sometimes received more understanding and respect for our views from conservative West Germans."

Four people explicitly listed these advantages of the GDR: an excellent education system, gender equality, antifascism, committed to peace, and solidarity of all peoples in all nations. I did not press them on advantages to living under capitalism because I was certain that they saw none.

One of these four, who felt forced into retirement, told me, "Well, I do not know if this is an advantage but, I am happy that no one placed me in a concentration camp or threatened my life. As you know, there was no violence involved in the re-unification of Germany. Also, I was given a pension to live on. Although there was much to regret about the end of the GDR and how it was taken over, I feel an obligation to mention these positive factors."

The man who became a statistical modeling consultant took this opportunity to focus on what he sees as a crucial "Meet the new boss, same as the old boss" similarity regarding social control in both the GDR and FRG.

"Both the GDR and the FRG systems serve elite political and ideological interests. You did not challenge the dominant paradigm in the GDR, and you do not do so in the *Bundesrepublik*. I have found this to be true even in the conduct of my business here in the western capitalist system; and, of course, it is so in the public sphere. The techniques of assuring that one follows the dominant paradigm in the GDR and now in the FRG are different; but the intent is the same: to produce conformity of thought and control of the people."

Question 5: Could Unification Have Been Handled Differently?

All twenty-eight former citizens of the GDR I spoke with in July 2014 felt that unification had been executed in haste that gave rise to multiple pernicious outcomes. I have already noted that the overwhelming majority of them saw this haste as unnecessary, probably intentional as opposed to a political necessity, and an insult—and invalidation—to the accomplishments and potential contributions of the GDR and its people to united Germany.

Their thoughts on this question are further divisible into, on the one hand, the central alternative that might have been pursued and, on the other hand, the empirical facts of what took place.

Just as in 1990, in 2014 a majority continued to speak of how beneficial it would have been if there had been a gradual process leading to unification and the creation of a new German national/cultural identity and state based upon a synthesis of the two German nations. The obvious point to make here is that this was an East German intellectual class conception of the situation, a view they have both held onto over the years and acknowledge as an impossible dream or illusion.

The former university professors who answered jointly observed, "If you assess the way in which today's capitalist governments make political decisions and the chaos these decisions create in the world because they are made on the basis of current interests and not in terms of long-term systems analysis, then you can assume that the haste of unification could not otherwise have been conducted."

Another gave this explanation: "There was no political space for rational assessment or dialog about the strengths of the two German states. Without question the West German goal was to abolish as quickly as possible the GDR and its cultural system. Under these conditions there was no possibility of forming a real democracy. The GDR had no source of power with which to bargain with the FRG. The Soviets' power was in decline in 1989 and Gorbachev was treating with the West about the post-Cold War era. One can speculate if another way was possible, but this is what happened; it made sense given the conditions that existed at that moment of history."

A historian elliptically noted, "There was no alternative to the allure of the power, consumer goods, and money of the West Germans."

Specifically, the academic who survived at Humboldt University told me, "Yes, my university could have done it differently. A slower process of evaluation of faculty was possible, but after the March 1990 election it was full speed ahead. And recall that the GDR government simply collapsed in 1990, there was a political vacuum."

The sociologist who has survived the Academy evaluation process and several contract renewals said, "I don't know if it could have been done differently. We had so many discussions in that time to no avail. Clearly, finding a third way was an illusion as we quickly came to see our situation as colonization or annexation. What did not fit in the West German mold was simply cast aside as useless, uncouth, backward. We [East Germans] had no voice, no power, and few options if you were negatively evaluated by the

Rat and wished to stay in Germany. I was very fortunate to survive in my career. We faced a double transformation or transition: from socialism to capitalism and from one German culture to another."

She continued, "Finally let me note that the situation is much worse for the common people now—in 2014—than in 1990. We now live under a neoliberal form of capitalism with fewer social supports and more and deepening socioeconomic inequality."

Two professors who were dismissed from their positions and took early retirement put it this way: "The contributions of the GDR must be acknowledged—even after all these years—for a real unification [of the German people] to occur. What took place was merely an opportunity for a crash course in capitalism; the West Germans saw only a new colony for profit-making. We [East Germans] have made contributions in science, childcare, education, gender relations, and support for working mothers. The West Germans have adopted several of our ideas and policies without acknowledging them as East German in origin. The GDR had no real poverty; it was anti-war, anti-fascism, and pursued egalitarianism. For us, a part of German history remains grossly distorted or ignored."

Finally, a speculative note about those not interviewed is in order. Several of those I interviewed told me of fellow former citizens of the GDR who no longer want to speak of the Turn and unification. I had three people I contacted by letter who did not reply to my request for an interview. Also, one person who agreed to be interviewed and seemed eager to do so in her emails to me failed to show up for our appointment in Berlin. I sent several follow-up emails to her asking if there was some mistake in my understanding of our meeting time. I never received a reply. Also, one of those I interviewed said that she had tried to get a family member to meet with me but the family member declined, saying in essence, that there was no use in reliving those painful times.

Notes

1. To preserve their anonymity, I do not give pseudonyms to any of those interviewed in July 2014. Further, only eight of those I re-interviewed at this time were presented in Part I of this book. Recall, that I conducted 106 interviews in 1990–91 and presented only 40 of these interviews in Part I.
2. This number is difficult to pin down because I am including many of those I spoke with casually during coffee breaks at the Academy

English classes or one of the many events I attended in the former East Germany during 1990 and 1991.

3. In the 1980s and early 1990s, what some label neoliberalism—or Thatcherism and Reaganism—became prominent, culminating rhetorically in Margaret Thatcher's nostrum that markets solve all problems, therefore, TINA, There Is No Alternative to market forces. One of Reagan's famous slogans was "government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem." The book, *The End of History and the Last Man,* by Francis Fukuyama was published in 1992, but an essay by that title was published in 1989 and cited frequently as an explanation for the fall of communism and, crudely put here, Thatcher's claim about TINA.
4. One is a university professor of chemistry, and he was not in the original list of interviewees. I found an article about him in which he, in numerous respects, negatively rated the GDR science system in comparison to that of the current Germany. He agreed to an interview only if I would allow him to approve of everything I wrote about the interview. He informed me that he did not want his views placed in an erroneous or distorted context. My reply to him pointed out that: (1) I was not a journalist, (2) I gave all my interviewees anonymity and would not quote him by name, and (3) it is not customary for social scientists to grant such a request because it could interfere with my ability to analyze his interview as data. He subsequently refused to be interviewed. The second scientist contacted was a physicist I did not interview in 1990. I learned of his views by reading an essay about him. I explained to him in an email that I had interviewed many GDR scientists in 1991.When he requested more information, I sent him a copy of the questionnaire I would use in our 2014 interview. Thereafter, I did not hear from him.
5. One of them was recuperating from surgery in July 2014, so they asked if they could respond to my questions in writing. I agreed and the quotations from them here are from their jointly written replies.
6. This is a well-known academic and his name came up as an example in another interview. As my respondent explained the intricacies of the fate of those at the Academy, she said, "Take professor ******* for example. Did the West Germans tell him straight out: 'We will never hire you.' No, they told him, 'You are overqualified.'" I reacted, "Overqualified? In other situations that would be called

brilliance and considered a reason to hire a scholar." She smiled and said, "Well, you asked about subtleties and the complications."

7. Four of those I interviewed remarked that the workers suffered more than did the intelligentsia.
8. "The East German pedestrian traffic light symbols, or, 'ampel men' are Berlin born and bred. They came into being on October 13th 1961 when, in response to the growing threat of road traffic accidents, the traffic psychologist, Karl Peglau, introduced the first pedestrian signals to the GDR capital" Striegler (nd). The Ampelmann charm stands in sharp contrast to the drabness of West Berlin pedestrian signals. One can now see Ampelmann signals all throughout Berlin, not just the former East Berlin.
9. I have encountered this cynical reaction from a few West German academics when I tried to explain to them that GDR intelligentsia identity incorporated socialist values of community, solidarity, social justice, pro-peace, and antifascism.
10. A former East German, who is now a faculty member in West Germany, told me about her experience with one of the integration programs. "These programs were intended to help GDR scholars adapt to the West German system by doing work with West German academics. It is difficult to make a summary statement about these programs, but safe to note that what I saw was far from ideal. In my experience, these GDR scholars were not students, not faculty, not really colleagues—so who were they and what work could be assigned to them? Their pay was low and some of them just got lost with no real learning taking place."
11. I use apprentice for want of a better term. The status of those in this program was typically low and their role unclear. One West German professor I spoke to about this told me, "We did not really know what do with them. We had our students to train and we did not want to treat GDR academics like students or, on the other hand, as full peers. Perhaps this program was a good idea, but it functioned poorly."
12. "The Gauck Commission" *(Gauck-Behörde)* on Stasi files is of note here, as it was illegal for someone deemed to have collaborated with the Stasi—a broad range of activities could potentially fall under this rubric—to hold a job funded by the German government.
13. The GDR lacked a business infrastructure and, therefore, such institutionalized services as private doctors and insurance

companies. People with good language, rhetorical, logic, and mathematics skills found employment in business settings throughout the former GDR.

14. "Dresden Technical University and its branches had 9,000 employees in 1990, only 3,400 of whom could stay" Wilke (2007).
15. The struggle for control of Humboldt University is complicated and I am not competent to do it justice. I feel safe in noting, however, that the struggle for control of Humboldt illustrates how the East Germans attempted to reconstitute and reform it from a non-existent political power base. Briefly, a new rector of the university was elected in 1990 and he sought to reform the university from within. He was, naturally, an East German who had no support among West Berliners. (The West Berlin *Senat* controlled Humboldt.)
16. Integrity committees were formed at East German universities as part of the "vetting process" that would reduce most university faculties by 60 percent or more as the unification process unfolded.
17. "We solved regional conflicts, we achieved German reunification, the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Eastern Europe, nuclear disarmament" (Gorbachev 2015).
18. David Clarke and Ute Wölfel (2013, p. 10) have edited a collection of essays dealing with, "coming to terms with the GDR past [which] has been the subject of consistent and intense public debate since unification." They title the section of their introductory essay on this topic, "Dictatorship, socialist paradise, or just 'normality'? Public debates about the GDR past."
19. The literature from GDR intellectuals on defining what the GDR was is extensive. A few examples are Engler (1999), Klein (2000), Land (1998).
20. My thanks go to Professor Herbert Hörz for his elucidation of this two nations concept in a private correspondence (2015).
21. Under the present system, most children of foreign parents, who were born in Germany on or after January 1, 2000, automatically receive German citizenship. Children can hold both the German citizenship and the citizenship of their parents. "In general, German citizenship is not established through birth on German territory but by descent from a German legal mother and/or a German legal father" (Germany.info) (nd).
22. Many East Germans say *Bundesrepublik* rather than FRG.
23. See Karl Mannheim (1952).

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Part III: Theoretical Perspectives

Thus far, this ethnography has emphasized the emic perspective, which describes the insiders', the subjects', or cultural members' worldview. An emic account calls for elucidation of the logic and coherence of insiders' shared attitudes, values, beliefs, understandings, meanings, and explanations of events.

Occasionally in the preceding pages, I have paused to offer theoretical—or etic, "outsider"—observations and interpretations. In this final portion of the book, we can gain insight by interpreting East German intelligentsia through three social science perspectives to examine what happened to them as the GDR came to an end.

Accordingly, the following perspectives are considered.

1. Albert Hirschman's model of Exit, Voice, and Loyalty.
2. Pierre Bourdieu on the analysis of Field and Habitus.
3. Erving Goffman on the topic of Stigma.

The Political/Economic Context of 1989: Neoliberalism Ascending, Socialism in Ruins

Before turning to each theoretical perspective, it is necessary to adumbrate the Western world's political/economic climate as the GDR entered its dénouement. Francis Fukuyama (Fukuyama 1989), then a US State Department analyst, proffered the "End of History" thesis in an article in the journal

D. Bednarz, *East German Intellectuals and the Unification of Germany*,
DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-42951-9_4

The National Interest. Approximately three years later, after widespread positive approbation for his thesis, he released a book with a portentous title, *The End of History and the Last Man Standing* (Fukuyama 1992). He argued that communism had been empirically tested in the Soviet Union and other nations and had failed. He concluded from the "failure of communism" that capitalism, epitomized by Western liberal democracy, was the genuine "endpoint of history." This means that all social problems and economic issues henceforth were to be addressed through the political and economic institutions of capitalist liberal democracy.

Meanwhile, Margaret Thatcher was using the more politically blunt slogan, "There Is No Alternative"—TINA—to proclaim that the free market version of laissez-faire capitalism (later to be known as neoliberalism) had indeed won the Cold War and brought modern society to its ideological epitome.

As Fukuyama's essay was published that spring of 1989, the GDR was entering its final crisis period. It seemed logical by the end of 1989—after the collapse of several Warsaw Pact governments—to argue that Fukuyama was correct that there would be no further conflict over political or economic ideology in the modern world. In short order, conventional wisdom in the West proclaimed Marxism bankrupt and dead, and capitalism the only viable path to a democratic, peaceful, and prosperous world. (Recall that a student in Lilly's class asked me to discuss the End of History thesis with the class.)

Fukuyama later modified this position[1] as geopolitical events of the 1990s and 2000s produced strident criticism of his thesis. For instance, in a 2014 essay in *The Atlantic* Stanley and Lee (2014) argue, "Today, it's hard to imagine Fukuyama being more wrong" about his thesis.

For a specific example concerning Germany,[2] economist Billy Mitchell (2015) comments,

"More recent data shows that Germany is not even working very well in terms of advancing the prosperity of its own citizens. A recent report (in German)—*'Der Paritätische Gesamtverband (HG 2014): Die zerklüftete Republik'* (The Fragmented Republic)—shows that poverty rates are rising in Germany and there is now a dislocation emerging between unemployment and growth and poverty rates. The reason is clear—too much neo-liberal labour market deregulation and ridiculously tight fiscal policy. Both failing policies that Germany continues to insist should be adopted throughout Europe. It would do the other Member

States a service if they banded together and rejected the 'German poverty model.'"

Concurrent to the embracing reception of the argument for history's end, a voice of caution came from philosopher John Gray, who asserted the conclusion about capitalism as the only viable political/economic framework for the modern world rested upon ethnocentrism, shallow historical analysis, and wrongheaded emotional folly generated by hubris over the collapse of Eastern European communism. His book title expresses his critique: *False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism* (Gray 1998). Grey argues that what appeared in 1989 and into the 1990s as the triumph of neoliberalism over communism, typified by so-called globalization of free trade and free markets, was in fact a complex prelude to the collapse of not only the Soviet Union's experiment with communism but also this neoliberal free market form of capitalism.

With the vantage point of twenty-five years, it is evident that Gray's False Dawn thesis has provided a far more accurate forecast than Fukuyama's End of History, and this is relevant to how the GDR intelligentsia have adapted to living in a neoliberal Germany.[3] Parenthetically, the comments of doctor Dieter Schmidt at the opening of this ethnography, made in mid-October 1990, that democracy in the West was not really democracy, are now shared by a majority of Germans (RT News 2015).

With this laconic outline of the geopolitical and socioeconomic context at the time of the end of the GDR—which is strikingly different from the one of 2014—we begin by examining the GDR through the lens offered by Albert O. Hirschman, who in 1970 published his parsimonious and profoundly influential book, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Response to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States.*

Hirschman (1993, p. 173) viewed "the events in 1989–90 in East Germany" as a theoretically intriguing interaction of emigration, exercising the exit option, and protest, an exercise of the voice option. This gave him a unique opportunity to see how well his exit, voice, and loyalty model could explain the empirical facts of the East German case.

It is important to point out that Hirschman made scant conceptual use of the loyalty option (Gerken 2013) throughout his career, and this oversight is especially relevant in the case of GDR intellectuals' reactions to the Turn. If one would take the loyalty option seriously in this instance of East Germany, one would ask, Loyalty to what? German culture and history? The idea of the GDR? The Party? Communism?

In similar fashion, Torpey (1995, Chap. 4) discusses exit and voice, and gives short shrift to Hirschman's concept of loyalty among GDR intelligentsia as East Germany came to an end.

For the purposes of this ethnography, the question to ask is "How does Hirschman's model —which he modified in light of the East German case— explain the options open to GDR intelligentsia as the Turn and unification unfolded?"

Here is Hirschman's (1993, p. 174) introduction to his study of the East German case:

> Exit and voice were defined in my book as two contrasting responses of consumers or members of organizations to what they sense as deterioration in the quality of the goods they buy or the services and benefits they receive. Exit is the act of simply leaving, generally because a better good or service or benefit is believed to be provided by another firm or organization. Indirectly and unintentionally exit can cause the deteriorating organization to improve its performance. Voice is the act of complaining or of organizing to complain or to protest, with the intent of achieving directly a recuperation of the quality that has been impaired. Much of my book and of my subsequent writings on this subject dealt with the conditions under which exit or voice or both are activated.
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> . . .
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> A recurring theme of my 1970 book was the assertion that there is no pre-established harmony between exit and voice, that, to the contrary, they often work at cross-purposes and tend to undermine each other, in particular with exit undermining voice. Easy availability of exit was shown to be inimical to voice, for in comparison with exit, voice is costly in terms of effort and time. Moreover, to be effective voice often requires group action and is thus subject to all the well-known difficulties of organization, representation, and free riding. By contrast, exit, when available, does not require any coordination with others. Hence one of my principal points: "The presence of the exit alternative can . . . atrophy the development of the art of voice." (5)

Hirschman (1993, p. 175) sketches his parsimonious "hydraulic" model: "organizational or societal deterioration generates the pressure of discontent, which will be channeled into voice or exit." He continues, "the more pressure escapes through exit, the less is available to foment voice." Based upon the East German case, he acknowledges that this model proved too simplistic and lacking in nuance to describe what occurred there in 1989. Hirschman (1993, p. 176) explains,

> What happens here [speaking in light of the events in the GDR during 1989] is that the newly won right to exit actually changes the human agents involved. Being allowed more choice they become more aware of and more desirous to explore the whole range of choices at their disposal. Once men and women have won the right to move about as they please, they may well start behaving in general as adult[s] and hence as vocal members of their community.

He stresses that in contrast to other Warsaw Pact nations, such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, the people of East Germany could, until August of 1961 freely exit the GDR for the FRG. In the FRG, they would be welcomed as repatriated full "German citizens." Therefore, Hirschman (1993, p. 177) argues, "From the very day of its founding, the stability of the German Democratic Republic was undermined by its coexistence with the Federal Republic." As noted earlier, until the Wall was erected, any "German" living in the GDR who was unhappy, easily could become a citizen of the other German nation, the FRG, simply by setting foot there.

This exit option existed throughout the 1950s and into 1961, when the Wall was constructed. Hirschman (1993, p. 177) likens this exercise of the exit option to "a life-threatening 'hemorrhage' that had to be stopped" by the GDR government/Socialist Party. He suggests that, "The building of the Berlin Wall in 1961 was intended to eliminate the exit option." Incidentally, I note there is evidence to make the case that this suppressing of the exit option—while not false—is an incomplete account of why the Berlin Wall was built. There were as well economic reasons to "keep capitalism out" so as to give socialism a chance to succeed.[4]

Omitting Hirschman's account of how over the years of its existence the GDR sought to control the exit and voice options, we can go on to his description of how exercise of the exit and voice options proliferated in 1989 among East Germans—notably not, however, among intellectuals tied to major institutions, for example, the Academy, universities, arts and media:

> The inability of the GDR, starting in the spring 1989, to prevent a large-scale flight of its citizens to West Germany, via Hungary, Poland, or Czechoslovakia, signaled a novel, serious, and general decline in state authority. It was thus taken to imply a similar decline in the ability and readiness to repress voice—with the result that citizens started to demonstrate against the regime for the first time since June 1953. Precisely because the East German regime had made the repression of exit into the touchstone of its authority, its sudden incapacity to enforce its writ in this area meant a huge loss of face that emboldened people to other kinds of transgression (Hirschman 1993, p. 178).

After the March 1990 election, however, which expressed the will of the majority of the population of East Germany for unification with the FRG, the exit option was available only in a radically different form: it had to be an exit from unified Germany. The voice option—combined with the loyalty option Hirschman (regrettably) gives no consideration—to reform the GDR had vanished almost as suddenly as it had appeared. In this regard, Hirschman (1993, p. 179) points out that prior to the March election, "Attempts to stay the course [not unite quickly with the FRG] were made, notably by the famous November 26 appeal, *Fur unser Land* [Wolf 1989] (for our country), which was drafted by [author] Christa Wolf and signed by a group of GDR writers and professionals that included several well-known dissidents... It argued for the maintenance of a reformed but socialist and 'humanist' GDR—an expression of loyalty—and it proved totally ineffectual."

Here we have revealed—something Hirschman does not explicitly take note of—the chasm in feelings of loyalty separating East German intelligentsia from the remainder of the GDR's citizens. The intelligentsia exhibited loyalty to socialism and their idealized vision of what the GDR still might become by organizing roundtables to consider unification as a gradual, multi-year undertaking. Meanwhile, as noted, the vast majority of the citizens of the GDR favored immediate unification with the FRG, which meant "exiting" the GDR, and socialism. Put differently, after the social-psychological finality and legal formality of the March election, no former GDR citizen could exit back to the GDR or use their voice to attempt to politically reconstitute it; these options were eliminated. The possibility for the massive use of loyalty and voice to reform the GDR—Christa Wolf's plea to at least Germans—was now defunct.

Briefly stated, voice was transformed, tamed, and confined to political parties constituted as legitimate within the FRG. Most importantly, however, in Hirschman's language, the intelligentsia of East Germany saw the loss of loyalty—again, to build a truly reformed new Germany—as the major consequence of the March vote.

Indeed, loyalty to the idea of a reformed GDR became grounds for stigmatizing East Germans as unable or unwilling to accept the economic, political, and social realities of the failure of communism and triumph of capitalism.

In summary, after March 1990, loyalty to the GDR was negatively sanctioned—loyalty to the idea of a reformed GDR became revanchist disloyalty to unified Germany. Meanwhile, the use of voice was delegated

to East German politicians who reconstituted themselves into parties that could legally function in unified Germany. It is important to stress this meant the finality of the end of any hope for building a new Germany created from a synthesis of the achievements of the GDR and FRG.

Recalling the end of history *Zeitgeist* of 1989, the widespread hope of GDR intelligentsia that such a "third way" synthesis, combining the best features of two nations, was simultaneously incomprehensible and presumptuous to West German politicians—and in all probability the vast majority of all West Germans. Nevertheless, loyalty to the ideas of (1) reforming the GDR and (2) third-way socialism was the only route by which East German intellectuals—as a class—could claim a legitimate right to contribute to unified Germany. And for almost all of them, the notion of loyalty to the abstract concept of "Germany" could not be translated into loyalty to the FRG and the simultaneous abandonment or repudiation of their GDR national identity.

The West Germans were dictating terms of surrender, not just at the universities and the Academy but also throughout the GDR. Furthermore, the fact that one-third of those at the Academy would be offered new positions created collective feelings of fear, anger, disorientation, discouragement, powerlessness, and, above all, individualized "save yourself" isolation that excluded the possibility of collective action through voice.

At this point, Hirschman's exit, voice, and loyalty framework informs us that GDR intelligentsia were left with only the potential of voice as expressed through voluntary organizations—such as peace and justice movements—or political parties. As for exercising the exit option, it meant the solitary, individual action of emigrating from unified Germany.

This leads to consideration of the Turn and unification from the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu. In surveying his approach to sociology, it is important to bear in mind two extra-theoretical observations: First, Bourdieu was an optimist by virtue of his deep pessimism about the potential for virtuous conduct by humans while maintaining—in contradiction, as optimists frequently do—that the sociologist's mission is to understand, explicate and, in the role of activist citizen, work to overcome systems of cultural, political, and economic domination that in the modern world socialize and channel people to be either the victims or perpetrators of exploitation, domination, and oppression.[5] He was, for example, a relentless critic of neoliberalism as a cultural expression of exploitation and domination (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2001); and he developed the concept of misrecognition in part to explain neoliberalism's disguises and subterfuges. He also sought to

indicate how individuals are capable of becoming "reflexive" so as to overcome the power of misrecognition and the symbolic violence systems of domination cybernetically perpetuate. The second observation is that his sociology is easily either (1) mischaracterized as new bottles for old wine or (2) applied as a "cookie cutter" model of social research.

In my view, we should consider his contributions as conceptual a labyrinth with which to explore the exercise of power in society.

At its core, Bourdieu's sociological mission (1991) is to explain the structure and workings of power relationships in social collectives. Always insisting that theory and research be unified, while reproaching armchair theorizing, he expanded the concept of capital from its traditional Marxist denotation of the source of power that comes from economic wealth—or the possession of property—to include subdivisions into its symbolic forms. To complement this approach to capital, he fashioned the central concepts of the habitus, the field, and symbolic violence. These concepts are focused upon here in our consideration of the East German intelligentsia.

He has also introduced the complementary concepts of distinction, taste, and the previously mentioned misrecognition to elucidate his overarching theory of cultural hegemony and class conflict. Bear in mind that other categories of distinction and domination, such as gender, age, nationality, and ethnicity, need not be excluded or subsumed under class in using his analysis (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992).

It is helpful to elaborate two of Bourdieu's central concepts, the field and the habitus, especially as the habitus is found by some sociologists to be trite, ambiguous, or incoherent.

When discussing the field and habitus, note that Bourdieu developed his sociological perspective to overcome dualistic explanations of human action and social structure. Michael Burawoy (2012, p. 189) comments, "Bourdieu is always seeking to transcend antinomies, subject and object, micro and macro, voluntarism and determinism," to which we can add structural determinism and human agency.

Bourdieu sees the field as a web of social relations often characterized with the metaphor of an athletic contest, where each player—social agent is one of his preferred terms of description for individuals—occupies a specific location relative to others in the field. Players routinely—albeit not always earnestly—follow "the rules of the game"[6] as they compete for various forms of capital and the power that accompanies the acquisition of capital. Of course, this metaphor is somewhat distorting because in the social empirical world frequently we will find several aspirants in competition for

one exclusive position in the field, as in the case of members vying for promotion to a prized position that has become available in their organization. Also, it is common for players to be in overt or covert conflict, and also to cooperate or form coalitions in the struggle for "location" and scarce forms of capital within a field. These struggles lead the field's participants to ignore, disobey, strategically utilize, or reinterpret the rules to their advantage. Here are a few mundane examples: the struggle for control of a corporate board, a professional association, or an academic department; or political disagreements among legislators over social policy.

Bourdieu cautions his readers to imagine society not as one field but as an integrated configuration of fields—politics, education, law, the arts are common examples—set within a larger "field of power"—colloquially, a society, government, or culture—where agents exercise their power by spending capital so as to simultaneously accumulate more power and capital. This is accomplished by making "distinctions" of "taste" that are defined, put into practice, and enforced by those with the most capital—typically symbolic capital used in concert with economic capital—in the field. (These distinctions are enforced through misrecognition and the use of symbolic violence, which is discussed below.)

Lower-ranking agents in the field, those with relatively low amounts of capital, ordinarily "misrecognize" their domination and exploitation as matters of personal inadequacy or just desert; if they do misrecognize their situation, they accept domination. Thus, by "misrecognizing" their situation, they participate in culturally legitimizing and justifying their deficiencies of "distinction" and "taste" and, therefore, accept their possession of less capital and power than dominant players as the natural state of affairs. For example, high-capital agents employ symbolic violence—disparaging, demeaning, stigmatizing, and so on, characterizations and definitions of "distinction" and "taste"—to control and maintain advantage over low-capital players. This process also serves to stabilize the field's rules and criteria of access to capital as normal and fair as opposed to socially constructed, arbitrary, and invidious. That is, to Bourdieu "distinction" and "taste" are not objective criteria but social constructions of reality that serve to stabilize the rules of the field—in other words, to ensure that all members agree on an accepted definition of the situation/social construction of reality so as to validate all positions and power relationships within the hierarchy of the field.

In short, a field is a social setting for struggles among humans over capital, which determines their available power and positions—or

rankings—in the field. This explains why individuals in a field possess unequal degrees of power and capital, and this implies that some form—no matter how benign—of domination, submission, and exploitation, justified by symbolic violence which is meted out according to standards of distinction and taste, typify the field.

He points out,

> social agents are not "particles" that are mechanically pushed about by external forces. They are, rather, bearers of capital and, depending on the position that they occupy in the field by virtue of their endowment (volume and structure) in capital, they tend to act either toward the preservation of the distribution of capital or toward the subversion of this distribution (things are of course much more complicated than that). ... this is a simplified but general proposition that applies to social space as a whole, although it does not imply that all small capital holders are necessarily revolutionaries and all big capital holders are automatically conservatives (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 8).

Therefore, the extent to which agents in a field agree on abiding by the rules of the game is an empirical question. People can become outraged and indignant about their location in the field and organize to rebel or resist or subvert the rules of the game—use their voice or exit in Hirschman's language. Further, Bourdieu writes that fields in a given society are interconnected to a larger "field of power" often called a worldview, dominant discourse, paradigm, cosmology, or culture. Each of these fields—such as law, politics, and education—is "governed by different logics" that are, nonetheless, coordinated and situated within this larger social construction of reality Bourdieu refers to as society's overriding "field of power" (Bourdieu 1984, p. 101).

A field's logic derives from "doxa," by which he means interrelated taken-for-granted, and therefore unexamined—often misrecognized—beliefs about "the rules of the game" for that given field. For example, East German intelligentsia took it for granted that lifetime tenure and government supported collaborative work in teams was the best model for their scientific and intellectual work. They found this doxa absent or negatively valued when they entered the field of intellectual inquiry in unified Germany, where individual achievement was wedded to research grant seeking and typically short-term contract work was the norm. They have concluded, after working in the West German system for approximately two

decades that the West German system of serially applying for research funding is pernicious and counterproductive in several respects, which are noted in Part II.

Another larger field of power doxa influencing all the fields in the GDR was a belief in the historical inevitability of a socialist world succeeding capitalism. This was in conflict with Fukuyama's proposition that was then ascendant in the Western capitalist world.

Turning to the concept of habitus, according to Bourdieu, it explains the agent's socially acquired yet not fully deterministic worldview. Keep in mind that individuals possess more than one habitus depending upon the fields in which they operate.

He cautions that habitus should not be confused with habitual, non-reflective, or over-socialized (Wrong 1961) rote behavior, although this understanding of habitus is a main source of dispute we consider below. Moreover, while a habitus is compatible with the rules and doxa of a field, an agent typically possesses a generalized habitus that exists independently of a specific field. This generalized habitus is gained through socialization experiences stemming from an agent's gender, ethnicity, or membership in a nation-state, and so forth.

Indeed, the possibility of habitus continuing to exist after a field ceases to empirically exist explains why East German intelligentsia cast a critical eye on how science and scholarship are done in unified Germany, as well as their critical views of neoliberal capitalism, which remains dominant—albeit frequently not expressed—two decades after the intellectual fields of the GDR came to an end.

Much to his critics' displeasure or bewilderment, Bourdieu used habitus as a multi-scalar (Wacquant 2014)[7] construct to explicate a continually emerging generative set of dispositions, which, parenthetically, is similar—but not identical—to how some American sociologists describe how social actors explore, construct, and negotiate the definition of the situation (Goffman 1963). As an aside, it is pertinent to note that Bourdieu was responsible for having the works of American sociologist Erving Goffman translated into French. (We turn to Goffman's relevance to Bourdieu's analysis of the East German intelligentsia below.)

As implied above, an individual possesses a generalized habitus, which is a unique adaptation of all the experiences of a personal life history. To repeat, various categories, such as class, gender, education, and so forth, also can be conceptualized as habitus (plural) that possibly could be matched to any given field. In *Distinction,* Bourdieu explains that the habitus is internalized

through what he calls "cultural products" such as education, language, group affiliations, judgments, values, methods of classification, and activities of everyday life (Bourdieu 1984, p. 471). These all lead, he argues, to an unconscious incorporation of standards of "taste" and "distinction" that establish categories of social differentiation which function as the basis for stabilizing and legitimizing power hierarchies within a field. This gives the agent a habitus that fits the location in field in which she operates. Put differently, the concept of habitus explains how an agent acquires a working understanding of the field and her place—which means rights, obligations, sentiments, and so forth—in it. Therefore, Bourdieu intends habitus to connote a set of learned yet fluid relationship with the field, hence his otherwise fuzzy idea of "structuring structures," (Bourdieu 1980, p. 53) which are emergent, malleable dispositions, "an acquired system of generative schemes. . .[that] makes possible the...production of. . .thoughts, perceptions and actions" (Bourdieu 1980, p. 55), drawn upon to "make sense" of and participate in a field.

Bourdieu comments,

> The notion of habitus accounts for what is the truth of human action, namely, the fact that . . . [s]ocial agents are the product of the history of the whole social field and of the accumulated experience of a path within the specific sub-field. . . . The way one accedes to a position is inscribed in habitus as a system of durable and transposable dispositions to perceive, evaluate, and respond to social reality. . . social agents will *actively* determine, on the basis of these socially and historically constituted categories of perception and appreciation, the situation which determines them. One can even say that *social agents are determined only to the extent that they determine themselves.* (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 136).

Before examining East German intelligentsia and the unification of Germany with Bourdieu's theoretical perspective, controversies over the concept of the habitus should be recognized. While the understanding of the field is less in dispute, Bourdieu has received substantial critical commentary about his formulation of the habitus, most of it accusing him of, ironically, failing to transcend an oversocialized conception of the nature of the relationship between the individual and—or in—society.

Sociologist Michael Burawoy (2012, p. 190) observes,

> Sometimes, Bourdieu starts with *homo habitus*, the notion that the human psyche is composed of "durably installed generative principle of regulated

improvisations", producing "practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle" (1977, p. 78). Here the emphasis is on doxic submission but one that allows for improvisation within limits. We might call this a deep notion of social reproduction as it depends upon the internalization of the principles of the social structure.

On other occasions, Bourdieu starts with *homo ludens*, the notion that human beings are constituted by the games they play, giving rise to a notion of social structure as rules that guide individual strategies. Human beings are players motivated by the stakes and constrained by the rules that define the game. This is a contingent notion of social reproduction that depends on the continuity of a particular game, itself embedded in a particular institution. The only assumption it makes about human beings is that they are game players seeking control of their environment.

Thus, Bourdieu has both a contingent notion (homo ludens) and a deep notion (homo habitus) of social action, alternating between the two and often fusing them. For Bourdieu, game playing accompanies deeply inculcated, almost irremovable dispositions, which, to some degree, vary from individual to individual, depending on their biographies. Here, however, I want to oppose rather than merge these two notions of human action: on the one hand, homo habitus for whom social structure is internalized and, on the other hand, homo ludens for whom social structure is external. Is submission deeply engraved in the psyche or the product of institutionally ordered practices?

Bourdieu wants it both ways, but the result is a notion of social structure that can never change and a pseudo-science that is unfalsifiable. . .

In the final analysis, habitus is an intuitively appealing concept that can explain any behaviour, precisely because it is unknowable and unverifiable. . . In short, habitus is not a scientific concept but a folk concept with a fancy name—a concept without content that might equally well be translated as character or personality. We can contest the notion of habitus as being unfalsifiable and unscientific, but I have taken the even stronger position, namely that we can dispense with any such deep psychology when it comes to understanding the breakdown of social orders (Burawoy 2012, p. 204).

Anthony King offers a similar but more charitable critique to point out what he sees as the ambiguity in Bourdieu's multiple implicit definitions of the habitus. He then suggests this re-conceptualization,

> The habitus itself patterns nothing. Individuals, at each point, choose their course of action; they choose the habitus they follow. . .The habitii do not pattern behavior; they are merely patterns of behavior, which individuals can choose to adopt at any particular point. Habitii are the options. They are not the factors, which explain the selection of the options (King 2005, p. 465).

Locï Wacquant (2014, p. 122), a frequent co-author with Bourdieu, writes an explanation of the misconstrual of habitus that I will accept for the discussion of East German intelligentsia that follows,

> [I]t bears repeating that habitus can be a source of creativity: whenever it is composed of disparate dispositions in tension or contradiction with one another; whenever it encounters settings that challenge its active proclivities; and when agents enter rationalized worlds that encourage the methodical reshaping of their dispositions in conformity with the dictates of "greedy institutions" (Coser 1974). Thus the selfsame dispositional theory of action is capacious enough to account for both regularity and deviation, conformity and innovation, reproduction and change.
>
> . . . [We must be alert] to the dangers of rigidifying, reifying, and anthropomorphizing the concept, but this warning applies to every social scientific construct. This is as true for habitus as for, say, the petty bourgeoisie, the state, and patriarchical counter transference. Every concept is liable to be deformed, misused, and even abused, for concepts are our instruments of reasoning and observation: the work they do depends on how we work with them, that is, what we make them do in our analyses.

Wacquant (2014, p. 128) also asserts that many readers and critics of Bourdieu have a misguided or skewed grasp of his sociology,

> Bourdieu stresses that habitus is—or, to be more precise, can be—heterogeneous, changing, and open to symbolic manipulation—under historical conditions to be specified. And he returns to those themes at various junctures in his investigations into education, art, academic power, urban dispossession, gender inequality, and the state, whenever reality warrants. So what accounts for the staying power of the conventional view that stresses the opposite? I see two reasons for it. First, most scholars approach habitus in a theoreticist mode,

> reading Bourdieu's treatment of action through his more abstract and compact statements—in *Outline of Theory of Practice* for anthropologists, *Distinction* for sociologists, *The Rules of Art* for humanities scholars, and *Reproduction* for students of education—instead of attending to what Bourdieu does with the notion in his extended and variegated empirical analyses. This leads to confounding the formal properties of the concept with their concrete manifestations in a given setting and case. Next, at the more abstract level, Bourdieu does stress the tendency of habitus to become stable, coherent, congruent with its operant milieu, and relatively resistant to conscious manipulation … and for good reason: there exist powerful mechanisms of selection, on the side of the agent as well as the side of the social world, that work to ensure the minimal coherence, congruence, and persistence of dispositions… Briefly put, institutions weed out agents who do not adopt the requisite categories of perception, evaluation, and action; individuals drift away from settings that do not gratify their social libido and gravitate toward settings that do, where they congregate with others more likely to resemble them in their dispositional make-up and therefore reinforce their propensities.

Giving Bourdieu the final word, he offers this response to critics of his concept of the habitus (Wacquant 1989, p. 11),

> insofar as dispositions themselves are socially determined, then one could say that I am in a sense an ultra-determinist. It is true that analyses that take into account both effects of position and effects of disposition can be perceived as formidably deterministic. This being said, one can utilize such analyses precisely to step back and gain distance from dispositions. (This is the old Spinozist definition of freedom; there are of course many other forms of freedom, but it is one that social analysis can provide.)

Bourdieu's sociology invites us to focus on the power relationships between East and West Germany and, specifically, their respective intelligentsia as the Turn and unification unfolded. First, we note that the development of separate fields and habitus in each state made unification on egalitarian terms implausible. Rather, the dominant sentiment in West Germany after the Turn was for validation of the Western capitalist path the FRG had taken and repudiation of the Soviet-dominated socialist path the GDR had followed. Given the failure of a third-way movement in the GDR, confirmation of the West German choice of capitalism occurred through the use of symbolic violence—primarily through the utilization of stigma—to justify the

absorption of East Germany and the termination of its socialist-based institutions.

Bourdieu's field/habitus analysis leads us to expect that the West German government was incapable of treating the East Germans as equals. They had to be stigmatized, defined as inferiors, that is, found lacking in critical dimensions of taste and distinction if the West German field of power was to be the dominant force. This "Bourdieusian" analysis is, I suggest, is the best way to make sense of how the evaluation of the Academy and East German universities was conducted.

In support of this, on the macro level, many stereotypes spontaneously appeared among West Germans of East Germans as some admixture of country bumpkins, feral children, and closet totalitarians.

In short, according to the West German view, East Germans needed to understand that they required strong paternalistic guidance and various forms of cultural and occupational reeducation and re-socialization to escape the crippling psychological trauma and cultural socalization of life in the GDR.

The power available to East German intelligentsia—as well as all East Germans—to resist these stereotypes would derive from one's location in the field[8]. Further, the East Germans' ability to negotiate with West Germans—not just legally but also in the subtle and layered techniques of cultural and psychological *Silent Language* (Hall 1959) behavior—began to collapse after the March 1990 unification vote, when the entire GDR field of power—that is, the GDR itself—was voted out of existence.

Therefore, in March 1990, the West German government began to plan for the closing of the Academy and the vetting of the East German university system. GDR intellectuals at the Academy and universities were informed that they would be judged by West German intelligentsia for their intellectual competence and political acceptability to enter the West German field (sub-fields) of intellectual work. The overriding point is that—as I heard over and over—GDR intellectuals had no power to play a role in deciding their futures.

Examining the cases of the Academy and Humboldt University through the lens of Bourdieu's sociology, we see two different methods at work. In the case of Humboldt and other universities in the GDR, there was an administrative takeover and purging of many GDR faculty by West Germans. The Academy was slated for closure, not takeover or reform. West German academics selected one-third of them as fit—politically and intellectually—to work as intelligentsia in the unified German state.[9]

The announcement of the official closing of the Academy, which was "negotiated" as part of the unification treaty between the FRG and GDR, came as a shock to most Academy employees. From the opening of the Wall until the March 1990 vote, only a few of them had given thought to the possibility of the GDR coming to an end, let alone to their career vulnerability. Nor did many anticipate a threat to their economic livelihood.

Instead, most were caught up in the exhilaration of having the opportunity to create an improved, unified Germany and contemplating a future without the Wall and interference from the Party and its enforcement arm, the Stasi in their intellectual endeavors.

To summarize, the unification treaty between the GDR and FRG called for the closing of all the institutes of the Academy and this set of processes laid bare the total domination of the FRG government and virtual powerlessness of the GDR. This, coupled with the closure of all other East German institutions, gave rise to the characterization of unification as *die Abwicklung der DDR*.

A few Academy members sardonically told me in the fall of 1990, as the evaluations were underway, Why not evaluate West German scientists as well? Why does the Academy have to be shut down, rather than reformed or merged on an equal footing with West German institutes? Why not discover whether or not some West German institutes and individual scientists are lacking in intellectual rigor and productivity? They knew the answer: in the sociopolitical context of 1990, these were absurd, self-serving, superfluous, or impudent questions.

The evaluation process, which was conducted by the various West German controlled *Wissenschafträten*, occurred for the most part in the late summer and fall of 1990. Since the Academy's dissolution was prescribed in the unification treaty, there was no legitimate means of collective action—using the voice option—to challenge these evaluation panels. Those who refused to be evaluated were simply scheduled for summary dismissal—and some Academy members were outright dismissed without an evaluation. Instead of organized resistance, politically ineffectual fear and loathing, disbelief and some instances of acceptance, spread among those at the Academy. In Bourdieu's terms, this act of closing down the Academy and evaluating its members for admission into the West German field of intellectual work can be viewed as a matter establishing rules of acceptance and exclusion—in other words, making distinctions.

To be fair, this evaluation process was officially said to be based upon commonly accepted cross-cultural standards of science and scholarship, an

argument those I interviewed at the Academy rejected based upon their contacts with the evaluation panels.

Finally, the knowledge that only a minority of them would be granted permission—regardless of their intellectual achievements—to enter the West German field of intellectual endeavor was taken by East German intellectuals as another sign—"divide and conqueror"—of colonization and domination.[10]

In contrast to the swiftness and finality of dismantling the Academy, the takeover of East German universities, which would not be closed down, and vetting of their faculties played out over several years. However, the final results for East German university intelligentsia were—again consistent with Bourdieu's analysis—virtually identical as that at the Academy: approximately two-thirds of them were for one reason or another replaced.

The case of Humboldt University, which is in the former city of East Berlin, illustrates the difference in the process—not the outcome of staff turnovers—to that of the Academy. In the spring of 1990, it became a symbol of East German resistance to the dismantling—*die Abwicklung*—of the GDR. In April of that year, six months before the official day of unification, 74 percent of the faculty of Humboldt elected a new rector; the first time a popular election had been held at the university. Recall that during this time period, the closing of the Academy, whose main administrative offices were a few hundred meters from Humboldt's main entrance on *Unter den Linden*, was taking place.

The New York Times found the newly elected rector—my two short interviews with him are above on pages 88–91—drawn from the university's theology faculty, perplexing and, I suggest, a recalcitrant anachronism. "The new rector at Humboldt, Prof. Heinrich Fink, raised eyebrows when he said in interviews before his investiture that his study of Marx's works at the university in the mid-1950's led him to become something of 'a utopian Socialist.. . . I don't want to give that up,' he said. 'I don't want to give up my GDR identity, which is more than a matter of our common history'" (Binder 1990).

When Fink took office, the GDR was in a brief interregnum until it would come to an official end on unification day, October 3. As the GDR still existed as a legal entity, confusion and uncertainty were high regarding how GDR universities would be transformed by unification. This was the context in which Fink attempted to seize an opportunity to reform Humboldt University "from within," which translated into reform from the perspective of an East German intelligentsia habitus.

In the field of the East German intelligentsia, there was cognitive and emotional disparity between, on the one hand, the certainty of the scheduled closing of the Academy and dismissal of many of its employees and, on the other hand, the election of a man at Humboldt who wished to preserve what he considered vital aspects of the East German intelligentsia's habitus and, more generally, East German national identity. From Bourdieu's perspective, if Fink were to be successful in his quest to reform the university from within, Humboldt would have been a field from which to perpetuate the habitus of the intelligentsia of the GDR.

It is critical to remember that Fink's election took place while the GDR still legally existed. Furthermore, at that moment, the way unification would play out for East German higher education appeared to be not fully in the control of the West Germans. Also, the 75 percent majority in the Humboldt election of Fink *prima fascia* indicated that the faculty wanted to maintain itself as an institution reflecting an East German habitus. Fink quickly became a spokesperson or even a symbol for the dignity and preservation of the East German national identity. While this stand enthused East German intelligentsia, it simultaneously made him a *bête noir* to many West German intelligentsia and politicians. In addition, it is the case that Humboldt University, because of its renowned history in the humanities and science and its location in central Berlin, has an iconic status in German culture. In other words, it was a prized institution to both East and West Germans, and they held diametrically opposed visions of its future that could not—at least at that historical moment—be reconciled.

In terms of Bourdieu's sociology, Fink wanted to carve out a niche for a modified yet preserved form of the field and habitus of East German academic life, with its own standards of distinction and taste, not those of the West Germans. This is not to characterize him as opposed to unification with the FRG. Rather, his actions as rector showed—whether he was cognizant of this I cannot say—that he was attempting to reform Humboldt based upon East German defined dispositions of distinction, taste, and symbolic capital which could—somehow—be accommodated and legitimated as genuine scholarship and science within the parameters of a capitalist West Germany.

His "eyebrow raising" comments regarding socialism[11] and his insistence that the East German national identity was more than an artifact of depraved, misguided history were interpreted by West Germans intelligentsia and politicians—and *The New York Times*—as politically insubordinate. Indeed, Fink's stance was a direct challenge to the capitalist field of power in

which Humboldt was to be embedded after unification. It is crucial to reiterate that Fink took office at Humboldt at a moment when it was becoming clear to East German intelligentsia that West Germany was not going to undergo a dialectical synthesis with East Germany to form a new German cultural identity. Rather, what Bourdieu describes as judgments of distinction and taste and the deployment of symbolic violence to delegitimize East German intelligentsia were well underway but nonetheless not fully recognized as all-powerful at the moment of Fink's election.

In summary, upon entering office, Fink knew that time was of the essence and reforms were required. He sought to walk a thin line between reforming Humboldt to fit into unified Germany—as he conceived of it—while preserving what he and many of his East German colleagues considered the valuable scientific and cultural contributions East Germans could make to unified Germany. Again, the overwhelming reaction of West German politicians, and many West German intellectuals, was incredulousness at the arrant nonsense and arrogance of the proposition that the GDR had anything of merit to bring to unified Germany.

The consensus view of West German academics and politicians was that Fink's reform proposals were cynically crafted window dressing. To them, Fink was a roadblock to purging Humboldt of its unsavory GDR legacy and to returning it to Western academic standards. In this hostile context, Fink's "internal reform" of Humboldt could only fail. Consistent with Bourdieu's perspective, his reform efforts were unsuccessful specifically because any changes he wanted to make were subject to approval by the Berlin *Senat*, which was operating under West German rules and standards of taste.

In fact, in late fall 1991, while his reform proposals were working their way through committees at the university, the (West) Berlin *Senat*, which earlier had officially taken temporary emergency-like control of some of the university's administrative functions (Groen 2013), and the Gauck Commission accused him of having spied on religious groups for the Stasi during GDR times. This, of course, was a career-ending accusation if substantiated. He was accused in December 1991 and formally removed from office in January of 1992.[12]

Given his immense popularity with Humboldt students and faculty, coupled to the support of many intellectuals, students, and political activists throughout all of Germany and also from other nations, there was significant protest about the timing and motives behind the accusations against Fink. Removing him at that time made the vetting and reformation of Humboldt far easier.

However, it is my view that even if he had remained in office, the Berlin *Senat*, West German politicians, and other influential West Germans would have stymied his vision of Humboldt's future in a drawn out process. Simply put, trying to establish what amounted to an isolated East German field in the larger West German field of power was sociologically impossible.[13]

The charges against Fink made for a complex battle that lasted over a decade, and it need not concern us here. What is significant is that his aims for Humboldt were, from Bourdieu's perspective, a Don Quixote-esque pursuit, which perfectly matched his ideal-driven persona and style of religious thinking. In addition, it is not far-fetched to speculate that his attempts to redefine Humboldt from his East German habitus was so popular in the East—and so despised in the West—because here was a concrete attempt—juxtaposed to the humiliating and inglorious end imposed on the Academy—to combine the best of the GDR and FRG in one of Germany's premier institutions of higher education.

This is not to imply that this outcome of domination and destruction will always occur and a melding or synthesis is impossible. Bourdieu would, I think, hypothesize that this outcome was, when all is considered, simply a matter of how much power the West Germans possessed and the East Germans lacked.

This brings us to a consideration of what Bourdieu would consider a micro-level complement to his macro-level analysis, Erving Goffman's analysis of the role of stigma in face-to-face interaction.

Erving Goffman: The Power of Stigma

Before applying the concept of stigma to the case of the intellectuals of the GDR after the Turn, it is necessary to give readers a sense of Goffman's sociological contributions.

Sociologists often misconstrue Goffman's contributions to social science as mere social psychology that is astructural, apolitical, and commits the error of methodological individualism. These first two criticisms misunderstand the uses to which his work can be put, and the third is simply wrong. Here I wish to use Goffman's "microanalysis" of face-to-face interaction as a complement to Bourdieu's sociology to explain the manner of the intelligentsia of East Germany's incorporation into and exclusion from the West German intellectual field.

Goffman's symbolic interactionist, "Chicago School," training, from which he evolved a uniquely stylized" (Williams 1983, p. 99)[14] and prolific

form[15] of sociological inquiry, provided him with a foundation to create numerous concepts—stigma, frame, spoiled identity, dramaturgical model, total institution, face, impression management, and so on—from this master concept of the definition of the situation.

This observation alone reveals that his was not a methodologically individualistic project. Rather, Goffman's approach to sociology involves detailed observation and systematic analysis of the emergent sociological properties in the definition of the situation. These properties arise from the inherent fluidity of social interaction and are not grounded in individual psychology. This means "social" interaction arises not exclusively from traits or psychodynamic forces within the individual but from the meanings—vocabularies (Foote 1951) of motivation (Mills 1940)—individuals bring to and then draw upon to create, negotiate—or have imposed upon them by powerful other participants—an emergent definition of the situation during interaction. Readers should be aware that his classic and still influential first book, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, was the groundbreaking sociological study of the dynamics of face-to-face interaction.

Goffman conducted his detailed observations and analyses of face-to-face interaction guided by the core concepts associated with the definition of the situation, such as identities and roles, and the concept of the "deviant," a label typically used with the rhetoric of symbolic violence.

He is frequently chided for never discussing power, and while this is literally accurate, it misses the sub-textual content in his work describing how power works at the face-to-face level of interaction. Paradoxically, then, he meticulously details how the definition of the situation summons and creates behavioral expectations, power disparities, and status hierarchies during interaction. It is fair to describe Goffman's studies as a continual development and exploration—adding new concepts as needed—of the nuances and complexities of how humans go about competing for and employing power. That is to say, what is omitted, or more accurately implicit, in his work is how defining the situation is simultaneously determined by—and analogous to Bourdieu's concept of structuring structures—and determines the distribution of power during interaction. This, in short, is why Bourdieu found Goffman's work complementary to his—Bourdieu's—sociology.

Reading the first chapter of *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, one is struck by, on the one hand, the attention Goffman gives to discussing the definition of the situation and, on the other hand, how little attention is paid to this basic concept by those who take inspiration and guidance from his work. I suspect this is the case because he was a prolific producer of

concepts, which is accounted for by his pathbreaking approach to sociology and because he did not think of himself as a symbolic interactionist. Instead, he saw himself as a sociologist who had evolved his own perspective from that starting point.

Here is an excerpt of his discussion of the definition of the situation in *The Presentation of Self*, his first and still most widely read book. The first paragraph of the book reads (Goffman 1959, p. 1),

> When an individual enters the presence of others, they commonly seek to acquire information about him or to bring into play information about him already possessed. They will be interested in his general socio-economic status, his conception of self, his attitude toward them, his competence, his trustworthiness, etc. Although some of this information seems to be sought almost as an end in itself, there are usually quite practical reasons for acquiring it. Information about the individual helps to *define the situation*, enabling others to know in advance what he will expect of them and what they may expect of him. Informed in these ways, the others will know how best to act in order to call forth a desired response from him.

A few paragraphs later, he outlines the utility—in other words, the inherent access to power offered—of defining the situation,

> Regardless of the particular objective which the individual has in mind and of his motive for having this objective, it will be in his interests to control the conduct of the others, especially their responsive treatment of him. This control *is* achieved largely by influencing the definition of the situation which the others come to formulate, and he can influence this definition by expressing himself in such a way as to give them the kind of impression that will lead them to act voluntarily in accordance with his own plan. Thus, when an individual appears in the presence of others, there will usually be some reason for him to mobilize his activity so that it will convey an impression to others, which it is in his interests to convey (Goffman 1959, p. 3).

Describing how the definition of the situation is emergent and continually negotiated, he writes,

> Ordinarily we find that the definitions of the situation projected by the several different participants are sufficiently attuned to one another so that open contradiction will not occur. . .

> Together the participants contribute to a single overall definition of the situation which involves not so much a real agreement as to what exists but rather a real agreement as to whose claims concerning what issues will be temporarily honoured. Real agreement will also exist concerning the desirability of avoiding an open conflict of definitions of the situation. Let us refer to this level of agreement as a "working consensus". It is to be understood that the working consensus established in one interaction setting will be quite different in content from the working consensus established in a different type of setting (Goffman 1959, p. 3).

Then Goffman points out the importance of establishing a working definition of the situation to literally enable interaction to proceed. Unstated, but fully implicit, is the realization—which Bourdieu would appreciate—that parameters of the definition of a situation are determined by and simultaneously negotiated in the larger filed/habitus context.

After this, Goffman lays out a sketch of the social functions served when "normals"—in our case West German intelligentsia—impose the definition of "stigma" on "deviants"—East German intelligentsia.

> In noting the tendency for a participant to accept the definitional claims made by the others present, we can appreciate the crucial importance of the information that the individual *initially* possesses or acquires concerning his fellow participants, for it is on the basis of this initial information that the individual starts to define the situation and starts to build up lines of responsive action (Goffman 1959, p. 6).

Goffman uses stigma to denote a special case of the definition of the situation where a master negative social label is created that, when successfully applied to an individual or a group, locks the individual or group into a virtually powerless status attached to a "spoiled" social identity. Stated differently, stigma functions to create a rigid definition of the situation for "normals" to feel justified in the exercise power and social control over the stigmatized.[16]

Adhering to Bourdieu's concepts of the field and habitus, we can see how stigma provides simple and effective answers to the questions, what status—and, it follows, identity—should be assigned to those East German intellectuals who are permitted entrance into the West German field? What appraisals of taste and distinction should be invoked to assign their location—what Goffman terms a collective social identity—in the field? Finally, what are the rules of exclusion from the West German field?

Stigma creates a socially imposed superior-inferior relationship. Two central features of stigma are, first, a failure to accord the stigmatized respect and, second, a subsequent normalization of a socially accepted definition of the natural inferiority—and symbolic danger posed by Douglas (1966)—of the stigmatized. Along with this comes the normalization of the superior-inferior relationship.

Goffman (1965, p. 4) delineates a type of stigma he terms "tribal" or social. Tribal stigma refers to a person's race, gender, nationality, religion, or any group membership a dominant group deems defective. The stigmatized find it difficult, humiliating, identity threatening, and overall not to their advantage to interact with members of the dominant stigmatizing group.

Tribal stigmatization characterizes the way many West Germans defined the entire population of the GDR as it was absorbed into the FRG. This stigma was present in the reception East German intelligentsia received from many of their West German peers. It was evidenced in the conduct of many of the West German *Wissenschaftsrat* members sent to evaluate East German scholars and scientists at the Academy of Science.[17]

Daphne Berdahl's (1999) ethnography of the "borderland" East German village of Kella—it was largely geographically surrounded by West Germany—delves into the connections between borders, identity, and stigmatization. It is worth quoting her in some detail because it parallels what I found among East German intellectuals.

> This is a book about borders, boundaries and the spaces between them... Arguing that articulations, ambiguities, and contradictions of identity are especially visible in moments of social upheaval, I portray the rapid transformations of everyday life of an East German border village, Kella, after the fall of the Berlin Wall. I ask what happens to people's sense of identity and personhood when a political and economic system collapses overnight, and I explore how people negotiate and manipulate a liminal condition created by the disappearance of a significant frame of reference (1999, p. 1).

> I was able to witness, and to a large extent, experience a multitude of changes in Kella during my two-year stay. I observed, for example, the border fence being slowly dismantled, noting that as the political border disappeared, a cultural boundary between East and West was being maintained, indeed invented... I talked with women, those most affected by unemployment, about their feelings of superfluousness and isolation, and I watched as many villagers who were fortunate to have found work in the West struggle with

> feelings of humiliation and anger arising out of encounters with West German coworkers (1999, p. 2–3).

The portmanteau *"Besserwessi,"* referring to an archetypical West German know-it-all and, by implication, an East German rube, was the 1991 word of the year in Germany because it captured West German haughtiness and arrogance toward East Germans.

In 2009, a former East German citizen filed a discrimination suit against a German firm after she learned that someone at the company had written *"Ossi"* on her resume as the reason she was rejected for the position. Ultimately, she lost her case. The complainant's claim of discrimination was based upon the stigma of being born and raised in East Germany. Nevertheless, the court ruled that being a former GDR citizen was not protected from a discrimination status under German law.[18] The court's reasoning illustrates Germany's inability to forthrightly—and legally—come to grips with the stigmatization of East Germans by West Germans.

Let me conclude with a fitting observation from Goffman,

> By definition, of course, we believe the person with a stigma is not quite human. On this assumption we exercise varieties of discrimination, through which we effectively, if often un-thinkingly, reduce his life chances. We construct a stigma theory, an ideology to explain his inferiority and account for the danger he represents, sometimes rationalizing an animosity based on other differences, such as those of social class. . . (Goffman 1965, p. 5).

> The central feature of the stigmatized individual's situation in life can now be stated. It is a question of what is often, if vaguely, called 'acceptance'. Those who have dealings with him fail to accord him the respect and regard which the uncontaminated aspects of his social identity have led them to anticipate extending, and have led him to anticipate receiving (Goffman 1965, p. 8-9).

Notes

1. Fukuyama (1999) writes, "Nothing that has happened in world politics or the global economy in the past ten years challenges, in my view, the conclusion that liberal democracy and a market-oriented economic order are the only viable options for modern societies. The most serious developments in that period have been the economic crisis in Asia and the apparent stalling of reform in Russia. But while these developments are rich in lessons for policy,

they are in the end correctable by policy and do not constitute systematic challenges to the prevailing liberal world order."

2. Economist Richard Wolff (2015) notes, "Germany's recent history has featured reduced wages (especially via increasing part-time jobs), fewer social welfare protections, major bank bailouts in the crisis of 2008, rising inequality of income and wealth, austerity policies and so on. Its leaders around Merkel have responded by carefully rescripting their recent financial maneuvers as 'Europe's bailout of Greece' in a classic exercise in scapegoat economics. Three institutions (the 'troika' of the European Central Bank, the European Commission and the International Monetary Fund) lent the Greek government money since 2010. Those loans were used chiefly to pay off the Greek government's accumulated debts to private European banks (including especially German, French and Greek banks). The 'bailout of Greece' was thus really an indirect bailout of those private banks."
3. Despite the significance of this issue, it cannot be further enunciated in this ethnography.
4. I think Hirschman was unaware of the significance of research, most of it conducted by Erika Hoerning and her colleagues at the Max Planc Institute in Berlin, showing that the Berlin Wall originally was built to keep capitalism out as much as it was to keep disgruntled and exit-minded East Germans in.
5. Pierre Bourdieu (1987, p. 117), "Sociology can be an extremely powerful instrument of self-analysis which allows one better to understand what he or she is by giving one an understanding of ones own conditions of production and of the position one occupies in the social world."
6. Readers unfamiliar with Bourdieu's work may see him as painting a Hobbesian or Ayn Randian picture of social reality. In contrast to this, the field should be viewed as a structural concept, having nothing to do with the content of the "rules of the game." In other words, the rules of the game in a field can be those of sharing, solidarity, and communalism.
7. Wacquant writes (2014), "[H]abitus is indeed a multi-scalar concept that one can employ at several different levels of social activity (from the individual to the civilizational), and across degrees and types of aggregation (settings, collectives, institutions) depending on one's

research question is precisely what allows us to make clear distinctions as well as connections between these levels and types."

8. For the sake of simplicity, I will speak of the intelligentsia as operating in one field, when in fact we should conceptualize numerous intellectual sub-fields in which various groups of intelligentsia operated, such as, economics, physics, the performing arts, and so forth.
9. It is my view that the actual evaluations were of little to no importance in determining which Academy scholars and scientists were reassigned. Without extensive elaboration in this footnote, I point out that networking ties and extra-scientific commitments and side deals—what the Germans call *"Vitamin B"*-- appears to have been the crucial factors in deciding the fate of many of the Academy and university intellectuals.
10. After the closing of the Academy *Die Leibniz-Sozietät der Wissenschaften zu Berlin e. V.*, http://leibnizsozietaet.de was established by former Academy members.
11. Fink gave many speeches during his less than two-year tenure as rector, and a remark he often made was how Western journalists quoted him out of context to portray him a as a crypto-Revanchist. His speeches and impromptu discussions with students and activists revealed his belief in Christianity far more than any commitment to socialism.
12. Fink was returned to his professorship at Humboldt, but not allowed to resume duties as rector. Some years later, Stasi files were produced that allegedly described his spying activities—only a code name, not his real name, was in the files—on religious groups and churches in the GDR. He has consistently denied these charges.
13. It is doubtful, however, that if Fink had remained in office he could have done more than slow down what was to occur at Humboldt. The Berlin *Senat*, as mentioned above, had arrogated control of the hiring process from the university. Further, all faculty were informed that they would have to reapply for their positions and compete with other applicants—many from the West.
14. Williams, eulogizing Goffman, notes, "His attitude to the systematizing and placement of his own work by students and critics alike represents less a defence or protection of that work from outside attack or influence, but more an invitation to a particular view to be taken of not only his work, but the whole of contemporary

sociology. He certainly never expected celebration on the part of his readers, hoping instead for utilization, adaptation, alteration, even eventual dismissal if the text could not be pressed into the service of their own research effort . . . to generate knowledge of the social. No one who was precious about his work would write of one of his texts—as Goffman did—"the first few chapters are indeed stuffed with clumsy typologies and held together with string."

15. Goffman is one of the most cited social scientists of the twentieth century. His works have had major influence in a diversity of fields and professions, such as disability studies, linguistics, communications and rhetoric, public relations, marketing, mental health and health care, among others.
16. This process is consistent with Mary Douglas' discussions of how setting the boundaries of purity and danger—and the sacred and the profane—are integral to any society, especially when it is incorporating new members (Douglas 1966). Goffman and Douglas draw upon Emil Durkheim's classic discussion of the function of deviance in society (Durkheim 1964).
17. My interviews indicate that those Academy employees in the natural sciences—physics, chemistry, biology, and so forth—were acknowledged as competent by their West German counterparts. This stands in sharp contrast to how Academy employees in the social sciences were treated. Clearly, their West German peers stigmatized most East German social scientists as inferior. In the natural sciences, there appears to have been a different type of discrimination underway. Those natural scientists I interviewed informed me that the *Wissenschaftsrat* panels told them their research could not jeopardize funding for West German scientists.
18. "Ossi"-Streit endet mit Vergleich. *Suddeutsche Zeitung*. 17 Oktober 2010. http://www.sueddeutsche.de/karriere/diskriminierung-bei-bewerbung-ossi-streit-endet-mit-vergleich-1.1012988.

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Epilogue

I began research for this ethnography in 1990, wrote Part I in the mid-1990s, and the manuscript lay dormant until I returned to Germany in 2014 to re-interview approximately one-fourth of those I had spoken with a quarter of a century earlier. Part II and Part III, to state the obvious, were written after this 2014 return visit to Germany.

My primary intention throughout this process has been to give voice to the perspectives of the intellectuals of East Germany. That is, to allow them to present their reactions to the end of socialism and their nation at the time of the Turn and unification of Germany; and then a quarter of a century later to report their interpretations of life in unified capitalist Germany. A secondary aim was scholarly: to study how the identity of an intellectual class is affected by wholesale institutional change—the end of a nation-state, the dismantling of its institutions (particularly those that created and disseminated knowledge and art), and the absorption by a rival nation-state with the same language, history, culture, and claim to nationality.

Some West Germans I met along the way felt that the very fact of studying how East German intellectuals reacted to the Turn was, first, in itself a tribute East German intellectuals did not deserve, and, second, an indication that anyone who would think GDR intellectuals were worthy of study ipso facto must be biased in favor of the East Germans. As an "*Auslander*"—in this case, an American—I could only imagine the how and the why of these West Germans' feelings disapproval, but nonetheless, I could not accept their point of view as my guide.

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What I as an outside observer saw in the autumn of 1990 was a unique natural experiment unfolding. In that regard, I will always be grateful for my serendipitous introduction to the intellectuals of East Germany in that moment, and for the reception I got from most of these intellectuals in their period of agony.

If one examines the literature on corporate mergers in capitalist nations, one finds that over and over the same phenomenon takes place: the merging firm that has the greater power imposes its corporate culture on the other in the guise of common sense and efficiency, as in this is "the right way to do things from now on." Summarizing the literature of corporate mergers in the United States, a writer (Bradt 2014) in *Forbes Magazine* states, "The fundamental premise of any merger is that the merging entities will be more valuable together than they are separately." He goes on to note how the failure to genuinely integrate corporate cultures is the primary reason why many mergers do not work out.

In this regard, I hope that this book will motivate some West Germans to rethink the Turn and their current attitudes and feeling about all East Germans. Most of them are familiar with Max Weber's concept of *Verstehen*, which calls for understanding the meaning of action from the actor's point of view.

In that regard, I want to tell them, West Germans, that East German intellectuals experienced their treatment at the hands of the West German government as gratuitously mean-spirited, crude, and banal.

Appendix A: Methodological Notes

Given the naturalistic—as opposed to controlled experimental—character of ethnographic research, it is necessary to rely on in situ, not a priori, judgments about data collection methods and techniques. Ethnography has a range of data collection techniques and methods available, which include secondary data analysis, general fieldwork observations, and observations and description of specific activities; participant observation; types of interviewing, ranging from formal structured to open-ended conversational; analyses of personal and public documents; self-reflection by the ethnographer, which can be considered data necessary for analysis and refining lines of inquiry; and life histories of the subjects under study. Any of these may be suitable or inappropriate given the contingencies and constraints of the social context under study.

The primary data collection methods used in this study are fieldwork observations, participant observation, and open-ended and semi-structured interviews.

There is an extensive literature about these central considerations for doing ethnography (Pelto and Pelto 1970; Atkinson 1990; DeVita and Armstrong 1991; Fine 1993; Stocking 1992).

Following is a description and discussion of salient issues I faced while conducting this study. They are: (1) establishing trust, rapport, and access; (2) identifying key informants; (3) the separation of emic description and etic analysis; (4) styles of interviewing; (5) the decision to forego the use of a

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tape recorder; (6) sampling design; (7) anonymity; and (8) the strengths and weaknesses of the ethnographer as a stranger to the culture.

Establishing Trust and Rapport

When I arrived at Lilly's class in late August 1990, it was as a last-minute fill-in guest speaker. Several months earlier she had invited her West Berlin colleague, David, with whom I was staying for a week until my apartment for the year was available at the beginning of September, to her class as a guest speaker. Due to a hectic schedule with an impending deadline, David had put off going to Lilly's class and now the final meeting was pressed for time.

The evening after I arrived in Berlin, David received a telephone call from one of Lilly's students, Herr Grentz. He was calling to remind David of his promise to speak to Lilly's class. David apologized to Herr Grentz and told him that he was behind schedule with a project and therefore would be unable to attend the class. Then David looked at me as his eyes lit up. "Herr Grentz," he spoke into the telephone, "I have a solution. An American friend has just arrived in Berlin for the year and I know he would be delighted to fill-in for me. He's a sociologist." David then put me on the phone with Herr Grentz, saying, "It's for you, Dan. I've volunteered you to fill-in for me at this English language class in East Berlin."

Entering the lives of East German intellectuals in this manner was serendipitous—a point discussed in the introduction to this book—and advantageous to gaining trust and establishing rapport. I learned later from Lilly that my unplanned appearance in her class was one of the reasons she did not think I had been sent by the United States or West Germans to gauge how GDR intellectuals were reacting to the impending unification, which was only six weeks away. In other words, she reasoned that since I was a last-minute stand-in for David, it was unlikely or impossible that I was sent to monitor the reactions of GDR intellectuals to the impending massive loss of jobs and careers East German intellectuals were beginning to experience. Lilly also informed me later that a few members of her classes had asked her how it was she came to know me and her opinion as to whether I was sent to spy on them. She had reassured them that I was a curious sociologist.

Another coincidental factor that served to build trust and rapport was my last name. At Lilly's class that day in late August, one of the students asked me if I was related to Klaus Bednarz, a well-known West German

correspondent and journalist. I told them I was not and then asked who he was. They explained that they held him in high regard. "He understands us East Germans . . . He does not look down on us, like most West Germans," they told me. One of the class members said that I bore a resemblance to Klaus Bednarz and even spoke in a similar manner.

From this beginning in Lilly's class, I was able to continuously widen the circle of people I was talking with and to receive many referrals to other GDR intellectuals. This is the "snowball" sampling technique. As the project developed, I set out to meet intellectuals in a range of fields, such as the natural sciences, theater, and media.

Identifying Key Informants

Key informants are those who possess and are willing to share with the ethnographer detailed and insightful knowledge, either specific or general, about their culture. They provide guidance, leads, insight, and interpretations, especially in the early stages of research when the ethnographer is very much an "outsider" in need of contextual and, at times, esoteric historical knowledge, clues, and direction.

The key informants I developed relationships with were, first, Gunther Kohl (he asked that his real name be used). He was a recently retired chemical anthropologist at the Academy of Sciences. He was sixty-one when we met in one of Lilly's fall 1990 English classes. His entire adult life spanned the rise and demise of the GDR. We met numerous times during my year in Germany.

Renate Tanscher, a psychologist at the Academy of Sciences, was thirty-nine when we met in Lilly's class in August 1990. Although she began our relationship by telling me she would offer me "honest and truthful information" about the workings of the Party, the organization of science in the GDR, and the culture of the GDR, she did not trust me until her mother—she invited me to dinner with her and her mother—told her I was trustworthy. Her mother had been a social worker, and Renate called her an excellent judge of character and integrity—"a 'sharp cookie,' as you Americans say." We met regularly throughout my time in Germany.

Marie Schultz, a librarian at the Academy building where Lilly's classes were held, was in her early fifties when we met in the fall of 1990. She—loosely—fit the description of the "marginal man" concept developed by sociologists Robert E. Park (1950) and Everett Stonequist (1937).[1] Unlike most East Germans, Marie had lived in West Berlin until she was a teenager,

when she and her mother decided to move to East Berlin to "help build a socialist world." Although she was a committed communist, she found the Party's rule of the GDR oppressive and a perversion of Marxism. She was proud to have her West Berlin experiences to use as a comparative framework. We spoke regularly on the telephone and met occasionally at the Academy building in the *Otto Nushke Straße*.

Lilly turned fifty in the fall of 1990, just as the GDR was swallowed by the FRG. She introduced me to many people, in and out of her classes, and always answered my many questions in detail. She was apolitical yet knowledgeable about the Academy and GDR intellectuals' folkways. During the fall of 1990, while she ran her final two classes at the Academy, we would meet after class frequently and also one morning a week before class for long discussions. Thereafter, our contacts were about once a month after she had taken a job as a book representative with a West German publishing house.

Lothar, the "Marxist weatherman," was a twenty-eight-year-old PhD student at Humboldt when we met in January of 1991. We met regularly until his departure for a job in another country in April of that year.

Christa Fuchs was in one of the English classes at the Academy, and from November 1990 to the summer of 1991, she answered many of my questions and took me on tours of what she called "hidden and disappearing East Berlin."

Professor Lothar Sprung (his real name) was a fifty-four-year-old psychologist at Humboldt University when an American professor spending a year in Berlin introduced us. We met regularly for long discussions from the spring of 1991 until my departure in August 1991.

Emic Description and Etic Analysis

Anthropologist Marvin Harris (1964) adapted "emic" and "etic" from linguist Kenneth Pike (1967), who coined these terms. Harris and Pike went on to have a debate about the precise definitions and proper usage of these concepts. Harris suggests an emic approach is focused upon description from the point of view of members of the culture under study. His understanding of this concept parallels the goal of ethnography as stated by Malinowski almost a century ago, "to grasp the native's point of view . . . to realize his vision of the world" (1922: 25).

An etic approach involves the assessment of the culture in terms of theoretical perspectives from outside the culture.

Overall, the use of emic and etic here follows the distinctions made by Pelto and Pelto (1970), where emic refers to describing the members' social construction of reality from "the native's" perspective. In short, emic is about how the locals experience and organize reality. Etic analysis refers to theoretical analysis done with the social science theories ethnographers use to objectify, order, and analyze their observations.

Part I of the book is emic description; Part II is mostly emic but switches to etic analysis in its concluding section; and Part III is exclusively etic analysis. In Part I the reader hears the voices of individual East German intellectuals—not summary accounts—at the time of the Turn and unification, 1990–91. I made a decision that the uniqueness of the Turn in German history justifies hearing from individual East Germans as the reader will be able to glean consistent general GDR interpretations—such as "The West Germans are colonizing East Germans." Also, the reader will have firsthand accounts of divergences among GDR intellectuals regarding the moral significance—was this colonization really brought on by East Germany's inability to create a viable socialist society?—and political and economic necessity of this perceived colonization.

I conducted 106 interviews and had numerous informal conversations with GDR intellectuals. Forty of those formal interviews are presented here. They were chosen based upon my decision about how they added something new or unique to an understanding of how GDR intellectuals reacted to the Turn and unification.

This format of individualized presentation of interviews was not followed for Part II, the interviews done a quarter of a century later, in 2014, for two reasons. The first is sheer expediency regarding the length of the book if the interviews from 2014 were presented individually. The second reason is substantive; the differences in historical significance between 1990 and 2014 are major and the sentiments of former GDR citizens could be summarized in 2014.

Style of Interviewing

The first iteration I constructed of a questionnaire was a structured one. I found out in pretesting with a few East Germans that it was received coolly. Therefore, I felt awkward asking a series of structured questions. In some of my informal coffee break chats with members of Lilly's classes,

the metaphor of "*Zoo Tieren*"—zoo animals—had come up. This refers to GDR intellectuals feeling as if the West Germans and other Westerners were inclined to treat them as if they were animals on display in a zoo. "We do not want to be regarded as *Zoo Tieren*" is how they put it, "We do not think the West Germans understand us ... We want to be heard, not studied," one put it to me.

I decided to have a conversation with a West German colleague, sociologist Werner Rammert, after I had done the pretest interviews and ruminated on the "*Zoo Teiren*" complaint. I told him the interviews had not gone smoothly.

He knew immediately what had occurred in these interviews. "You must look at a book called *Der Fragebogen* (von Salomon 1951). This was a popular novel written about the Allies' De-Nazification questionnaire many Germans had to fill out after the war ended." He went on, "You see, this questionnaire inquired about a person's political connections, membership in various organizations and so forth during the Nazi times. Many Germans came to resent this questionnaire as shallow, pointless, and insulting."

Based on Werner's advice, I dropped the structured questionnaire and conducted interviews either in a semi-structured format or as conversations where I pursued several key questions. In every interview, I took pains to first hear what was most important for my interviewee to tell me. Here are the questions I covered in most, but not all, interviews: How did the opening of the border affect your thoughts about yourself, the GDR, and the future of the East German people? Did you favor rapid unification or slow integration with West Germany? What do you feel about the GDR now? Why did the GDR fail? (If fail is the right word.) What is your assessment of how unification is proceeding? What has become of your career? Did West German peers evaluate you and your coworkers? What career options are open to you now? Can you tell me how you think of your citizenship, now that the GDR no longer exists?

It is important to emphasize that many of those I interviewed in 1990–91 were experiencing a crisis of identity and used the interviews as an opportunity for catharsis and to gain some sense of perspective—by talking to an "*Auslander*"[2]—on what was taking place. This study was premised upon the idea that a massive natural (sociological) experiment was underway; the central question that motivated me was, "How does the knowledge and culture producing class, a society's intelligentsia, react to the demise of its society?"

Foregoing the Use of a Tape Recorder

This decision not to use a tape recorder was an easy one to reach. At one point in the text above, page 48, I had a discussion with Renate Tanscher about the potential veracity of the accounts her fellow intellectuals were giving me. I had already decided not to use a tape recorder, and when I informed her of this, she heartily agreed that tape recording would likely lead her colleagues to give me the answers they think I want to hear instead of their real feelings and thoughts.

Recall that during September and the first two weeks of October—unification took place on October 3—I was satisfying my curiosity about the Academy employees I was meeting in Lilly's two English classes. Each time after returning from her classes, I would write up my notes, and at the end of each day, I would write in the journal I was keeping of my entire string of relevant experiences that day.

To that point in mid-October, I had told myself I was just taking notes with the possibility of writing a short article on East German intelligentsia. It was after unification—as well as after conversations with colleagues at the WZB—that I came to appreciate that I was witnessing a dual phenomenon of the loss of cultural—as an East German—and national—as a citizen of the GDR—identity.

At the beginning or shortly into all of the interviews and conversations, I would inform my interlocutor that what they told me was confidential and that they would be given a pseudonym if I quoted them in my writings. Most respondents I spoke with seemed unperturbed and were, in fact, eager to speak with an outsider. Only a few were cautious, as is indicated in the Part I interviews, causing me to begin our discussions without taking notes and asking permission to take notes after I felt they had relaxed enough to not pay inordinate attention to my scribbling as we talked.

For the record, no one refused me permission to take notes. Also, those I spoke with were given the choice of speaking in English or German. About 60 percent of the interviews were done in German. Of all the 1990–91 interviews, three were done with an American translator; no West German translators were used in the 1990–91 interviews. In the 2014 interviews, one former East German and three West German translators were used.

Sampling Design

In the fall of 1990, every East German I spoke with, either informally or in an interview, was either a member of one of Lilly's classes or someone referred to me by a member of her classes. This "snowball technique" of sampling falls far short of random sampling. Obviously, it was not feasible to conduct classical random sampling. However, it was possible to sample from a variety of intellectual fields and disciplines and to go beyond the confines of the Academy of Sciences to speak with academics at Humboldt University, in the media, and theater. As noted in the text of Part I, this type of sampling began in January 1991.

What Is an Intellectual?

S.M. Lipset (1981, p. 333) defines intellectuals as those whose primary occupational activity involves the creation, diffusion, and utilization of knowledge or symbols in the areas of art, science, and religion. An alternative conception of the intellectual is offered by Verdery (1991, p. 17), who writes, an intellectual is anyone—regardless of primary occupation—"that is privileged in forming and transmitting discourses, in constituting thereby the means through which society is 'thought' by its members, and in forming human subjectivities."

Torpey (1995, p. 3) compares Lipset's occupational-role definition with Veredey's activity-and-production-focused definition by combining Lipset's sociological approach—a focus on occupation and role-specific behavior and training—"with the more recent emphasis on a 'space' of activities that clearly entail forays into the symbolic realm of ideas and values, even in the absence of the relevant 'role' characteristics."

Both definitions were employed; for the most part, those I interviewed fall under Lipset's definition.

Anonymity

Pseudonyms have been assigned to all but two of the interviewees discussed here. Gunther Kohl and Lothar Sprung requested that they be identified by their real names.

Recall that the initial portion of this study was conducted several weeks before and during the first nine months after unification, which took place on October 3, 1991. This was a time of multidimensional uncertainty and

discontinuity for East German intelligentsia. Accordingly, they experienced a range of mixed emotions and reactions (fear, anger, depression, confusion, humiliation, as well as fortitude, stamina, and perseverance).

Readers may wonder what became of those East Germans I met in 1990–91. I have included an update appendix (Appendix B) with information on as many of them as I could locate.

It is important to point out that approximately one-third of the forty interviewees presented in Part I were found and interviewed for Part II. However, those others interviewed in 2014, for Part II, were originally interviewed in 1990–91.[3]

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Outsider Observer

It became clear from their repeated comments, for example, "we are tired of talking among ourselves and we cannot talk to West Germans," that they viewed me—someone from another nation—as an approximation of a neutral observer. In several interviews people told me, "I am speaking to you because my friend—the person who had referred me to this interviewee—said you would listen without judging me."

Notes

1. Another East German woman, and a member of the intelligentsia, who also had a "marginal man" perspective on the GDR is Rita Kuczynski (2015). Like Marie, Kuczynski spent a great deal of her youth in West Berlin.
2. Describing myself as an *Auslander* is accurate in a general sense. I was also potentially an American, a sociologist, a capitalist, and so on to those I interviewed.
3. As noted in Part II, in 2014, a small number of GDR intellectuals were interviewed who were not interviewed in 1990–91.

Appendix B: What Became of Those Interviewees Presented in Part I?

1. Lilly Dieckmann left her position in marketing books and continued her career in teaching English, interpreting, and translation. We lost touch with each other in 2000.
2. Ingrid Grund, Could not locate in 2014 (CNL).
3. Renate Tantzscher found an academic position in Germany and wrote several more books in her field of study.
4. Dieter Schmidt was given a position at a German University, where he remained until 1999. I could find no information about him after that date.
5. Marie Schultz, CNL.
6. Detlaff Broder was given a series of research contracts and continued his career in his field.
7. Gunther Kohl had been forced to retire just before we met. We were in touch until 1999. I have no further information on him. He would be approximately ninety in 2016, if still alive.
8. Hans Aldersflügel continued as a social science researcher in Germany.
9. Alfred Biermann, CNL.
10. Heike Erbacher, CNL.
11. Peter Erbacher, CNL.
12. Fritz Assenmacher, CNL.
13. Robert Hess, CNL.
14. Angela Schulte, CNL.

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15. Uwe Dienst, CNL.
16. Irene Rasmussen, CNL.
17. Gisela Meerz, CNL.
18. Andreas Pfeiffer, CNL.
19. Christa Fuchs. Finished her PhD at Humboldt University and emigrated to Norway.
20. Christian Kuhn continued his career in university administration.
21. Heinrich Fink went on to a career in politics.
22. Jonathan Schröder became a consultant and independent scholar. He continues to live in Germany.
23. Theo Zuckerman, CNL.
24. Monika Kalbaugh, CNL.
25. Stefan Feuchtwanger continued his career as a writer and playwright. He lives in Germany.
26. Sigrun Feuchtwanger continued her career as an economist. She lives in Germany.
27. Lothar Gaus became a professional meteorologist and lives in Germany.
28. Andrea Kuhrkg, CNL.
29. Robin Osand, CNL.
30. Wolfgang Schenk
31. Lothar Sprung took early retirement from Humboldt University. We lost touch in 2000.
32. Hanno Kamphausen returned to retirement after the Academy was closed and died several years later.
33. Felix Lange, CNL.
34. Ernst Wilfe retired and lives in Germany.
35. Fritz Siefert, CNL.
36. Johan Büttner became an independent television journalist. He lives in Germany.
37. Hans Grass entered into media consulting. He lives in Germany.
38. Roland Grau, CNL.
39. Ernst Franger, CNL.
40. Konrad Acker, CNL.

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Note: Page numbers followed by "n" denote footnotes.

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