

to the wagon"—I believe that is the expression you use. If the wave of the future is the Soviet Union, or Cuba, if the sea-lanes for the shipment of oil to Europe are controlled by the Soviet government through satellites, that is a geopolitical fact of a certain importance. Maybe we cannot avoid such a development, but at least it would be good to give the impression of being conscious of the problem.

Tyrrell: But surely Andrew Young is providing leadership for the moderate nations in Africa?

Aron: I believe the opposite is true. Young is of course against

South Africa and Rhodesia. He believes that it is of no importance that certain African governments speak of themselves as pro-Soviet. He is convinced that, in the long run, these governments will be independent from the Cubans or the Soviets. It is a plausible argument, but for the moderates, who feel themselves in a difficult position, it is of no great help. But I do not want to explain what western policy in Africa should be. From the outside I see a Young line, a Brzezinski line which is very different, Vance's negotiations which are not very successful, and an unknown Carter. □

Victor Baras

Under East German Eyes

*As long as East-West contacts are based on governmental
sufferance rather than individual rights, East Germany can
survive a great deal of exposure to the West.*

Can Communist societies survive exposure to the West? The rulers of East Germany think so. No other Communist country is so flooded with western visitors and western culture as the German Democratic Republic. Yet the GDR is in many ways the most successful Communist country in the world. It is the most highly industrialized, the most prosperous, and among the most stable. And East Germany's standard of living, unlike that of other relatively well-to-do Communist states such as Poland and Hungary, is not based on the widespread restoration of petty private enterprise. Socialism in the GDR is run pretty much by the book. In fact, East Germany probably comes closer than any other country to what Marx had in mind—state ownership of the means of production, collectivized agriculture, central planning, and a modern technological economy.

All this despite East Germany's exposed position. The GDR is part of a divided country. Unlike the other states of Eastern Europe, it is not sealed off from the West by natural barriers of distance, language, or nationality. Even during the chilliest days of the Cold War, most East Germans were in touch with friends and relatives in the West. Radio and television from West Germany and West Berlin have always blanketed the GDR. And while the Berlin Wall has stopped the mass exodus of East Germans to the West, West Berlin remains a troublesome western outpost deep inside GDR territory.

In recent years East Germany has been more exposed than ever to travellers and ideas from the West. The reason is West Germany's *Ostpolitik*, the German variant of détente. When Willy Brandt's Social Democratic Party came to power in 1969, West Germany abandoned her traditional refusal to recognize the GDR. Brandt gave the East Germans their long-desired objective—diplomatic recognition. But in return he made the GDR agree to permit a vast increase in "human contacts" between the two states. These contacts did not come gradually as a side effect of political détente; they represented a grudging concession by the GDR in order to achieve détente.

The results of Brandt's policy were spectacular. In 1976 about eight million westerners visited the GDR, a country of 17 million people; this was nearly triple the 1970 figure. Road and rail

traffic through East Germany to West Berlin doubled after the signing of the Four Power Agreement in 1971, with the rate currently at 15 million passengers a year. Residents of West Berlin (who, under the city's Four Power status, are not citizens of West Germany) now visit the East more than three million times a year; before 1972 the figure was zero. All told, more westerners now pass through the GDR every year than East Germany has citizens.

Travel from East to West is another story, since travel to the West is forbidden to most East Germans. Visas are normally granted only to those who cannot work—retired people and invalids. In this category travel has increased from a million persons a year before 1972 to 1.3 million in 1976. These travellers bring back gifts and first-hand information from the West. Also, since 1972 about forty thousand East Germans of working age have been permitted each year to visit parents, children, or siblings in the West for "urgent family matters" (while leaving their own spouses and children in the GDR).

Postal and telephone communications have also improved. In 1970 there were only 34 telephone lines linking West Germany with the GDR, and it took hours or days to get a connection. Calls between East and West Berlin had to be relayed by way of Western Europe. By 1976 there were more than 700 East-West lines, including 441 within Berlin. The number of calls in both directions increased from a million in 1969 to 15 million in 1975. Letters between East and West are now generally delivered in less than five days, compared to weeks or months before 1970. West Germans mail about 30 million parcels to the East every year, East Germans about ten million to the West.

The West German government's contribution to the cost of East-West contacts—visa fees, maintenance of road and telephone lines, postal charges, and so on—is a major source of foreign exchange for the GDR.

The East German authorities view all this contact with the West as a potential source of unrest, but they have ways of coping with it. For one thing, the East German government is not highly vulnerable to adverse public opinion. There are 300,000 Soviet troops to keep the people from rebelling and 50,000 border guards to keep them from leaving. In addition the state maintains a virtual monopoly on the necessities and luxuries of life, from employment and housing to vacation opportunities and scarce consumer goods. Thus, while East Germans get many of their tastes from the West, they never forget that they get their bread and butter in the East.

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The GDR conducts an organized campaign to limit the effect of increased contact with the West. The campaign is known officially as *Abgrenzung*, "demarcation" or, less literally, "isolation." The GDR's purpose, in the words of First Secretary Erich Honecker, is "to rebuff all attempts to conduct espionage, sabotage, and ideological diversion under the banner of 'freedom of information' and 'human contacts.'"

Abgrenzung went into high gear in 1972, just as the great influx of westerners was beginning. In one of its more harmless manifestations it took the form of exhortations to East Germans to avoid or report all conversations with westerners. Far more effective was the extension of the GDR's list of "secret-carriers," East Germans who are forbidden by law to have unauthorized contact with persons from the West. Since November 1972 this category has included most of the managerial and technical personnel of the GDR—an estimated one to two million people out of a work force of less than nine million.

Even many East Germans who are not actually forbidden to associate with westerners do not actively seek out western contacts. Although the GDR seems to be awash with foreigners, their presence is largely taken for granted. East Germans maintain family ties with the West, but such connections tend to be rather unpolitical. It is not that people are not interested in the West. They are. They watch West German television almost exclusively, and they prize western clothes. If given the opportunity to visit the West, most of them would go and many would stay. But since they cannot go, there is nothing to be gained by consorting gratuitously with westerners.

The sealed border to the West forces East Germans to come to terms with life in their own country. This is why the abolition of travel restrictions is out of the question for the GDR. Nearly three million people fled East Germany before the Berlin Wall closed the last avenue of escape in 1961. East German spokesmen are not bashful about the importance of preventing people from leaving. They promulgate draconian laws forbidding "flight from the Republic" and "anti-state trafficking in human beings" (organizing an escape attempt). Politburo member Konrad Naumann has called the Berlin Wall "part of our revolutionary tradition." And Erich Honecker, rejecting western pleas for an open border, described the Wall as "the foundation of our peace and security, that is, the highest good of mankind."

Contrary to a widely-held opinion, the closed border does not serve primarily to shield East Germans from the truth about the West. Western ideas, western entertainment, western goods, and westerners are readily available for the inspection of most East Germans. The purpose of the Wall is not to prevent people from learning about the West but to prevent them from going there—for fear they will not return.

The ban on travel to the West is a feature of East German life that everyone finds oppressive, and the recent influx of travellers has further irritated this raw nerve. The government has tried to relieve some of the population's wanderlust by easing travel restrictions to other countries of the Soviet bloc. In 1972 visa requirements were abolished for travel to Poland and Czechoslovakia. Since then, according to GDR reports, nine to 12 million East Germans have visited these countries annually, and millions more have travelled elsewhere in the bloc. Eastern Europe is far from homogeneous, and tourism within the bloc does afford certain pleasures. In Poland, for example, censorship is more lax than in the GDR, and a visitor from East Germany may experience the way of life as relatively "western."

Nevertheless, freedom to travel to the West remains just about

the most sensitive issue in East Germany. One of the successes of the *Ostpolitik* was that the GDR agreed to permit a small amount of emigration of working-age people for purposes of "family reunification." The news that the authorities were letting some people go, in conjunction with the spirit of Helsinki, caused many East Germans to apply for exit visas. GDR officials denied western reports that the number of applicants was as high as two hundred thousand, but they conceded that there were tens of thousands. The problem was so serious that the leadership sent out confidential directives ordering that most applications be rejected out of hand and that applicants be reminded of possible sanctions. Persons who persisted in resubmitting applications have been subject to demotion, firing, and arrest.

Détente has also caused some ferment recently among East German artists and intellectuals. During the 1950s and 1960s, control of intellectual life in the GDR was unusually rigid, even by the standards of Eastern Europe. At the same time, East Germany's intellectuals were relatively docile in comparison with those of other Soviet-bloc countries. There were some interesting dissidents, but for the most part the intellectuals were about the most successfully co-opted class in the GDR in the 1960s—perhaps because so many anti-Communists had left the country before 1961. The replacement of First Secretary Walter Ulbricht by Erich Honecker in 1971 signalled a slight relaxation of cultural censorship, at least for a time. Some authors were permitted to publish in

the West books banned in the GDR, and in at least one case an East German book published first in the West was later issued in the GDR.

By the summer of 1976, the authorities decided things had gone far enough. They announced a shift to a harder line with the imposition of house arrest on the country's most prominent dissident, the scientist Robert Havemann. Then, in November, poet-singer Wolf Biermann was involuntarily expatriated while on tour in West Germany. (Like most East German dissidents, Biermann is a

Communist. He joined the West German branch of the Spanish Communist Party, since the CP of West Germany is controlled by the GDR.)

The expulsion of Biermann provoked an unprecedented outcry from the cultural establishment of the GDR. A number of artists and writers, representing a virtual Who's Who in East German arts and letters, signed a petition of protest. The authorities responded sharply, and within a week the East German press was able to print a handful of recantations. The sanctions imposed on the prominent signers of the petition ranged from reprimands to harassment and expulsion from the country. Less prominent supporters of Biermann were arrested, and many were subsequently expelled. At the same time, several works by authors who had signed the petition were published in the GDR more or less on schedule. In short, while some signers were punished outright, others were brought to heel with reminders of how much they stood to lose.

The new restiveness of East Germany's intellectuals is part of the price the GDR is paying for increased East-West contact. So far it is a price the regime can afford; the dissidents are more of an embarrassment than a problem. They pose no immediate threat to the power of the government. But they do challenge the regime's authority, and the government feels it must respond in order to deny them the respectability of toleration.

The GDR will be content if it can contain dissent at about the present level. In the long run, of course, the dissidents may cause real trouble, especially if other things go wrong, such as a slowdown in economic growth and continuing fragmentation of the world Communist movement. But for the time being East



Germany can take comfort in the fact that it has a smaller dissident problem than neighboring countries that are less exposed to the West, such as Poland, Czechoslovakia, and the USSR.

On balance, the GDR has done well by her decision to grant more "human contacts" in exchange for détente. The end of East Germany's international isolation has given the country a new self-assurance as well as improved access to western business, western tourists, and western money. And by making some concessions on human contacts, the GDR has given the West a certain stake in the status quo. West German police, for example, no longer encourage East Germans to escape to the West by way of the Berlin *autobahn*, for such "abuse of the transit roads" would force the East Germans to go back to inspecting every vehicle themselves, thus inconveniencing western travellers.

The GDR has managed to give the West Germans much of what they wanted—increased contacts—without giving them what they really wanted—liberalization and progress toward reunification. The East German regime is as repressive as before the *Ostpolitik*, and political relations between the two German states are terrible, human contacts notwithstanding. Germany is less divided as a result of détente, but it is no more unified.

Nor has the increase in human contacts led to a dramatic reduction of tensions in Central Europe. The world's greatest concentration of firepower is still to be found on the two sides of the intra-German border, and the area has witnessed a significant military build-up in recent years. The great issues of war and

peace are not determined by the fact that West German fishermen now fish in East German waters, that coal miners now dig together in border areas, or that West Berlin's garbage is now dumped in the East.

Above all, human contacts have not bridged the fundamental differences of principle that separate East and West. When the issue is drawn clearly, the two sides are as far apart as ever. A recent example is the case of Werner Weinhold, a young East German who made his way to the West by killing two GDR border guards. The East German government demanded his return to stand trial for murder. The West Germans ruled "self-defense" and let Weinhold go free. The East Germans responded by putting a \$40,000 reward on his head. Weinhold went into hiding in the West.

The difference between Werner Weinhold and the millions of travellers who now cross the border legally is at the heart of the GDR's attitude toward contact with the West. The increased contact permitted by the GDR is tolerable to the regime precisely because it is permitted. Hence it is not a fundamental threat to East German Communism but merely an inconvenience, for which the GDR is compensated by recognition, trade, and credits from the West. East Germany can tolerate more contact. What it cannot tolerate is *free* contact. By negotiating with the West, East Germany has redefined the central issue in its own terms—"how much movement" rather than "freedom of movement." As long as East-West contacts are based on governmental sufferance rather than individual rights, the GDR can survive a great deal of exposure to the West. □

Stephen Haseler

The New French Polemicists

Though their ideas are not new, the "new philosophers" of Paris have unburdened themselves of Marxism, no small accomplishment for French intellectuals.

The whole phenomenon of the young Paris "*philosophes*" invites imperious skepticism—at least at first sight. André Glucksmann, Bernard-Henri Lévy, Edgar Morin, Jean Marie-Benoist, all are powerful writers. They are certainly good news politically too, worrying as they do the French left and, in particular, the French Communist Party. The problem seems to lie in the absurdly high expectations that those around them (astute publishers, quick-witted publicity men) have generated on their behalf. Claims are made about the emergence of a new "school" of political thought—a *school* no less, and all within the space of a few years.

Further resistance sets in because of the massive attendant publicity which the "new philosophers" themselves inspire. These young writers are the subjects of lengthy television programs (apparently with large audiences) and color-supplement journalism. They have taken on some of the characteristics of the media personality—a kind of French intellectual equivalent of the Hollywood film star. Their books, for the most part, sell (Glucksmann's

most recent, *The Master Thinkers*, was a best-seller). They are sometimes recognized on the street. Even allowing for a native Anglo-Saxon jealousy about the glamor and popularity to which intellectuals can aspire in France, this sort of treatment and response seems a very improbable setting for the arrival of a profound and new philosophy.

Furthermore, the political pedigree of the "new philosophers" must appear to the Anglo-Saxon political mind as rather alarming. For the most part these young thinkers spring out of the fevered world of Paris, 1968. Some of them are former Maoists. Others retain powerful anarchist strains with a continuing and annoying tendency to reject all forms of authority and stability. One is led to wonder how anything coherent or sensible can possibly derive from the shattered illusions of the French leftism of the sixties. Of course, it is unfair and arbitrary to hold against those who have now rethought their position the infantilism of the counterculture to which they once subscribed. Even so, serious political philosophy is not built in a day or upon sudden revelation or by polemical assaults upon a given orthodoxy (whether that orthodoxy be "liberalism," or "conservatism," or even, as in this case, "Marxism"). Rather, it must be a painstaking exercise, something built brick by brick over a long period, if not a lifetime. It is the lack of such sturdy foundations that must preclude the "new philosophers," at least for the moment, from ownership of a new philosophical system. As John L. Hess has observed: "theirs is not

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