The Challenges of Knowledge Transfer during the Cold War:
Exchange between East Germany and North Vietnam, 1953-1968

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Abstract

The exchange of knowledge was a powerful method to strengthen international relations in the 1950s and early 1960s. It came during a tense time: the start of the Cold War and the divide over socialist ideology. In the socialist world, exchange became a gateway for states to interact and engage with de-colonizing nations, and therefore, to advance the socialist cause. This thesis explores the relationship between East Berlin and North Vietnam from 1953 to 1968. It follows the knowledge exchange programs between the two states as a front line for the tensions of the socialist world. This thesis further approaches exchange through the lens of national identity and the intra-struggles of the international socialist movement. It challenges the meaning of “exchange of knowledge” to include all areas of technological and scientific development, including the field of state security and intelligence. It also makes use of extensive research from the Foundation Archives of Parties and Mass Organizations of the GDR in the Federal Archives of Germany and the Records of the State Security Service of the former GDR.
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Acknowledgements

I initially encountered the remnants of the GDR in Summer 2014, when I first studied in Berlin. The German Department accepted more students than planned and had to house a small group in the former East. One of the lucky ones, I got to live in a socialist housing project in Lichtenburg. During one of my many evening jaunts, I came across a large, vibrant Vietnamese community. Shocked to find a Vietnamese community in an area with a reputation for xenophobia, I had to know more.

This thesis is a culmination of my interests in the Cold War, German division and German multiculturalism. I owe much to the German and History Departments for their support on this and past research projects. I also owe much to my fantastic advisors, Dr. James Chappel and Dr. Jakob Norberg. Both have challenged me to produce my best work possible. I extend my thanks to Dr. Anna Krylova, who has provided excellent advice and has challenged my perceptions of East Germany and North Vietnam. I would further like to thank Dr. Heidi Madden, Professor Jochen Wohlfeil, Ute Lipske at the Stasiarchives, and everyone else who helped make this project possible.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents for all of their encouragement and support, as well as for nurturing my love of history at an early age.
Introduction

In July 1963, a group of North Vietnamese students at University of Greifswald in East Germany prepared an appeal to the East German state and population. They hoped to raise awareness about the socialist cause in North Vietnam and expose what they saw as fascist practices of the South Vietnamese regime. To achieve their goals, they approached a professor about beginning a protest movement in East Germany. But rather than emphasizing the plight of socialism in Southeast Asia, the students called attention to themselves and became a target of the East German State Security (Stasi). The Stasi infiltrated the group with two moles, including an East German student the North Vietnamese regarded as a helping friend. This episode is one of many examples from the Stasi Archives of East German attempts to infiltrate groups of North Vietnamese students, whose enthusiasm for international solidarity and attitude towards the socialist cause in Vietnam often landed them in trouble.

Why did the students’ initiative fail, and what does this tell us about the actual state of socialist internationalism in the early 1960s? The students, after all, were invited by the East German leadership to study at the University of Greifswald through arrangements with Hanoi. Wouldn’t the attempts of the North Vietnamese students to propagate a socialist struggle be celebrated by the East German state as an act of socialist internationalism? This story – the students’ goals and the atmosphere surrounding them, as well as the Stasi’s reaction – is constructed in the international political developments of the Cold War and begins with the growth of exchange, inside and outside of the socialist world.

2 “Report about Contact Support,” BStU, 50-55.
The exchange of knowledge – the sharing of ideas and information on the arts, sciences, technology and sports – emerged in the 1950s as one of the most significant means to build and strengthen international relations.\(^3\) It came at a tense moment in the development of the Cold War and socialism internationally: the Soviet Union and the Allies had just defeated fascism in Europe; the United States used atomic bombs in Japan; the Soviet Union had also constructed an atomic bomb (1949); NATO and the Warsaw Pact formed (1949 and 1955, respectively); and previously colonized areas were achieving nationhood.\(^4\) East-West relations cooled since 1945, but improved to an extent with Khrushchev’s rise to power in 1956.\(^5\) The brief period of liberalization that followed fostered exchange between states, even between the Soviet Union and the United States, and provided a space within a divided and strained world for nations to encounter one another.\(^6\)

This was an extremely exciting time for socialist internationalism, a field that has recently garnered much interest. Marxism was always supposed to be an international ideology, and in the globalizing 1950s and 1960s, socialists sought to achieve this promise (one scholar recently called this “red globalization”\(^7\)). By the late 1950s and early 1960s, the exchange of knowledge became a gateway for the Western and socialist worlds to interact and engage with previously colonized nations. And in the socialist states specifically, the exchange of knowledge


\(^6\) Ibid.

\(^7\) See Oscar Sanchez-Sibony, *Red Globalization: the Political Economy of the Soviet Cold War from Stalin to Khrushchev*. 
with de-colonizing nations, or the Global South, emerged as an important tool to advance the socialist cause internationally.\textsuperscript{8}

As study abroad administrators know now, and as Americans were discovering through the Peace Corps, student exchange programs often do not go as planned.\textsuperscript{9} In the socialist world especially, students found themselves caught up in problems larger than themselves. Most socialist states, with the exception of the Soviet Union and a few others, formed in the aftermath of the Second World War from either the remains of fascism or colonialism. Many were not recognized by the West and struggled to find a sense of nationhood, which led to fragile and anxious leaderships.\textsuperscript{10} The newly formed nations were further entangled in the two significant developments of international socialism in the 1960s: the escalation of the Vietnam War, and the rise of Maoism, the more revolutionary take on socialism in China.\textsuperscript{11} Rather than joining forces and forming a strong socialist front against the West to combat the first development, the communist leaderships disputed over the second to the extent that they sacrificed the international socialist movement. By the mid-1960s, the communist parties had to either follow the socialist path set out by the Soviet leadership or that by the Chinese state, which severely strained relations within the socialist world, especially between the Eastern European states and the Global South.\textsuperscript{12}

The budding educational exchange between East Berlin and Hanoi that began in the 1950s was then restricted by the developments in international socialism by the mid-1960s. Both

\textsuperscript{8} See Young-Sun Hong, \textit{Cold War Germany, and the Third World, and the Global Humanitarian Regime}, for more on East-West engagement with the Global South.

\textsuperscript{9} See Elizabeth Cobbs Hoffman, \textit{All You Need is Love: The Peace Corps and the Spirit of the 1960s}, for more on the Peace Corps and its complex history and vision for internationalism.

\textsuperscript{10} See William Glenn Gray, \textit{Germany's Cold War: The Global Campaign to Isolate East Germany, 1949-1969}, for more on the fragility of East Germany's leadership.

\textsuperscript{11} See Lorenz M. Lüthi, \textit{The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World}, for more on Maoism and the response to it within the socialist world.

\textsuperscript{12} See Lüthi, \textit{The Sino-Soviet Split}, for more on the divide international socialism.
nations had a political and national rationale behind the educational exchange that occurred at the University of Greifswald, as well as at other East German universities. The educational program, despite the monitoring of Vietnamese students and the East German anxiety over their political activity, was about exploration for both states and not the suppression of students. In the 1950s and 1960s, both East Berlin and Hanoi were searching for themselves in a politically and ideologically divided socialist world. And although the intra-challenges of this world and the strains that these disputes caused tested exchange between East Berlin and Hanoi, the exchange of knowledge allowed the two states to encounter one another and ultimately brought them closer together. Exchange of knowledge became so important to both nations because it had the power to strengthen their relationship, and in turn, their positions within the Cold War world.

In this thesis, I uncover how a moderately sized educational program between East Berlin and Hanoi became a front line for the tensions of the socialist world, and more broadly, the Cold War. East Germany was a highly industrialized nation, which, by Marx’s standards, was ripe for socialism, whereas North Vietnam lacked the industrial working class theoretically needed for a communist revolution. North Vietnam was thus an archetype of the de-colonizing, underdeveloped nation that opted for Communism in the mid-twentieth century. The study of the East German – North Vietnamese relationship, only recently explored by historians, therefore provides an important window onto the development of socialist internationalism as a whole.

Most scholarship focuses on the East German state in general. I am one of the first to comprehensively consider this particular exchange program between East Berlin and Hanoi, and examine how it impacted relations between the two states, as well as both of their positions in the socialist world. I further challenge the meaning of “exchange of knowledge” and expand it beyond the traditional realm of university education to include all areas of technology and
scientific development, including, perhaps most importantly, the field of state security and intelligence. Finally, I draw on my own extensive research from the Foundation Archives of Parties and Mass Organizations of the GDR in the Federal Archives of Germany (Federal Archives, SAPMO collection) and the Records of the State Security Service of the former GDR (Stasi Archives). I consider state orders, state reports, memos, notices of actions, letters between East German officials, letters between East German and North Vietnamese officials, intakes, diplomatic agreements between East Berlin and Hanoi, Stasi briefings, Stasi surveillance reports, Chinese propaganda intercepted by the Stasi, Stasi inter-department communications, as well as newspaper articles from the East German media archives, Zeitungsinformationssystem (ZEFYS).

Historians are only now approaching foreign life in East Germany, the exchange between the East German state and other nations, and the technology, information and expansion of state securities. For years, historians have either shared the story of East Germany alone or alongside that of West Germany. However, scholars like Quinn Slobodian, Young-Sun Hong, and Anne-Marie Sammartino have recently published important work that places East Germany in its proper global context. They have proven that East Germany should be viewed through the lens of the “Global Cold War,” as theorized by Odd Arne Westad. Urban planning, Sammartino illustrates, connected East Germany with New York City, while Slobodian and Hong show how East Germany saw itself as the vanguard of an international socialist revolution, as well as how seriously it took its relationships with other socialist countries and decolonizing nations.

Furthermore, scholars such as Martin Grossheim and Bernd Schaefer have recently published

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13 See Mary Fulbrook, *A History of Germany, 1918-2014: The Divided Nation.*
pieces on the close partnership between East Berlin and Hanoi. Grossheim points out the important role of smaller powers in intelligence during the Cold War, and Schaefer explores how East Berlin helped modernize a united Vietnam through work programs. In this thesis, I specifically focus on the exchange of knowledge between the two states to explore the anxieties surrounding state identity and the intra-socialist struggles, both on a local scale and on a global one.

The thesis, covering approximately 1953-1968, points out how the East German-North Vietnamese relationship evolved as one form of socialist internationalism came to displace another. Chapter 1 explores the origins of the student exchange program and what both nations hoped to gain from it. The analysis shows that despite the national interests of each nation, the program was forged in a spirit of optimism and international socialist solidarity. The Socialist Unity Party invited North Vietnamese students to study mathematics and the sciences at its universities and technical schools. Upon completion of their studies, the students returned home to build up their nation’s educated workforce and work in its industries. If all went as planned, the students would improve the war-torn economy in North Vietnam and further develop its industries. And East Berlin would gain a presence abroad, strengthen its position internationally, and become a prominent educator of the socialist world. However, the escalation of the Vietnam War changed the student program and the goals behind it. The need for more modern technology and a larger, educated workforce in North Vietnam led the East German state to expand its student program. And although East Berlin experienced economic and spatial limitations, it increased its involvement in socialist internationalism and became more competitive with the Soviet Union.

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Chapter 2 analyzes how and why this optimistic exchange program broke down, becoming little more than symbol of socialist internationalism. By the mid-1960s, East Berlin had limited the interaction between the North Vietnamese students and East Germans because of the ideological divide and need to preserve relations with Hanoi. The North Vietnamese leadership needed support from all socialist nations to combat American military advances in the South. The state, however, also became entangled in the political and ideological disagreements over the “Chinese interpretation of socialism” that permeated the socialist world, especially in post-colonial, developing nations. Like socialist states and parties, the North Vietnamese students at East German universities were also divided over ideology, and although the majority adamantly supported Hanoi, a few favored the East German government and the lifestyle it provided. These students placed East German leadership in a difficult position, because it wanted to strengthen its relationship with Hanoi rather than destroy it. Hence, both nations came to expect the students to stay in East Germany during the duration of their studies, abide by the arrangements of the programs – maintain the ideology pushed by Hanoi and have limited interactions with other students and East Germans – and then quietly return home. While this promoted perceptions of “friendship” and “international solidarity,” it fostered little room for academic and cultural exchange.

Rather than the end of a collaboration, the decline of the student exchange program signaled a new chapter in the exchange of knowledge between both nations. Although the aims to strengthen the collaboration between the nations, modernize the North Vietnamese workforce and provide the East German leadership space abroad were not entirely realized through student exchange in the 1960s, they were advanced through another form of exchange of knowledge,

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albeit not with students, but rather their state securities and intelligence apparatuses. Chapter 3 then explores the educational exchange between the Stasi and the North Vietnamese State Security. By the 1960s, the North Vietnamese needed to strengthen its intelligence apparatus to combat the American enemy and secure its control over its people. The North Vietnamese State Security, however, had neither the financial nor the technical means to achieve this, and approached the East German Ministry of State Security (Stasi) for guidance and support. At the same time period, the Stasi was working to increase its presence in other socialist states as a way to expand control over East Germans. The two state securities thus began a collaboration, in which the North Vietnamese sent its security officers, most of whom were already trained engineers, to take apprenticeship in East Germany. This collaboration solidified East Germany’s status as an educator of socialist nations and improved North Vietnamese intelligence, and illustrated how state securities became a diplomatic mission in the socialist Cold War world.

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1.

Self-Image of a Socialist State: The Foreign Policy behind the Educational Exchange, 1953-1965

On October 23, 1953, four students from the Democratic Republic of Vietnam arrived at Schönefeld Airport in Berlin. These four students constituted the first official delegation of “liberated” people from Vietnam – those no longer under colonial rule or Western influence – invited to study in the German Democratic Republic. Upon their arrival in East Germany, the students were greeted by representatives from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Higher and Technical Education, and the Free German Youth.¹ The students then attended a reception hosted by the Central Council of the Free German Youth with members from the Humboldt University chapter present to recognize the commitment to the friendship between the people of Vietnam and the people of Germany, wrote an East German official. Finally, on October 24th, the students travelled to Leipzig, where they met the director of studies of the Department of the Workers and Peasants, a representative of the Korean students, and a representative of the German students.² In Leipzig, the students would master German in the Department of the Workers and Peasants, and then, hopefully, acquire an East German university education.³

¹ See appendix for more on the Free German Youth.
² See appendix for more on the Department of Workers and Peasants.
These initial four students from Vietnam were not the only foreign students invited to study in East Germany at that time. In addition to the Vietnamese students, the East German state invited four Korean students, two Czechoslovakian students and a Polish student to begin study at its universities in October 1953. By fostering foreign exchange and study at its universities, East Berlin hoped to further its development of a much-needed foreign policy. The young state formed “socialist friendships” and strengthened its relations abroad by inviting students from other socialist nations and “young nationalist states” – developing nations – to study at its universities. The universities predominately educated “foreign” students in math, sciences and engineering, areas of study that would improve a nation’s workforce and therefore strengthen its infrastructure, economy and self-sufficiency.

Both the East German and North Vietnamese states had much to gain from their educational programs. East Berlin hoped that these programs would positively impact developing nations, because forming relations with them provided East Germany with an increased influence abroad and with some leverage against the Soviet Union. One of the most significant collaborations, therefore, was the partnership with Hanoi, which “struggled” for its socialist values and sovereignty, much like East Berlin believed that it had after the Second World War. Hanoi further would greatly benefit from the education of its citizens in math and the sciences, because it was an underdeveloped, war-torn nation that lacked an infrastructure.

The East German leadership needed “socialist friendships” to make a serious claim of statehood, position its state on an international arena and create a place for itself within the

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4 I use the term “foreign” to describe the students because the East German government refers to them as foreign (ausländische Studenten) rather than international students (internationale Studenten) in agreements, letters and other state documents.
6 See Mark Atwood Lawrence, Chapter 2 “Colonialism and the Cold War” in *The Vietnam War: A Concise International History*. 
larger, international communist movement. The student programs, especially with Hanoi, played an important role in shaping how the young state perceived itself internally, internationally and within the socialist world. Furthermore, the student program with Hanoi allowed East Berlin to reach new depths in its education of foreign citizens and its goals through these programs, as the escalation of the Vietnam War in the mid-1960s encouraged the state to take in more Vietnamese students. The program therefore became a means for the state to increase its presence abroad and its involvement in the international socialist movement, as well as to become more competitive with the Soviet Union.

One of the crucial findings of my analysis is that East Berlin and Hanoi forged the student exchange program in the spirit of optimism about the present and future of international socialist solidarity. In the wake of Stalin’s death, many believed that socialism was the future, and that the anti-fascist and anti-colonial struggle was an international one. Although the early educational exchange between East Berlin and Hanoi intended to improve the workforce and technical knowledge of the North Vietnamese state, it was more about exploration for both states. Like educational exchange today, the German Academic Exchange Service, and the Peace Corps in the early 1960s, this program was initially about cultural exchange, language acquisition and political education in a world that was finally opening up to new ideas and experiences.

In this chapter, I consider documents about the development of the student program with North Vietnam from the Foundation Archives of Parties and Mass Organizations of the GDR (SAPMO) in the German Federal Archives to illustrate how the program became a quest for national and international legitimacy. East Berlin arranged the program with Hanoi to gain a presence in Southeast Asia and aid a developing socialist state. However, the program changed
dramatically with the escalation of the Vietnam War, prompting the East German leadership to increase the size of its student program as a way to assist its “socialist brother” in the fight against the West. The development of this program and the difficulties that it inflicted on the leadership, however, reveal the economic and bureaucratic problems that plagued the East German state since its infancy: it struggled to find finances to fund a larger program, and the bureaucracy involved created more input than output. Yet the student program with Hanoi allowed the East German leadership to create its own space within the communist world and offer an alternative, albeit smaller in scale, power to the Soviet Union within this world.

The Quest for Legitimacy

The leaders of the Socialist Unity Party declared the German Democratic Republic a nation in October 1949 in response to the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) and its Western-influenced government led by Konrad Adenauer in May of that year. The leadership of the Socialist Unity Party aspired to create, according to the official newspaper of the party, Neues Deutschland,

a sovereign, independent and autonomous German nation. A suchlike government would speak for all of Germany, and its formation is a blow against the Adenauer government and all quislings who barter away our people to foreign monopolies.⁷

The leaders did not want a unified Germany under Western influence, not least because the party was communist. However, the Party leadership did aspire to unify Germany under its own authority and hoped that the nation would “act in the spirit of friendship with the Soviet Union.” For the Socialist Unity Party, a partnership with the Soviet state pledged “the peaceful future of [our] nation, its welfare and its prosperity.”⁸

⁸ “Day of Birth of the German Democratic Republic,” Neues Deutschland.
By forming an East German state, the leadership of the Socialist Unity Party believed that it had, through socialism, “liberated” the German people from their imperialist past and the Western influence that shaped West Germany and determined its future. And to further ensure a “peaceful” future without capitalist and imperialist influences in East Germany, along with the prosperity of the liberated German state, the Party under the leadership of Walter Ulbricht sought to form foreign “friendships” with nations other than the Soviet Union.\(^9\) The leadership promoted East Germany as a friendly socialist nation and a voice against the West, as shown by the then Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Otto Winzer, who described East Germany in 1960 as “a sincerest friend and helper to people who had freed themselves from imperialist enslavement or stand against the colonial rule.”\(^10\) Moreover, the East German leadership realized that partnerships with other socialist nations and young national states, or recently formed nations that were previously colonized by Western countries, were the key to making East Germany a legitimate state and not just another puppet regime controlled by Moscow.\(^11\)

The Socialist Unity Party hoped to create a nationhood and national identity that would challenge the Federal Republic and Adenauer.\(^12\) However, it needed a centralized administration independent of Moscow that could collaborate and form relations with foreign nations, as well as promote a socialist German statehood abroad.\(^13\) The day after the declaration of the German Democratic Republic, the Socialist Unity Party released a list of fourteen initial ministries, with

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the Ministry for Foreign Affairs headlining it in the *Neues Deutschland*.\(^{14}\) The Ministry for Foreign Affairs was officially responsible for building trust with the nations that fell victim to previous German conquest in order to form relations with the said nations.\(^{15}\) And therefore, according to the *Neue Zeit*, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs was “deeply a ministry for the German liberation.”\(^{16}\) In liberating Germany, and legitimizing the government of the German Democratic Republic, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs had to further facilitate trade and provide the needed provisions to sustain a nation, both factors that demanded friendly relations with foreign nations, and in East Germany’s case, socialist nations.\(^{17}\)

East Berlin found a solution to further trade, acquire the needed provisions and establish international relations through academic exchange. The tradition of educational exchange programs was embraced by a united German government in the early 20\(^{th}\) century and became a burgeoning international movement in the 1950s and 1960s. On the one hand, East Berlin followed a model that the Weimar government created with the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in 1924 to promote the exchange of ideas and study, particularly across the Atlantic.\(^{18}\) However, the East German state also followed an international trend amongst both Eastern and Western nations that included pursuing foreign policy and trade goals by means of academic exchange and expanding interests abroad. The Western counterpart of the East German state, the West German government, expanded the German Academic Exchange Service in Bonn

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\(^{15}\) “Decisions,” *Neue Zeit*.


\(^{17}\) In state documents, the East German government described relations with a fellow socialist nation as “friendly” to emphasize the friendship that East Germany shared with the other socialist nation. Muth, *Die DDR-Außenpolitik*, 98-99.

and had “dedicated [the government’s] first funds to international training and education in 1956 with dm 170 million,” according to Quinn Slobodian.\(^\text{19}\)

However, East Berlin faced challenges that concerned neither Germany in the 1920s nor West Germany in the 1950s and 60s. The communist state had to work within the confines of the political organization of the universities and socialism that it adopted. John Connelly points out that universities in the socialist world were the “key” to making state socialism, because they were where national identities and ideologies were produced, as well as the “elites,” or the future members of the communist parties and leaders of state socialism.\(^\text{20}\) The socialist states like East Germany had to fill the universities with supporters who would remain loyal to the state and to socialism.\(^\text{21}\) Therefore, to support a foreign policy and promote state socialism through academic exchange, East Berlin had to invite students from other socialist nations who could fit within the structure of an East German University, or it would face an internal threat to its own political structure.

The East German leadership found an important socialist partner in the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, one of the earlier collaborations that it fostered through its foreign student programs.\(^\text{22}\) East Berlin was particularly interested in the pursuit and advancement of a “socialist friendship” with Hanoi, because both states shared many similarities. From an East German prospective, both nations struggled for liberation from their imperialist past and achieved a socialist state that promised a peaceful and prosperous future.\(^\text{23}\) Furthermore, East Germany and North Vietnam had a Western-influenced counterpart with a shared cultural history, and the

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\(^{19}\) “dm” was the West German currency, or the West German Mark. Quinn Slobodian, *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012), 28.


\(^{21}\) Ibid, 3.

\(^{22}\) “Report about the Reception of the First Student Delegation from the Liberated Vietnam,” BAarch, SAPMO.

\(^{23}\) See Gray, Chapter 1 “Containing East Germany in the Early 1950s” in *Germany’s Cold War* for more about the early development of the East German state.
Western counterparts of both nations, West Germany and South Vietnam, were not officially recognized by the East German state. Finally, these two countries were also on the front of international tensions centered on the rivalry between capitalism and socialism that dominated the second half of the 20th century. East Berlin viewed the North Vietnamese state as a “developing country” that it could help, and it believed that a socialist friendship between East Germany and North Vietnam would be mutually beneficial for both nations.24

Hanoi, too, needed to expand its relations in the socialist world and realized that it would profit from a socialist partnership with East Berlin. At the time of the initial arrangement to send students to East Germany in 1953, the Vietnamese communists were battling the French for liberation and control of Vietnam.25 The young communist state was declared only eight years earlier by Ho Chi Minh and the Viet Minh, and since its establishment in 1945, struggled to secure its sovereignty, largely because the French wanted to take back control of their empire. According to Mark Atwood Lawrence, the North Vietnamese leadership believed that international allies were crucial to this cause.26 Although it did not receive any military support from East German communists, who did not even have a state until 1949, in its war against the French, Hanoi found a friend in East Berlin in the early 1950s that could help modernize its workforce and state through educating its citizens.

The benefits that the student program provided to both East Berlin and Hanoi encouraged the states to expand the program to include more East German universities and North Vietnamese students. The growth of the program is illustrated in a letter written to the General

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24 East Germany use the term “third world” like the West, but rather referred to developing nations as “developing nations,” “young national states,” or non-aligned states. Sandra Naumann, Zum Studium in der DDR: Zwischen Solidaritätsbasar und Kaderschmiede. (Hamburg: Diplomica Verlag GmbH, 2008), 29.
State Secretary, Dr. Girnus, from a main advisor, signed Lange, in 1958. When Lange wrote the letter in November 1958, East Germany hosted around sixty university students from the “liberated” Vietnam, and around ninety technical students, fifty-seven of whom were studying at the Institute for Foreign Studies Leipzig.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Number of Students from the Democratic Republic of Vietnam</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TH Dresden</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karl-Marx-University Leipzig</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Martin-Luther-University Halle</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University for the Cinematic Arts, Babelsberg²⁷</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute for Foreign Studies Leipzig</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1.1²⁸

According to Lange, the students from Vietnam were chosen on account of their “exemplary discipline, studiousness, social engagement, collective awareness and politeness.” More or less, the Vietnamese students were chosen based on how good of socialists they were and how well they would follow the organized structure of the student program in East Germany. Upon being selected to study, the students would receive intensive language training at the Institute for Foreign Studies Leipzig, the initial destination for all foreign students entering universities.²⁹

As shown by the arrangement that Lange outlined, the East German government was establishing a program with a rigid structure that left little room for change and improvisation. And as a further example, the ninety technical students were in Plauen, Bautzen, Karl-Marx-Stadt and Zschopau in preparation for their studies until the end of August 1958. They were then moved to the Institute for Foreign Studies in Leipzig, where they were assessed on their level of education and where they stayed during the summer academic break. By the end of November,

²⁷ I translated this as the University for the Cinematic Arts. It was listed as the Hochschule für Filmkunst Babelsberg.
²⁹ Ibid.
some of the students were assigned to technical schools to pursue their university studies. The remaining fifty-seven students were to be split into four groups to further prepare for the subjects that they wanted to pursue in universities; the two groups with the most advanced students were to be redirected to technical schools upon the completion of an internship in either January or April 1959. The rest of the group of fifty-seven students, which the Lange predicted to be between twenty and twenty-five students, were to be enrolled in additional German language courses at the Institute for Foreign Studies Leipzig to further prepare academically and culturally for their impending studies at an East German university.

The Intricacies of the Student Program

Students from the Democratic Republic of Vietnam only constituted a fraction of the foreign student population in East German universities. Because of the growth of its academic programs with other nations, East Berlin needed more state institutions to control the students and ensure the program’s success. Although it continued to employ the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the state leadership expanded the administration and organization of the student programs by entrusting several other state-run organizations with responsibilities. These organizations and their responsibilities included: the Bureau for Economic and Science-Technical Collaboration; the Ministry for Foreign and Domestic Trade to assist the Ministry for Foreign Affairs with either measures of foreign-policy or trade; the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of State Security (Stasi) to resolve matters of safety; the State Planning Commission, the People’s Economic Council and the Ministry of Finance for planning and finances; the Ministry of Health for health issues and healthcare; and finally, social organizations and “friendship” societies, such as the Free German Youth, the Free Federation of German Trade

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30 Lange wrote this letter on November 30, 1958. Therefore, every event after November had not yet occurred.
31 “Amount: Vietnamese Students in the GDR,” BArch, SAPMO.
Unions and the East German League, tasked with the political and cultural “care” of foreign students in East Germany.\textsuperscript{32} The use of “care,” or \textit{Betreuung}, illustrates how controlling and invasive the East German government was in the everyday lives of foreign students. These organizations tasked with the political and cultural “care” policed the students and ensured that their ideology aligned with that of the state.\textsuperscript{33}

The amount of state-run organizations that contributed to the student program reveals the rapid growth of East German bureaucracy. Moreover, the government involved many state ministries and state-sponsored organizations to administer relatively small programs – less than 1850 foreign citizens had studied in East Germany prior to 1965.\textsuperscript{34} The complexity of administering the student programs and the multiple layers of ministries involved in them point out the early, and seemingly excessive, development of bureaucracy within the East German government. In the state’s infancy, its leadership quickly created ministries to exude the appearance of a legitimate and healthy state.\textsuperscript{35} However, the state leadership created so many ministries and expanded its government so rapidly that it encountered problems with containing the growth of its own bureaucracy. The state had far more input than it did output. And the hyper bureaucratization that partially developed out of the administration of the student programs became a significant, long-lasting problem for the East German state outside of these programs.

\textsuperscript{32} For more on the above listed organizations, see appendix.


\textsuperscript{34} „Übersicht über Studierende aus den jungen Nationalstaaten in der DDR und die Möglichkeit der Erweiterung dieses Studiums in der DDR,” “Overview of Students from the Young National States in the GDR and the Possibility of the Expansion of Study in the GDR,” 1965, Foundation Archives of Parties and Mass Organizations of the GDR in the Federal Archives (SAPMO): DR/Y/30/IV A 2/9.04/466.

\textsuperscript{35} See Gray, Chapter 1 “Containing East Germany in the Early 1950s” in \textit{Germany’s Cold War} for more about the early development of the East German state and the problems that it encountered.
Though many state ministries contributed to the student programs, the most important one became the Ministry of Higher and Technical Education, the leading state organization for the program. The State Secretariat for Higher and Technical Education began planning for an academic year by collaborating with the State Planning Commission, the People’s Economic Council, and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Together, these entities decided on a contingent number of foreign admittees for the upcoming year. After establishing the contingent number, the State Secretariat for Higher and Technical Education determined the costs for a new group of students. Because the host institutions usually provided the funds for scholarships, the State Secretariat for Higher and Technical Education worked to ensure that the host institutions held the funds required to accommodate a group of foreign students. The State Secretariat for Higher and Technical Education further considered the costs of future scholarships for the following years. While the East German government and its host institutions were expected to cover the costs of study, the home countries of the students were obligated to cover the costs of travel.36

After the total number of students for the upcoming year had been determined, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs worked closely with the East German diplomatic missions to decide with which countries to form agreements. First, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs considered all foreign policy matters, including the trade demands of different countries and the goals for the East German foreign policy for that year. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs further divided and allotted the number of scholarships to the various chosen countries, and then relied on the various East German diplomatic missions for technical support. The number of scholarships granted, along with details about the admission of students, was outlined in official forms and contracts between the home nation and East Germany; the East German government rarely, if

36 “Order: the Admission, Education and Care of Foreign Nationals at Universities, Secondary and Technical Schools of the GDR,” BArch, SAPMO.
ever, directly corresponded with the applicants. A government agreement had to include the number of students from the home country to study in East Germany and the length of their stay, as well as the obligation of the home government and its students to adhere to the length of the program. Additionally, it included the financial conditions of the program and the repatriation of students who did not meet the educational demands or broke East German law at the expense of the delegating country.\footnote{37 “Order: the Admission, Education and Care of Foreign Nationals at Universities, Secondary and Technical Schools of the GDR,” BArch, SAPMO.}

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs, along with the East German diplomatic missions, had to follow the allotted quotas that the State Secretariat for Higher and Technical Education provided for the admission of students to the universities and technical schools. The diplomatic missions were then responsible for advising the delegating nations on the selection of suitable candidates to study. Applicants to the secondary and technical schools were required to exhibit the level of graduates of the twelfth grade in East Germany to be admitted, while admitted applicants to the polytechnic secondary schools had to be above the educational level of the tenth grade. And furthermore, aspirants – defined as graduate students and job trainees – in the sciences had to possess a university degree. All admitted applicants for study at university level had to be between eighteen and thirty years of age, and admitted aspirants had to be younger than thirty-five. Once admitted, students were to arrive in East Germany in early September before the start of the East German academic year, and because of their home nations’ agreements with the East German government, the students could enter East Germany without a visa. The students from tropical and subtropical regions, for example North Vietnam, would have to be medically evaluated upon arrival at an East German airport.\footnote{38 \textit{Ibid}.}
As exemplified by the early programs with North Vietnam, admitted students were sent to the Institute for Foreign Students Leipzig, later called the Herder Institute, prior to matriculation at an East German university to learn not only the German language, but also the culture fostered by the East German government.\textsuperscript{39} The students would remain at the Herder Institute until they commanded the German language, and if they needed more instruction than the time provided, the students had to continue with their language preparation, as well as take additional preliminary courses for their studies. In the course of their education at the Herder Institute, the students needed to familiarize themselves with the “important laws, decrees and ethical standards,” along with the “political, economic and cultural life of the German Democratic Republic.” The East German state expected the students to embrace its vision for socialism and witness the construction of socialism in East Germany and the socialist German identity.\textsuperscript{40}

When finally matriculating at a university, students from socialist countries enrolled in a social sciences course. All students not enrolled in a social sciences course, for example those from “young national states,” had to study Marxism-Leninism to some degree, whether through a course or an organization.\textsuperscript{41} While studying at an East German university, foreign students would receive the utmost attention from the faculty, including “high measures of help and support, especially in their first year of study.” The students who did not receive “very good” remarks from the Herder Institute, but were nevertheless graduated from the institute to a university, mainly because the Herder Institute became overcrowded in the 1960s, further enrolled in German language courses at their respective universities. Those studying medicine and pharmacy

\textsuperscript{39} In the document from 1958, the language school was called the Institute for Foreign Students in Leipzig. However, in a later document, the school was referred to as the Herder Institute.
\textsuperscript{40} “Order: the Admission, Education and Care of Foreign Nationals at Universities, Secondary and Technical Schools of the GDR,” BArch, SAPMO.
\textsuperscript{41} Naumann, \textit{Zum Studium in der DDR}, 29.
could pursue further education in East Germany, however, students in other departments had to return home upon completion of their studies except for in exceptional cases.\footnote{42}

The students were relatively limited in their daily activities and interactions. As foreign citizens invited to study in East Germany, students were entitled to all of the rights provided by the state, law and decrees of the German Democratic Republic, on the condition that the students followed the East German law, in addition to the terms and conditions of the agreements between their home countries and the East German government. The students from African, Arab, Asian and Latin American nations had the right to convene amongst other students from their home nations. But if students from these regions met in larger groups, they had to register with the local authorities of the German People’s Police. When such meetings occurred, the students had to focus on “mutually supporting and promoting the optimal use of the stay to achieve the highest academic performance, strengthening the friendly relations between the homelands and the German Democratic Republic,” and “fostering the cultural traditions of their people.”\footnote{43}

Aside from having limited social lives, the students had to fulfill the political demands of the state and participate in state-sponsored activities when asked by host organizations and the Socialist Unity Party. This entailed participating in political and cultural work under the leadership of the Free German Youth and the Federal Association of the Free Federation of German Trade Unions.\footnote{44} East Berlin expected the students to contribute to the construction of socialism under the guidance of different state and economic organizations, and to participate in the more important highpoints of political and cultural work, such as parades and celebrations,

\footnote{42} “Order: the Admission, Education and Care of Foreign Nationals at Universities, Secondary and Technical Schools of the GDR,” BArch, SAPMO.  
\footnote{43} *Ibid*.  
\footnote{44} See Appendix I for more on the Free German Youth and the Free Federation of German Trade Unions. Helmut Caspar, *DDR - Lexicon: Von Trabi, Broiler, Stasi und Republikflucht*, (Petersberg, Germany: Michael Imhof Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, 2009), 108-110.
including: the Day of the Youth Campaign against Colonialism; the Day of the Liberation from Fascism; the Founding Day of the German Democratic Republic; the World Student Week, and the Day of the Liberation of Young National States.45

The Expansion of the Program and the Vietnam War

In 1965 and 1966, the East German state increased the number of foreign students at its universities, a goal it previously had but did not have the incentives to achieve until the escalation of the Vietnam War. By February 1965, 1851 students from foreign nations, including 939 students from African nations, 741 students from Asian nations, and 171 from Latin American countries excluding Cuba studied in East Germany. The students enrolled primarily in the sciences and math, subjects favored and promoted by the East German state even for East German students, as shown by the figure.46

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Study</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics / Natural Sciences</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applied Sciences</td>
<td>670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and Forestry, Veterinary Studies / Food Science</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine, Body Culture</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics, Law and Journalism</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy, Languages, Science Arts, History and Music</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1.2.47

East Germany further approved 800 new places for the 1965/66 school year. The additional seats were to be divided among nations as follows:

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45 “Order: the Admission, Education and Care of Foreign Nationals at Universities, Secondary and Technical Schools of the GDR,” BArch, SAPMO.
46 Connelly, Captive University, 62.
47 “Overview of Students from the Young National States in the GDR and the Possibility of the Expansion of Study in the GDR,” BArch, SAPMO.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National States</td>
<td>352 (around .45 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialist Nations</td>
<td>315 (around .40 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalist European Countries</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Organizations</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Committee of the SED</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1.3**: “National states” refer to developing nations. Many national states that East Germany hoped to form relations with were in East Asia and the Middle East.

Furthermore, the East German government hoped to reduce the seats available for students from socialist nations by thirty-five percent and increase the number of seats available for students from national states by sixty percent by 1970. In expanding the number of places available overall, the East German government encountered difficulties, particularly with the “accommodation and technical care for foreign students at institutions like TU Dresden and Karl-Marx-University Leipzig.” As an example, the state had already placed 650 students at the Herder Institute in Leipzig for language training; the institute could only accommodate 800 students. The task of housing the students and accommodating to what the state saw as their educational needs proved challenging, because East Berlin believed that those from young national states, the population of students that it had hoped to increase, struggled more with learning German than students from developed socialist nations in Eastern Europe.

These difficulties with the expansion of the program were apparent when East Berlin received a request from Hanoi to provide additional spots for Vietnamese students. The plans for the 1965/66 academic year changed when the North Vietnamese leadership appealed to the East German leadership, and all other governments that it had agreements with, to increase the intake of university and technical school students from North Vietnam. As outlined by a notice of action from 1965, the East German and North Vietnamese states had agreed on twenty new

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48 “Overview of Students from the Young National States in the GDR and the Possibility of the Expansion of Study in the GDR,” BArch, SAPMO.
students and aspirants for the 1965/66 academic year, a drastically different figure from what Hanoi now requested: 150 – 200 new students and aspirants. The East German state figured that it only had around thirty-five places at disposal within its entire student programs.

While East Berlin saw Hanoi’s request to accept additional students as an opportunity to expand its student program, it also used the request to increase its involvement internationally. In August 1964, the Vietnam War escalated when a North Vietnamese boat torpedoed the US destroyer Maddox in the Gulf of Tonkin. And though the details of the attack were and remain somewhat unclear, the White House immediately responded with airstrikes and further sought congressional approval to combat aggression against the US with the placement of ground troops in Vietnam; by March 1965, American ground troops had entered Vietnam. Thus, Hanoi effectively engaged the West in a full-scale war, leaving the socialist world with the tricky task of navigating how to aid Hanoi. Beijing agreed to send 300,000 troops to North Vietnam in the spring of 1965 and encouraged discourse between Hanoi and Washington to soothe tensions, whereas the Soviet Union merely condemned US aggression because its leadership was skeptical of Hanoi’s plight and chances against the US.

The immediate response of East Germany to the escalated war in Vietnam predictably aligned with Moscow’s reaction; because of its own relationship with Moscow, the East German state could not overstep the Soviet state in military support to Vietnam. An article from the

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50 Here, I refer to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam as “North Vietnam.” In the documents from the early 1960s that I am using in my research, the East Germans rarely refer to the Democratic Republic of Vietnam as North Vietnam. However, they do refer to Republic of Vietnam as South Vietnam.


52 Lüthi, The Sino-Soviet Split, 305.

53 Ibid.

54 Ibid.
Neues Deutschland in August 1964, titled “World Calls for the Cessation of USA-Provocativeness” condemns the American airstrikes in Vietnam. According to the article, official circles of the GDR condemn the provocation against Vietnam, which is shown by an authorized ADN-statement to the most decisive and demand the immediate cessation of the aggressive acts. In all of the population strata of the GDR, the raid has triggered great indignation; in demonstrations and meetings, the workers of the GDR declare solidarity with the Vietnamese people.55

By July 1965, the East German state expressed confidence in the power of socialism and believed that the socialist cause in Vietnam would defeat the West. The Neues Deutschland claimed that the “war for liberation” in Vietnam would be won in an article, “Vietnam will prevail.” The article emphasized the role of capitalism in the war in Vietnam. According to it, the escalation of the war was “a manifestation of the profound crisis of the imperialist power system and the American power policies.” It explained that “the strongest political, economic and military power of the capitalist world is not capable of coping with people fighting for their freedom.” Finally, the article argued that East Germany had provided fraternal aid to North Vietnam by launching aid campaigns and offering support along with the Soviet Union and other socialist nations.56

This article was vague in its description of how East Berlin aided Hanoi. As shown by the documents from the German Federal Archives, one way that the East German state provided support to North Vietnam was through its student program. In processing the North Vietnamese request from 1965 to accept more students, the East German government via the State Secretariat for Higher and Technical Education assessed what measures needed to be taken to admit such an increased number of students. East Berlin found a number of necessary prerequisites that had to be fulfilled for the request to come to fruition, first and foremost with the required one year

German language preparation prior to matriculation at a university. The East German state had to expand the first year language program by “provisioning a building with rooms for teaching and housing, maybe in the Free German Youth or the Free Federation of German Trade Unions school.” Furthermore, the state needed an additional twenty language instructors, as well as to find an additional 800,000 East German Marks (MDN) to pay for scholarships and care, for example, food and housing. Finally, East Berlin had to figure out how to further prepare the students enrolled in language programs for their studies in East German universities and develop any additional training courses that these students may need.57

Despite the challenges that taking in an additional 150-200 students from North Vietnam posed, the State Secretary for Higher and Technical Education recommended allotting additional places to Hanoi for the 1965/1966, largely because it would further the expansion of East Germany’s entire student program and support the socialist cause in North Vietnam. After a meeting, detailed in the notice of action from 1965, it was decided that first the request made by Hanoi should be submitted to the Secretary of the Central Committee. Then, the Ministry for Foreign Affairs would collaborate with the Central Council of the Free German Youth, as well as the National Board of the Free German Trade Union Federation, to find a suitable property for the language preparation courses.58 Finally, the State Secretariat for Higher and Technical Education had to review and calculate the exact material demands and implications that this would have on the 1966 academic year.59

For the following academic year – 1966/1967 – Hanoi asked East Berlin to admit 220 new students. To honor the North Vietnamese government’s request and make it come to

57 “Notice of Action,” BArch, SAPMO.
58 The Central Council and the National Board were the governing bodies of their respective organizations.
59 “Notice of Action,” BArch, SAPMO.
fruition, the East German leadership terminated the previous contract that it had with the North Vietnamese and created a new agreement with the aims to:

support the Vietnamese people in their intensified fair struggle against the US-aggression, and in this context, to create further comprehensive training facilities for the professional cadres of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the region of higher and technical education.

The agreement mandated that 180 of the students were to enroll in either secondary or technical schools, while the remaining forty were to be aspirants. In preparation for the 220 students, the East German government expanded the Herder Institute by providing more classrooms and living quarters for foreign students at the Engineering School for Automation Leipzig-Dölitz. The state further moved the 310 East German students living at the Engineering School for Automation to newly built living barracks and private quarters provided by the mayor of Leipzig.

The East German government planned what subjects the students would pursue, the allotted number of places per subject, and the university where each subject would be taught. Further educational institutions would be developed in exceptional cases, and under an official agreement between the German Democratic Republic and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. The allotment of seats went accordingly:

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60 More specifically, 120 of the 310 East German students were to be placed in the living barracks, and 130 of the East German students were to be placed in the private living arrangements provided. „Entwurf;“ “Outline,” August 1966. Foundation Archives of Parties and Mass Organizations of the GDR in the Federal Archives (SAPMO): DR Y/30/IV A 2.9.04/466.

61 “Outline,” BArch, SAPMO.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Duration of Study (in years)</th>
<th>Number of Spots</th>
<th>Secondary / Technical School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Berg Academy Freiberg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry of Mining</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Berg Academy Freiberg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining and Metallurgy</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Berg Academy Freiberg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Technical University Karl-Marx-City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction and Building Architecture</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Secondary School for Construction Weimar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Railroad Industry</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Secondary School for Transportation Sciences Dresden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Road Construction</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Karl-Marx-University Leipzig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Karl-Marx-University Leipzig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Technical University Dresden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering Economics</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Technical University Dresden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry of Apparatus Construction</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>TH Magdeburg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shipbuilding</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>University of Rostock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electrical Engineering</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>IS Mittweide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>IS Apolda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Engineering</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>IS Weimar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas Technology</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>IS Markkleeberg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1.4.**

The East German government did not increase the number of places available in the social sciences, only in the hard sciences and engineering. And by providing an education to Vietnamese students in the subjects included in the table, East Berlin not only aided Hanoi in its wartime efforts, but also assisted the Vietnamese government in rebuilding its infrastructure after the war.

Through the new arrangement for the 1966/67 academic year with Hanoi, the East German state expanded its student program and realized its political aspirations for the program: the state had taken an active role in the Vietnam war while remaining militarily inactive.

Though East Berlin struggled to find resources in the technical arrangement of its student programs, it was able to achieve its political goals through this arrangement.

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62 “Outline,” BArch, SAPMO.
program with North Vietnam in 1965, 1966 and 1967, it readily accepted appeals made by Hanoi and adopted an academic regiment that suited the needs of the war-torn nation in hopes to strengthen the North Vietnamese government and its infrastructure. The Vietnam war, or as the East Germans called it, the Vietnamese struggle for liberation, provided the East German state space to act in an international arena. And because the North Vietnamese government needed an infrastructure to sustain a war, the East German state could help through academic exchange that focused on the sciences and math, and not take too active of a role in the war itself.

*Political Care and its Challenges*

The 1966/67 academic year marked another significant development in the student program with Vietnam: the East German government admitted forty-five students from the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam, a political move that intended to undermine Western efforts in the South, as well as provide an East German education in socialism. The East German government had employed the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to work with the Central Committee of the National Front to administer the program. Together, the East German government and the National Front agreed that of the forty-five students, thirty would matriculate in either a secondary or a technical school, and fifteen would be aspirants. The breakdown of the number of secondary and technical students, their subjects, schools and the duration of their stay was as follows:

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63 During this period, the Party competed with its Western counterpart in Bonn for a presence in developing nations (Third World). See *Cold War Germany, and the Third World, and the Global Humanitarian Regime* by Young-Sun Hong for more.

64 „*Anlage 3 – Aide-Memoire,*“ „*Enclosure 3 – Aide-Memoire,*“ August 1966, Foundation Archives of Parties and Mass Organizations of the GDR in the Federal Archives (SAPMO): DR Y/30/IV A 2.9.04/466.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Duration of Study (in years)</th>
<th>Number of Spots</th>
<th>Secondary / Technical School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Petrochemistry</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Construction</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biology - Genetics</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inorganic Chemistry</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical Chemistry</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Chemistry</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organic Chemistry</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precision Engineering</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Engineering School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Optics</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Engineering School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 1.5.**

An Aide-Memoire further discloses the terms of the arrangement between the German Democratic Republic and the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam for the 1966/67 academic year. The two states planned that the students would begin their yearlong German language courses at the Herder Institute on the first of October, and upon completion of the language course, the students would be placed into their respective programs at the universities. The students pursuing physics, chemistry, precision engineering and biology had to complete an examination of their skills in these subjects; based on their results, the State Secretariat for Higher and Technical Education decided if the students were ready to matriculate in East German universities. The students would receive 280 East German Marks per month during their studies, while the aspirants would receive 470 East German Marks, and both groups would have free health care.

The decision of the East German state to expand its student program to South Vietnam introduced more technical difficulties, as well as what the East German government perceived as political problems, to a program that already faced many challenges. By the 1966/67 academic year, the East German government had “no uniform political conception for the work with foreign citizens,” and thus “a systematic work oriented on the conception of politics did not

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65 “Enclosure 3 – Aide-Memoire,” BArch, SAPMO.  
66 I define Aide-Memoire here as an informal diplomatic memo.  
Furthermore, the East German government had no uniform leadership and coordination for the education of foreign students. One reason for this was that the East German government struggled with students coming from different educational backgrounds, as well as political and ideological backgrounds. Because the students came from different environments, East Berlin had to put more effort in the political and ideological work with the students for the program to be successful from an East German standpoint. Furthermore, the East German state further viewed the “political care” of the students as a major weakness in the program. The state entrusted representatives to carry out the political care of the students. However, East Berlin found that the representatives pursued this education “spontaneously and randomly,” which undercut the purpose of the program.

And the state desperately wanted to further the political and ideological education of the foreign students, because the East German leadership felt threatened by their political circumstances. First of all, the East German government believed that West Germany threatened to “influence” and “abuse” the foreign students in East Germany for subversive activities, especially in Berlin. Under the agreements East Berlin had with other governments in 1966, students were able travel to West Berlin, West Germany and other Western countries from East Germany. And this ability to travel to West Germany and Western nations promoted negative political influences in the eyes of the East German government. East Berlin believed that the student unions and groups, especially those that involved students from young national states, had the potential to undermine its political goals with the home governments of the students.

68 “Enclosure 3 – Aide-Memoire,” BArch, SAPMO.
69 The political care, or politische Betreuung, in this context implies that the representatives will make certain that the students adopt and follow the East German views on socialism – Marxist-Leninism, as well as not disrupt the system and create trouble.
70 „Vorlage an die Abteilungsleitung,“ “Model of the Department Leadership,” Foundation Archives of Parties and Mass Organizations of the GDR in the Federal Archives (SAPMO): DR Y/30/IV A 2.9.04/466.
Adding to this, the foreign students at many universities were not bonding with the East German students in friendship organizations or the Free German Youth, and this was partly because the foreign students were housed together in the dormitories.\textsuperscript{71}

A report from the foreign commission sector of the larger ideological commission of the Socialist Unity Party leadership at the Technical University Dresden provides an example of the political care of the students. The report, written in January 1966, outlined the specific programs that the university had encountered with students from the nations that it hosted, including Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Yugoslavia, Mongolia and Vietnam. The report reasoned that most of the students from foreign nations approved of the politics of building socialism, and they further actively supported the East German efforts towards peaceful coexistence and the struggle to preserve world peace. The political support from most of the foreign students was obvious, according to the foreign commission sector, in the work of student organizations and in discussions with party organizers.\textsuperscript{72}

The report further concluded that the Vietnamese students actively worked in efforts to win support from the German students and other foreign students for the national struggle of independence in Vietnam. However, according to the report, the students from Vietnam no longer participated in the lectures at the Institute for Marxism-Leninism, in addition to other political and student organizations. Because of the failure of the Vietnamese students to partake in these organizations, their speaking and technical skills had suffered. Ultimately, the report gathered that the students were undermining their own education in East Germany, and in doing

\textsuperscript{71} The document does not go into detail about the East German students and whether they wanted to befriend foreign students. In fact, it only considers East German students in the Free German Youth and other friendship organizations, indicating that these relations were forced and under the terms of the government. “Model of the Department Leadership,” BArch.

so, were compromising the benefits that this education would provide North Vietnam. The political circumstances and beliefs of the Vietnamese students will be further expanded on and analyzed in the second chapter.

*A Competitive Relationship: East Germany versus the Soviet Union*

It is noteworthy that East Germany developed its student program with North Vietnam in mid-1950s, when significant disagreements over policy emerged between East Berlin under the leadership of Ulbricht and Moscow under Khrushchev. According to Hope Millard Harrison, Ulbricht had opposed the path of liberalization that Khrushchev had promised at the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956. This was partially because Ulbricht shared many similarities with Stalin: he preferred firm control over East Germany and had created his own cult of personality; these two factors conflicted with the measures taken at the Twentieth Party Congress to distance Khrushchev, his rule and the Eastern Bloc from Stalin and Stalin’s regime. However, Ulbricht also opposed measures towards liberalization because East Germany had experienced significant economic hardships that demanded Soviet aid, including a steep decline in its workforce that resulted from the mass exodus of East Germans to West Germany. Due to these economic hardships, along with the East German take on West German policies as aggressive and imperialist, Ulbricht and the Party disapproved of initial attempts made by Khrushchev and Moscow towards peaceful coexistence and forming relations with Western nations, particularly West Germany. Moreover, Ulbricht had to secure his control over East Germans, prevent further immigration to West Germany, and improve the East German economy to ensure East Germany’s success and future.

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73 “Report about the Foreign Studies at the TU Dresden,” BArch, SAPMO.
An outlet where the East German leadership could take these measures was through its foreign policy. According to Ingrid Muth, the foreign policy of East Germany had to “shape and preserve the favorable international conditions for the existence and the development of the GDR,” which entailed the following, among others:

The foreign policy security of the existence and stability of the GDR as an independent, sovereign state and subject of international law; the consolidation and expansion of the relationships in all areas to the Soviet Union as the guaranteeing power for the existence of the GDR; the consolidation of peace and security in Europe, which, from the viewpoint of the GDR, were threatened by the restoration of German imperialism and militarism in West Germany and the politics rooted in the federal republic. The German-German relationships were therefore for the GDR a primary security factor; and the development and care of an intensive external trades relations both within the few alliances as well as with countries from the Western and Third World…

Muth’s list of standards that the East German leadership set out to achieve align with the goals that it had created for its student program, especially with North Vietnam. East Berlin designed a student program that helped the state legitimize its newly formed socialist government and craft a foreign policy. And through the student program with North Vietnam and later South Vietnam, the young East German state created a space for itself within the post-WWII world. The student program allowed East Berlin to strengthen its sovereignty and independence, work to expand its relations within the socialist world while aligning with the Soviet Union, work to create a German nation that promoted a socialist vision for peace, and develop trade with socialist nations as well as young national states. Ultimately, the student program became important to East Germany and its quest to create a sense of nationhood.

But the student program also offered the East German state a relationship independent of the Soviet Union with other socialist nations like North Vietnam. Though student exchange was becoming increasingly common in the socialist world at the time, the East German leadership effectively used its student program to insert itself within the North Vietnamese political sphere.

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77 Muth, *Die DDR-Außenpolitik*, 49.
In its program with North Vietnam, East Berlin directly aided in securing a socialist Vietnam and in the modernization of the nation. 78 The East German support through educating Vietnamese citizens helped strengthen the war-torn nation’s then current infrastructure, as well as its future infrastructure. East Germany fulfilled its promises of fraternal support and promoted international socialist solidarity without the involvement of the Soviet Union, thus establishing itself as a power within the socialist world, or at least as a resourceful friend to developing socialist nations struggling for what East Berlin believed was their liberation from imperialist nations.

The student program, this chapter has shown, was created in a moment of international socialist optimism: East Germany hoped to increase its legitimacy abroad and North Vietnam hoped to increase its technical capacity, all under the umbrella of international socialist solidarity. This moment soon ended. By the mid-1960s, the student program that united the two nations sacrificed their relationship, not least because of the conflicting views of socialism that divided the socialist world. The original arrangements of the student program became trivial as the Vietnamese students tested the East German state and its fraternal support to Hanoi, as well as challenged their own government and the socialist system it was creating. Instances where students acted out against East Germany and North Vietnam reveal the insecurities of both nations surrounding national identity and their place within the socialist world, which is further explored in Chapter 2.

2.

Real People:
The Limits of Socialist Exchange, 1963-1968

In the summer of 1966, six students from the Democratic Republic of Vietnam studying in the German Democratic Republic refused to go home. The students, as part of the arrangement between East Berlin and Hanoi, had to return to North Vietnam for the duration of their summer break at the Technical University Dresden. The failure of students to adhere to the conditions of the state-sponsored trip would result in questioning by East German state security agents and possibly the ex-matriculation of the students, according to an assessment by the District Administration for the State Security Dresden sent to the Ministry for State Security (Stasi) headquartered in East Berlin. Although they constituted only a small proportion of their delegation – there were ninety-four students from North Vietnam at the Technical University in November 1966 – these students and their refusal to return home undermined the shared goals of East Berlin and Hanoi. As so often in the global 1960s, students refused to comply, with unpredictable consequences for both the students and the states.

The anxiety surrounding national identity and state control that complicated the relationship between the Vietnamese students and the East German state is an overarching theme in this chapter. I give voice and agency to the North Vietnamese students, who refused to play along and created problems for both states. These students were on the frontlines of socialist internationalism, as well as the growing divides within the socialist world. I first examine the

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breakdown in international socialist relations more broadly, focusing on four players: North Vietnam, East Germany, China and the Soviet Union. I then analyze documents from the Stasi Archives, including Stasi surveillance reports, Chinese propaganda and conversations between East Germans and North Vietnamese, to place the focus on a small group of students to see how socialist internationalism and the divide in the socialist world were re-enacted on an intimate level among real people. I finally explore the paradox of the East German student program and the socialist friendship: after inviting Vietnamese students to study in East Germany to promote international solidarity and friendship, East Berlin isolated them to preserve relations with Hanoi.

In the mid-1950s, the East German state sought to educate Vietnamese students in the East German tradition of Marxism-Leninism. However, in the midst of an escalated Vietnam War in the mid-1960s and deteriorated socialist relations internationally, East Berlin realized that this would not be possible and fostered an environment where the Vietnamese could refuse their political education in East Germany, as long as they kept their ideas within their delegation. In turn, this created a space where an academic exchange could not effectively take place and prosper. This leads to my argument that it was never really about the student program and the exchange of academia for East Berlin and Hanoi, but rather for the boost to the national agendas of both states that it provided. The goals for exchange from the 1950s conflicted with the rigid state control that both East Berlin and Hanoi insisted upon in the 1960s. As intra-socialist conflict broke out, the contradictions of the educational exchange between the two states, as well as socialist internationalism itself, became very transparent.

Rocky Relations

Since its beginnings in 1945, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) was embroiled in both internal and external conflict. Its leader, Ho Chi Minh, struggled to secure
statehood throughout the late 1940s and 1950s. The young state experienced economic instability and lacked control in the South, largely because “most of the population opposed the DRV and the communist movement had yet to recover from French repression during the Second World War,” according to Mark Atwood Lawrence. But the state also fought for its existence in the midst of international upheaval, and battled France for its independence and liberation from its colonizers. Early in their nine-year battle against the French, the Vietnamese communists were placed on an international front for the “confrontation between democratic capitalism and international communism” and garnered the attention of the Soviet Union, China and the United States.

Hanoi had experience fighting the West when tensions escalated and it engaged Washington in full-scale war at the Gulf of Tonkin in August 1964. The North Vietnamese state viewed the American involvement in the South in the early 60s as a renewed colonial presence. Partly because of this, Hanoi encouraged a revolutionary atmosphere within its borders throughout the 1960s. And although the North Vietnamese leaders saw re-engagement with the West as a means to secure their freedom and advance efforts in the South towards the liberation from Western imperialism, they received divided responses from the socialist powers. According to Lorenz Lüthi, both Moscow and Beijing had initial reservations about the North Vietnamese and their plight against the Americans, even though both states eventually aided Hanoi

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3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid., 28-29.
6 For more on the ten-year period between 1954 and 1964, see Lawrence, *The Vietnam War*, 67-88.
financially, politically and militarily.  

Hanoi’s direct action and battle against Washington challenged peaceful coexistence, a policy that divided the socialist camp prior to the 1960s. It further exposed the underlying issues between the powers of the socialist world, most notably, Moscow and Beijing.

The pursuit for peaceful coexistence came after the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953, when Moscow dramatically changed its domestic and foreign policy. Under Stalin, the Soviet state secured its borders and maintained a firm grasp on the Eastern Bloc. However, after his death, Moscow committed itself to softening its image in the West through denouncing the terrors carried out by Stalin and combatting Western fears of Soviet aggression that were previously nurtured through his cult of personality. In addition to ameliorating its image abroad, the Kremlin sought to push Eastern Bloc nations towards diplomatic relations with the West and towards “peaceful cooperation” with NATO nations. When Nikita Khrushchev emerged as the leader of the Soviet Union in 1956, Moscow had adopted this more neutral stance towards the West, as well as promoted “public diplomacy” and “propaganda of disarmament,” according to Vladislav Zubok. The state permitted Soviet “artists, scientists, writers, musicians, and journalists” to travel to Western nations to improve its image and actively promote its agenda of peaceful coexistence. And though Moscow’s new approach to foreign policy under Khrushchev’s leadership was not overly successful in its attempts to alleviate tensions with the West, it had a profound impact on the other socialist states, especially the other socialist power, Beijing.

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11 *Ibid*.
12 *Ibid*.
Led by Mao Zedong, the Chinese communists believed that Khrushchev and his agenda of peaceful coexistence were misguided. They feared that Khrushchev’s policies could threaten Mao’s own leadership in China, as well as undermine the chances of a socialist revolution throughout the world. First and foremost, Mao viewed destalinization as an attack against himself and a threat to his rule, because he had adopted some of Stalin’s more brutal tactics to achieve his goals of collectivization and industrialization. Mao, like Stalin, crafted a cult of personality to secure his power and modernize China through his program, the Great Leap Forward. Aside from Mao and domestic worries, the Chinese Communist Party believed that the peaceful coexistence doctrine undermined the international communist struggle to defeat the “American imperialists” in Taiwan, as well as the efforts of Marxists-Leninists internationally towards the success of the proletariat. Furthermore, Beijing believed that Marxism was a reality in China, whereas in the Soviet Union, the state leadership had abandoned Marxism for revisionism. The Chinese leadership felt threatened that the Kremlin wanted to achieve peaceful coexistence, because it benefited from the previous protectionist policies adhered to by Stalin. And without Moscow, Beijing believed that it had to take on the West alone.

The growing rift between Moscow and Beijing, along with the peaceful coexistence doctrine, tremendously affected Hanoi, who relied on aid from both states to fight the West. The divide between the two socialist powers crept into North Vietnamese politics and impeded efforts of the North Vietnamese military. Beijing warned Hanoi of Moscow’s intentions behind its doctrine of peaceful coexistence, or rather what the Chinese perceived as the “revisionism” of

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14 Ibid, 46.
16 Ibid, 64, 115.
17 Ibid, 64, 151.
18 See Zubok, Chapter 4: “Kremlin Politics and ‘Peaceful Coexistence,’ 1953-1957,” in *A Failed Empire*.
19 Lawrence, *The Vietnam War*, 94-9
socialism by the Soviet leadership, and advised Hanoi to proceed with caution in its relations with Moscow; whereas, Moscow provided Hanoi with a great amount of economic and political aid that China did not have the means to offer.  

Hence, Hanoi found itself in a complicated position between both Moscow and Beijing, and had to manage a middle ground between the two socialist powers.

Like Hanoi, East Berlin was caught in a similarly entangled position throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, not between Moscow and Beijing, but rather Moscow and the West. The Socialist Unity Party perceived the Soviet agenda to pursue friendly relations with the West, especially with Bonn, as a threat to its nationhood because so many of its citizens fled to West Germany. Between its founding in 1949 and the construction of the Berlin Wall in August 1961, approximately 3.8 million East Germans fled to West Germany. The state leadership realized that it could lose its nation to what it viewed as an imperialist West German government. Yet the East German state relied on the political support of the Kremlin, and needed this support to remain intact as a socialist nation and to not be reunified with West Germany under Adenauer’s leadership.

What emerged in the 1960s was a complex geopolitical situation with four players – East Germany, the Soviet Union, China and North Vietnam – all of whom became intertwined by their own national goals. Partly because East Berlin was so connected to Moscow and considerably influenced by the Soviet state, the East German leadership did not trust the Chinese Communist Party, despite their shared views towards the peaceful coexistence doctrine. East Berlin was critical of the international socialist revolution that Beijing advocated for

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21 Ibid, 323.
23 Gray, Germany's Cold War, 10-13.
internationally and Beijing’s belief in its Soviet “revisionist theory” that Moscow failed to follow a Marxist path. The East German state, particularly the Stasi, came into contact with these ideas through propaganda that the Chinese sent to East German citizens and businesses. In September 1963, Colonel Kistowski, the leader of the Department VII, the division for the “German people’s police” within the Stasi, wrote to Colonel Schröder, the leader of the Department V, the division that controlled the flight of citizens from the republic abroad, that there was a “more serious seizure of printed materials from the People’s Republic of China” in September 1963.  

According to Kistowski, the Stasi had recorded 890 correspondences with printed material from the Chinese state, forty percent of which came from London, in August 1963. Kistowski further described the mail, including a twelve-chapter bulletin from the Chinese embassy in August 1963, as propagating the “dogmatic and slanderous perceptions of the Chinese leader.”

The twelve-chapter bulletin was part of an anti-Soviet campaign carried out by Beijing following the partial nuclear test-ban treaty signed by Moscow, Washington and London in July 1963. In the bulletin, the Chinese castigated Moscow for its relations and agreement with the “imperialist” West over nuclear arms. Beijing further endeavored to build opposition to Moscow from within the socialist world. The Chinese state believed that the Soviet leadership, as well as its supporters, turned against a socialist agenda.  

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24 Jens Gieseke, *Die hauptamtlichen Mitarbeiter des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit (MfS-Handbuch)*, (Berlin: Hg. BStU, 1996). According to Christian Domnitz, the Department V was the predecessor to Department XX, which combatted opposition. Christian Domnitz, *Kooperation und Kontrolle: Die Arbeit der Stasi-Operativgruppen im sozialistischen Ausland*, (Bristol, CT: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht GmbH & Co. KG, 2016), 33, 118.
…it is our duty of the proletarian internationalism to point out that the [Soviet government] has now betrayed the interests of the Soviet people and of the entire socialist camp. If someone has really lost their mind, it is not the Chinese people, who consistently take the right point of view, but the Soviet leaders, who betray their own points of view…

…but if they try to make us silent under the pretense of nonintervention in domestic affairs, it will not succeed. Whoever wants to defend Marxism-Leninism must unmask the actions of the betrayers in Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism. Anyone who does not expose such acts of treason ceases to be a communist…

The language used by Beijing in the bulletin directly threatened East Berlin. Because the East German leadership officially supported Moscow and maintained a close relationship with the Soviet leadership, the East German leaders “ceased” to be communist, according to the Chinese state. Furthermore, East Berlin did not view Moscow as a betrayer to “proletarian internationalism” and rarely, if ever, used this language to describe an international socialist movement. The East German leadership was even more intimidated by Chinese bulletins and brochures when they were sent throughout East Germany, especially to Berlin and Leipzig. According to Kistowski, Beijing mailed a great amount of propaganda to “people with foreign names, presumably students” in East Germany, as well as a “large quantity to bookstores.” The Stasi collected these materials and thoroughly examined not only their content, but also where they were mailed from, who sent them, and to whom they were sent, because any propaganda that promoted a political agenda different from that of East Berlin threatened the state. The state wanted neither its citizens nor the “foreign students” to receive propaganda calling for proletarian internationalism because it inherently threatened the leadership and its stronghold on the nation.

Encounters between the Stasi and the Chinese diplomatic mission made the political divide in the socialist world apparent. The Stasi closely watched the Chinese embassy and

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28 Bulletin: of the Embassy of the People’s Republic China in the German Democratic Republic,” BStU, 12.
29 I read through documents from over 60 files at both the Federal Archives and the Stasi Archives, and rarely found East Germans using the term “proletarian internationalism.”
infiltrated it to a certain extent, as shown in a report by an informal collaborator from 1967.\footnote{The “GI” or Geheimner Informater, or secret informer, fell into the category of informal/unofficial workers for the Stasi. Informal collaborators and secret informers were usually not paid. Roland Lucht, \textit{Das Archiv der Stasi}, (Bristol, CT: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 118.} In his report, the informal collaborator described his visit with his wife to the Chinese embassy in great detail. According to him, the couple was initially greeted by a representative named Chang and was immediately warned to keep the details of their conversation private because the Stasi had planted people in the embassy. In their conversation, Chang railed against the ‘modern revisionists’ and said that one had to speak inconspicuously again and again of the new ‘czars’ in the Kremlin. The ‘modern revisionists’ in the Kremlin would come to a very bad end, and also ‘Mr. Ulbricht and his revisionists’ will not be spared from this…It will be very bad for these people.

He further reasoned that the modern revisionists could not prevent an uprising in the Soviet Union…It will at one point break out, and the revisionists will not calculate it.\footnote{“Bericht,” “Report,” 12 June 1967, The Federal Commissioner for the Records of the State Security Service of the former German Democratic Republic (BStU), Archive of the Central Department: MfS – HA XX, Nr. 17563, 3.} Chang denounced the political system in Moscow and in East Berlin, as well as the East German take on Marxism-Leninism and the position of Ulbricht and the East German political elite.\footnote{\textit{Ibid}, 1-3.} Though his words were slanderous, Chang and his presence in East Berlin were an even greater threat to the East German state, because he could have met with East German citizens and foreign students in person to promote the political agenda of the Chinese government, start a revolution and overthrow the East German leadership.

By sending printed materials and denouncing the states, the Chinese government actively promoted a permanent revolution in both the Soviet Union and East Germany. Lüthi best described the Chinese theory when he referred to political scientist Lowell Dittmer, who identified four characteristics central to Mao’s implementation of the Continuous Revolution: charismatic leadership, a salvational mission, mass mobilization, and an illegitimate authority structure that was the target of the struggle.\footnote{Lüthi, \textit{The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World}, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 83.}
With pamphlets and diplomacy, Beijing targeted authorities that it believed to be “illegitimate”: the Soviet leadership and its followers, which included East Berlin. The Chinese further spread their beliefs and attempted “mass mobilization”; however, mobilization was limited in East Germany to those in the inner circle of the Chinese embassy and evidently, foreign students.

In actively promoting a permanent revolution, Beijing made East Berlin aware of its leadership, its citizens and the socialist states that it influenced. East Berlin did not want any unrest. If a revolution occurred, even a socialist one, it would overturn the political system and the authority of the East German leadership. Unlike Beijing and Hanoi, East Berlin did not need to modernize. But it did need to prevent further population decline to maintain its statehood, which it achieved through the political and ideological control of citizens. Largely because of prior difficulties with flight to the West, East Berlin did not tolerate citizens who questioned the political system, especially those who would promote the “proletarian internationalism” that Beijing advocated. By the early 1960s, East Berlin developed a complex surveillance system by means of the Ministry of State Security, whose “responsibilities were never clearly defined.” The Stasi undertook the mass surveillance of the East German citizens and dealt with the opposition. And because the ministry could not as easily control foreign students, especially ones from Vietnam, it did not want East Germans to form close relationships

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35 The state had concentrated the power in the hands of a small bureaucratic class, had accepted Marxism-Leninism as source of values and had centralized the security forces and the police. The state also experienced stability from the “relatively cheap raw material imports from the Soviet Union and the presence of its armed forces on East German territory,” according to Mike Dennis and Norman Laporte in State and Minorities in Communist East Germany, (New York, NY: Berghahn Books, 2011), 2.

36 See Lüthi, The Sino-Soviet Split, Chapter 3: “Mao’s Challenges.”


with them. The Stasi therefore closely monitored the Vietnamese students who were politically active outside of their close-knit community.

*Altercations in Leipzig*

The delegation of Vietnamese students collectively did not cooperate with East Berlin. As part of its arrangements with Hanoi in 1965, East Berlin planned for the Vietnamese students to study Marxism-Leninism in some capacity and partake in state-sanctioned events. By 1966, however, the plans for the Vietnamese students failed, as illustrated by an incident during the summer. Over the summer break, the state placed a group of Vietnamese students from the Herder Institute in Leipzig in a summer camp at Buckow. The state “invited” the students to a meeting with the Club of Intelligentsia, a group centered on the sciences and arts under the jurisdiction of the state-funded Cultural Association. The leader of the Vietnamese cohort, referred to as the secretary, declined the mandatory invitation, because “Vietnamese students had no right to speak about political problems.” He further expressed his anger that he and his fellow countrymen could only socialize with young grammar school students who had no understanding of politics. Moreover, the Vietnamese students were irritated that they did not have a space where they could discuss political affairs with East Germans who had a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of politics. East Berlin, however, did not trust the Vietnamese students, because it was so concerned about ideology and the political leanings of its own students.

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39 “Order: the Admission, Education and Care of Foreign Nationals at Universities, Secondary and Technical Schools of the GDR,” SAPMO.
40 Maria Nühlen, *Erwachsenenbildung und die Philosophie: Historischer Rückblick und die Herausforderung für die Zukunft*, (Berlin, Germany: Lit Verlag, 2010), 152.
Meeting of Solidarity between North Vietnamese Communists and East German Youth. Circa 1960s. This photo illustrates the expectations of Vietnamese students in East Germany. They were “invited” to meetings, but rather than meeting East Germans their own age, they met with younger students.

Furthermore, the delegation of Vietnamese students interacted more closely with Chinese students than with other groups in East Germany. By the early 1960s, the Stasi was aware of this growing closeness, as well as the revolutionary spirit of both the Vietnamese and Chinese delegations. An unpaid informant for the Stasi gathered intelligence on the two delegations during a meeting at the Karl Liebknecht Plant in Magdeburg in 1963. According to the informant, the students discussed the differing views from within the international communist movement towards the doctrine of peaceful coexistence. While the Chinese students believed that a violent revolution was needed to settle the dispute between the “oppressors and the oppressed,” the Vietnamese students argued that peaceful coexistence had a “debilitating” effect.

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42 MfS BV Magdeburg Aug/Fo/800 Bild 108.
43 Lucht, Das Archiv der Stasi, 118.
on the war for the liberation of the “oppressed peoples.” The students also explored how Soviet economic support to China ended because of different political views, and as a result, some 30,000 Chinese workers lost their jobs. The Vietnamese students were unsettled by how differing political opinions within communism would lead the USSR to cut aid to China and hinder efforts towards international solidarity. From these conversations, it is clear that the Vietnamese students were most concerned with socialist efforts towards the conflict in Vietnam. They believed that more efforts and socialist collaborations were needed to secure socialism in Southeast Asia. Even though the Vietnamese students and East Berlin shared similar views towards the peaceful coexistence doctrine, the East German state did not want the violent revolution supported by the Chinese students and distrusted the Vietnamese because of their close relationship with them.

However, not all of the Vietnamese students supported the Chinese state and its revolutionary ideals. The divide within the international socialist movement extended to the Vietnamese students in East Germany, as illustrated by the assessment of the students at the Technical University Dresden, as well as by an assessment of the students in Leipzig. In the report from Leipzig, a captain at the Analysis and Informations Group within the District Administration of the Stasi expanded on the social and work relationships of the students. According to the captain, the students disagreed over the political direction of their government, which impacted their studies and daily lives in East Germany.

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45 The Central Analysis and Informations Group, or ZAIG, conducted many of the ideological assessments for the Ministry of State Security (MfS). Roland Lucht, Das Archiv der Stasi, (Bristol, CT: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 2015), 250.

46 There were twelve females and sixty-three males from Vietnam registered with the Leipzig police in November 1966. According to the Stasi captain, forty-four Vietnamese studied German at the Herder Institute, while seven
adamantly supported Hanoi and its more revolutionary political leanings, but a small cohort of nine students actively favored East Berlin and its political system. The nine students, like those in Dresden, voiced their sentiments after refusing to return home for the summer break. Because this small group actively opposed Hanoi, students in the Vietnamese delegation “could no longer live and study together.”

The majority of the Vietnamese delegation was so extremely dedicated to Hanoi and its “struggle” for socialism that they avenged the nine students by breaking into their cabinets in the dormitory that housed the entire delegation and stealing their personal belongings. The university administration intervened and moved the small cohort into the homes of Leipzig citizens. And in response, the leaders of the larger Vietnamese delegation, who spoke for all Vietnamese students in Leipzig at meetings with the North Vietnamese embassy, reported to Hanoi that the nine were enticed by the East German authorities and were morally degenerate because they turned their backs against the Vietnamese revolution, as well as their loved ones in Vietnam. The leaders of the larger group had reason for concern: they were not only devoted to their state and its revolution, but they were also tasked with keeping their peers politically aligned with their government. The nine dissenters thus endangered themselves and the leaders of the entire Vietnamese student delegation in Leipzig.

According to the captain in Leipzig, the delegation of Vietnamese students formed a close-knit group that became impermeable to university officials and the Stasi, accept when problems within the group became apparent from the outside. The delegation had “political

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Vietnamese matriculated in different departments at the Karl-Marx-University Leipzig, and the remaining 24 were aspirants or studied at different professional and tertiary schools in Leipzig. “Assessment of the Situation among the Vietnamese students in Leipzig,” BStU, MiS Abt. X, Nr. 339, 22-33.

47 “Assessment of the Situation among the Vietnamese students in Leipzig.” BStU, 26-27.

48 Ibid, 26-33.
organizations,” i.e. an internal hierarchy, to effectively control its members and ensure their loyalty to Hanoi. The captain noted the rigid control of the students, as

contact with the (East German) population is avoided by the Vietnamese. The students only exit in groups and are obliged to report to the secretaries. The secretaries have a very close alliance with the Vietnamese Embassy in the German Democratic Republic and agree upon almost all occurring problems (with the embassy).

All Vietnamese studying in Leipzig must further leave their passport with the embassy. The Vietnamese do not attend the voluntary social science courses specifically for foreign students. The Vietnamese embassy has allegedly prohibited the students from attending.49

The students were so closely supervised and policed by their own government in East Germany that they had little interaction with East Germans and East German politics. As a result, school administrators and the Stasi knew little about the students, their daily lives, their background and their political education inside and outside of East Germany, except for in extreme instances when the students called attention to themselves, such as in Leipzig.

The decision of the university administrators to house the small group elsewhere initially hampered relations between the Vietnamese delegation and administrators. However, escalated tensions in Vietnam ameliorated strained relations and provided a basis for a working relationship between the two parties. In 1965, the leaders of the Vietnamese delegation requested that the university administration return the nine students to the dorm that housed the delegation. And to appease the students, the university leadership moved eight of the nine back to the dorm. Despite improved relations between the student leaders and the university leadership, the Vietnamese delegation made little effort to assimilate to the foreign student life provided by the university and to partake in political programs.50

After the return of the small cohort to the dorm, the divide only deepened between the two groups of Vietnamese students. Yet the depth of the discord between the students over

49 “Assessment of the Situation among the Vietnamese students in Leipzig,” BStU., 26.
50 Ibid, 27-33.
political support for Hanoi went unnoticed by the Stasi, until two of the eight disappeared. According to the report on the students in Leipzig, the spokesman for the small cohort of then eight graduated with a degree in German Philology in the summer of 1966. Although he previously wavered in his political leanings and occasionally challenged Hanoi, he requested to return home upon graduation. His passport was revoked by the embassy, but because of his newfound interest in returning to North Vietnam, he was reissued one. The young graduate then purchased a ticket at the East German travel agency from Leipzig to Warsaw to Moscow to Beijing and then Hanoi. However, the spokesman was “never seen again,” according to the East German captain in his report. Another student from the small group fled to West Germany, as reported on West German television. This student, the East German captain noted, was a known problem to the Vietnamese government. He spent one year at the military academy in Yunnan China and then became an officer in Hanoi’s army. The young man was then arrested by the French in 1955, but after his release and return to North Vietnam, he was expelled from the army and the communist party. In 1966, he was denied an East German passport after a request to visit Prague, and he visited East Berlin twice, although not much was known about either of his trips.  

As illustrated in the report, the Stasi captain bore little concern about the student who disappeared and the other who fled. He only reported known facts about the students and showed little curiosity about their whereabouts and reasons for fleeing. However, he expressed much interest in the remaining seven students and their contact with East German citizens. The captain reported that shortly after West German news broke that the student fled, the Stasi observed a gathering of the remaining members from the small cohort and gained more information on the political leanings of the entire Vietnamese delegation in Leipzig. The small group believed that

the other students made no contact with people aside from the Chinese students in Leipzig. The leaders of the Vietnamese delegation and the North Vietnamese embassy were not settled on a course for the Vietnamese Communist Party and further recognized that “Vietnam went its own way independent of China and the USSR.” Issues within socialism would only be discussed in Vietnam after the war, while “similar processes in China would occur in Vietnam.” Interestingly, the Stasi captain noted that only after long talks with the North Vietnamese embassy and other students, the small cohort supported Chinese policies, viewed Washington as a “paper tiger” that must succumb to the people’s war, and believed that only socialist help from China was “heartfelt.”

The Stasi uncovered two sides to the story about the small cohort and their relationship with the larger Vietnamese delegation upon their return to the dorm. According to the leaders of the entire delegation, no political differences ever existed within the group, and the nine students were treated unfairly in being removed from the dorm, as

> The Vietnamese from the split off group cannot understand why they were hidden with East German citizens by the university leadership from their fellow countrymen, when they are now told to rejoin the other Vietnamese students and return home upon completion of their studies.

However, after their own investigation, the Stasi believed that the split off group did not want to return home. One of the seven students reported that he was told by another Vietnamese student, “when you return home, we will not talk with you, but rather let the knife speak.” Furthermore, the members of the small cohort “did not intend to return home, because [they] would die a senseless death in some camp there.” They also informed the Stasi that if the state did not permit

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52 “Assessment of the Situation among the Vietnamese students in Leipzig.” BStU, 28-29.
53 Ibid, 30.
their permanent stay, they would live illegally with East German citizens and that living illegally in East Germany was entirely possible.\textsuperscript{54}

The possibility that Vietnamese citizens who actively dissented against Hanoi could live illegally in East Germany with East Germans threatened the state and its political system more than any of the previous antics. In his report, the Stasi captain, though initially concerned by the students’ lack of participation in the “voluntary” Marxist-Leninist courses and state-sanctioned activities, was not as worried about the majority of the Vietnamese delegation because they mostly kept to themselves. They lived together in one dormitory and only spoke with Chinese students, whereas the small cohort of originally nine students came into daily contact with East Germans. This small group was therefore more of a wildcard. By actively favoring East Berlin, its members condemned Hanoi’s political environment and direction. If the small cohort inspired East Germans to question their own political system, which its members theoretically could do because they knew East Germans, it could have serious consequences for the leadership, the state and the system in place. Thus, the small group was monitored more closely by university officials and the Stasi; for example, when these students received visitors to their dorms, the visitors had to sign a sheet so that the Stasi would have a record of who visited these students.\textsuperscript{55} The Stasi now knew the names of East Germans who personally interacted with the students and could monitor them.

A letter sent to the Minister of the Interior in January 1969 provides personal perspective on why Vietnamese students rejected Hanoi’s political leanings. The letter was written by a former student and a then-current asylum seeker. According to the unnamed man, prior to his studies in East Germany, he wanted to “take part in the construction of socialism in [his]...
Because of his prior achievements, he was chosen in 1958 to study German Philology at the Karl-Marx-University Leipzig. After his studies, he planned to “further serve socialism in Vietnam.” But his plans and ambitions changed when “political disagreements emerged in the communist world movement in the beginning of 1963,” because the Vietnamese communist party viewed the line of the Communist Party under the leadership of Mao as right, even the most right, the most revolutionary. It denoted and condemned the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, and almost all communist parties in Europe as a so called ‘modern revisionist clique’. One of the most important goals of the political summer education that was organized by [the Vietnamese] party in 1963 in Köthen for all Vietnamese students in East Germany was the condemnation and unmasking of the so called ‘modern revisionist parties.’ Simultaneously, measures for combating the ‘modern revisionist’ influences were determined.\(^5\)

The man further confirmed what the Stasi report from Leipzig revealed: the North Vietnamese embassy controlled its students and prohibited their contact with East German citizens. Hanoi further prohibited the students from attending the Marxism-Leninism courses, and they received brochures daily from the Chinese government to further ensure that they stayed informed about the Chinese, and now Vietnamese, cause.\(^5\) The students were encouraged by Beijing and Hanoi to “unmask” the East German leadership and revolt against the system created and controlled by the Socialist Unity Party.

In addition to confirming some of the Stasi’s prior suspicions and shedding light on the extreme measures taken by the North Vietnamese state to control their students’ education abroad, the man enlightened his audience on why he personally rejected Hanoi and its relationship with Beijing. According to the asylum seeker, his love for the “fatherland, Vietnam, [meant] love for socialism and love for the Soviet Union and other socialist lands.” Furthermore, he believed that the “hate” the Chinese directed towards the Soviets should have been directed

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towards imperialism. From a young age, he learned about the Soviet Union and how it was the main power of communism and influenced the world peace movement. He could therefore not understand why “hate” was directed towards the Soviet Union instead of imperialism, when the Soviet Union allowed for socialism.\(^{58}\) The former student disagreed with the revolutionary measures taken by Beijing and the influence it had on Hanoi. By writing this letter, the asylum seeker hoped to express his unwavering support for East Berlin. He needed to convince the Minister of the Interior of his staunch support so that he could stay in East Germany and would not have to return to North Vietnam, where he would be treated as a traitor.

Finally, the former student mentioned the serious consequences that he would suffer in North Vietnam because of his past studies and his decision to request asylum in East Germany. According to him, Hanoi “decided that all Vietnamese students in East Germany who participated in one of the specifically political education [programs] had to return home” in 1964. The students realized this return would be dangerous and protested. But the man also experienced difficulties in East German daily life, such as finding a job. Although he favored the East German state and political system, he was clearly not a citizen. In East Germany, the man was associated with the North Vietnamese embassy because of his nationality, and he experienced difficulties in finding a job and forging a future for himself. In his final appeal to the Minister of the Interior, the asylum seeker wrote that he was ready to “sacrifice his life for his fatherland and socialism, but not for a senseless death for the Maoist ideology.”\(^{59}\)

*The Reality for East Berlin and Hanoi*

Although the rift between the students over the desire to seek asylum in East Germany strained relations between the two states, it did not sacrifice their socialist partnership. Because

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\(^{58}\) Feige, *Vietnamesische Studenten und Arbeiter in der DDR und ihre Beobachtung durch das MfS*, 36.

\(^{59}\) *Ibid*, 37.
of the Vietnamese students who had requested to extend their studies and sought asylum in East Germany, Hanoi believed that it was losing its citizens to East Berlin and became increasingly agitated with its partner. A notice of action from July 1964 outlines a conversation between the Pham Bang, the First Secretary of the Vietnamese Embassy, and two Stasi members, the Lieutenant Colonel Damm and Captain Müller. In his meeting with the Stasi officials, Bang expressed his concerns that twelve students – eleven of whom had studied at Leipzig and one in Greifswald – had fled in the previous six months. Bang requested that the “issue be reviewed,” because it was “incomprehensible that such a large number of people could vanish without the awareness of the East German people or police.” Bang, according to Damm, seemed to suspect that the twelve students were still in East Germany. Yet Bang thanked the Stasi for its support “in the delivery of the equipment for the operational technics.” According to the notice, the Ministry for State Security had supported North Vietnam and helped the Vietnamese state on the basis of socialist internationalism, a reference to the collaboration between the state securities of both nations that will be explored in great depth in Chapter 3.60

Despite the problems that leaders from both states encountered with the student program, East Berlin continued to host North Vietnamese students. Another conversation between Erich Mielke, the Minister of East Germany’s State Security, and Nguyen viet Dung, the North Vietnamese Ambassador to East Germany, in January 1967 points out the reality of the motivations behind the student program. As outlined in the notice, both men were meeting for the first time to discuss the terms of the partnership between their respective states. During their meeting, Dung inquired about the “situation” in West Germany. Mielke, surprised, responded “I have not dealt with this issue and am not prepared to speak about these questions. I promise that

we will meet to discuss these questions if your side’s interests persist.” But Dung was persistent and adamant that the two men discuss West Germany prior to adjourning their meeting. He further asked if he could offer a few suggestions in regards to West Germany.61

Dung used West Germany as a gateway topic to the North Vietnamese students who completed their studies in East Germany and refused to return home. The North Vietnamese ambassador reminded Mielke about these students and told him that they “must absolutely return to North Vietnam.” He further requested that Mielke and the Stasi help Hanoi to “easily solve” these issues as “fast as possible.” Dung then informed the East German minister that he had provided the East German Ministry for Foreign Affairs with the list of students, which he believed to be “around nineteen.” Although the Stasi had the names of the Vietnamese students who turned against their home government, tracked whom they contacted and befriended in East Germany, and likely knew where they lived, Mielke asked the North Vietnamese ambassador, “are there such comrades who do not want to return?”62 Mielke initially claimed that he knew little about the students, because he did not want to address the North Vietnamese concerns about them. It was in neither his nor his ministry’s interests.

But it was in Dung’s interests to know the whereabouts of his students and ensure their return trip home to North Vietnam. He worried about the impact that these students would have on other citizens within and outside of North Vietnam, as in 1967 over 3,000 Vietnamese citizens will come to the GDR. When these students stay in your republic, there is a bad influence on our other citizens. When the citizens are educated here, they

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62Ibid, 173.
must return in a moment of danger for the fatherland. We will help these bad citizens, so that they can fulfill their duties towards their nation.63

Dung associated the “bad students” with the greed and laziness that he believed enhanced living standards encouraged. According to the North Vietnamese ambassador, the students who had not returned quickly adapted to East Germany’s “high standard of living” and wanted to avoid the “difficulties” that people in North Vietnam experienced.64 The North Vietnamese minister realized the danger that the program, or rather the higher standard of living in East Germany, posed to the North Vietnamese state: some students would return home upset and uneager to fulfill their “duties” to the state, while others would not return at all. Those who did not return presented an even greater threat to Hanoi by being in East Germany, where they could meet future generations of North Vietnamese students and dissuade them from supporting their state. Hanoi also lost the valuable knowledge and experience these programs provided with uncooperative students, because the students either did not return home to work in its industries or were imprisoned immediately upon return because of their actions against the state.

Yet Mielke did not share the same concern for the North Vietnamese students and became annoyed with the North Vietnamese ambassador and the problems caused by his citizens. Although he understood the problems a state encountered when its citizens were not committed to it, Mielke believed that the students were not the Stasi’s problem, as “we do not deal with Comrades of friendly nations as an organization of State Security.” While the East German minister gave his support by offering to contact other state ministries for further clarification on how to handle the ordeal, he insisted that the East German Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the embassy of the concerned nation dealt with unruly foreign citizens. Furthermore,

64 Ibid, 174-175.
he informed the ambassador that even though these developments were “totally new” to him, he was “not the Minister of Education, [he was] the Minister of State Security.” The East German minister believed that the North Vietnamese ambassador was wasting his time with problems created, or at least furthered, by Hanoi.

Aside from pretending that he knew little about the students, Mielke defended the East German student program and universities, as well as the state. According to Mielke, the students did not suddenly become “bad people” in East Germany. Mielke further dismissed the connection between “bad people” and better living standards that he believed the North Vietnamese ambassador made, as

We don’t lead a grand life yet. The life does not make people bad. The life under socialist circumstances does not mean to take a bourgeois life. We have also previously lived under similar conditions, but we still fought well. If we have to eat dry bread again tomorrow, if a serious situation arises, we will fight again.

In his final defense of East Germany, Mielke argued that the East German living standards had to further improve. He also assured the North Vietnamese ambassador that living standards in Vietnam would improve after the war. Moreover, the East German minister did not buy that the educational environment of East Germany led Vietnamese students to dissent against their state. Rather, he implied that Hanoi sent bad apples to be straightened out in East Germany, which was not part of the deal between the two states.

This conversation between Mielke and Dung illustrates how the program was no longer about the students and the open exchange of ideas and information at East German universities. East Berlin and North Vietnam created an environment where academic exchange could not

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66 Ibid., 178.
67 Ibid., 178-179.
effectively take place and prosper. East Berlin did not exactly embrace the exchange of ideas, especially in regards to socialism, and did not encourage relationships between its citizens and North Vietnamese students. And Hanoi monitored its students so closely that they could not participate in the activities sponsored by the East German state or befriend East Germans. Moreover, the program was designed so that East Berlin could strengthen its position abroad and within the socialist world, while Hanoi could enhance its workforce to improve its infrastructure and build its nation during and after the war. In training students in engineering and the sciences, the East German state wanted to mark its place within the socialist world as an educator. It found its perfect partnership in Hanoi, who needed to quickly modernize its technology and workforce. Both nations, however, did not acknowledge that the students they exchanged were actual persons. Thus, exchange was less about opening societies and fostering a cultural awareness, and more about the symbol of friendship and the space for a partnership that it provided East Berlin and Hanoi.

The educational exchange between East Berlin and Hanoi became a site of international relations and the confrontation of strategic goals and values. Moreover, the quarrel between the students over ideology within the setting of East German universities was not unlike that between communist parties in the space of the international socialist movement. From the outside, both the Vietnamese students at East German universities and the leading communist parties within the socialist world appeared to be united. However, the students, like the communist leaderships, had very fragile relationships that were significantly affected by ideological disagreements, as well as their own political ambitions. Both the students as a group and the socialist leaderships as a collective were very much divided over the execution of socialism and international politics. Yet despite the flaws in the student program, East Berlin and
Hanoi both greatly benefited from this partnership and expanded their collaboration in the 1960s; similarly, the socialist leaderships benefited from solidarity in light of the Cold War and heightened tensions in Vietnam. East Berlin and Hanoi found a better way to achieve their agendas for their “socialist friendship,” not through the student programs, but rather through the developing relationship between their state securities.
3.

State Security:
The New Form of Socialist Exchange, 1965-68

Mielke and Dung met in 1967 to acquaint the North Vietnamese ambassador with the advancement of the East German-North Vietnamese partnership. The focus of this meeting was supposed to be on the budding collaboration between the Stasi and the North Vietnamese State Security. At the beginning of their meeting, Mielke boasted about the solidarity between the security apparatuses and how “closely linked” they were because of their shared desire to “combat the enemy.” He further pointed out that the two state securities experienced “no difficulties” in finding a common ground because they both understood that the “enemy must be fought.”¹ In response to Mielke’s positive remarks, Dung expressed his gratitude to the East German minister and the Stasi, as he “always received great support and help,” and his “Party and State Leadership [valued] very highly the help and support” from East Germany. Without the help of socialist nations, according to the Dung, Hanoi would not have achieved success in its fight against the Americans.²

Yet Dung believed that Hanoi needed East Berlin and other socialist states more than ever, because the West hoped to expand its war from the South to the North. Furthermore, according to the ambassador, “there [had] never been such a strong concentration of military power like in South Vietnam.” The ambassador played on the presence of the American military in Vietnam to gain sympathy for his nation’s cause, as well as to show how the war was a

² Ibid, 169.
struggle for socialism internationally, in hopes to increase aid from East Berlin. As Dung pointed out, the support that the North Vietnamese State Security received from the Stasi “helped a lot to strengthen the economic and military potential of [North Vietnam].” He expressed confidence in the socialist convictions of his fellow countrymen, as the “entire Vietnamese people [believed] in its cause” and were prepared to “sacrifice everything for the national independence and freedom.”

These exchanges between the statesmen became circular and a one-upping of who was more thankful, was more willing to fight for the cause of international socialism, and had the most dedicated socialists. Mielke added to the positive atmosphere of socialist solidarity as he thanked Dung for valuing East German support. Like Dung, Mielke laid out his nation’s commitment to socialist internationalism, as the entire population supported Vietnam in its fight against the West, largely because of the “education of [East German] citizens by the party on international solidarity.” He further described how the Stasi strived to fulfill its promises “even under difficult circumstances” and was “prepared to help where necessary.” The Stasi provided “complex technology for war against the enemy” to the leaders of the North Vietnamese State Security, but hoped to further extend its services and assistance.

Moreover, these positive exchanges between Mielke and Dung and their eagerness for solidarity masked the ambitions of the state entities they each represented. While a more public student exchange occurred in the 1960s between East Berlin and Hanoi, a more private, educational training program transpired between their state securities. The training program aimed to modernize the technical operations within the North Vietnamese State Security, which included strengthening the use of encryption technology, communications and information

processing in intelligence.\(^5\) An advanced state security force would allow the North Vietnamese to better combat the American military, as well as more tightly control their citizens. Both state securities had much to gain from this program, illustrated by the initial politeness and demeanor of the two statesmen at the beginning of their meeting. On the one hand, Mielke, who managed the meeting, wanted his ministry to become the main benefactor to the North Vietnamese State Security apparatus. He further saw this relationship as a way for the East German state to advance the North Vietnamese cause without actively participating in their war.\(^6\) On the other hand, Dung, as a representative of North Vietnam, hoped that the East Germans would increase their assistance to the North Vietnamese State Security. He therefore reinforced how his nation single-handedly engaged the American military in warfare for the plight of international socialism.

The assistance and training program for state security achieved what the student program did not: although it defeated the idea of cultural exchange and openness by promoting the surveillance of citizens, it strengthened the solidarity between the two governments, as well as educated the North Vietnamese in scientific fields and solidified the East German presence outside of Eastern Europe. Furthermore, it empowered the Stasi to become a diplomatic mission for East Berlin. The financial assistance and training of the North Vietnamese State Security as a form of educational aid then becomes the theme of this chapter. I specifically focus on the development of a North Vietnamese “Technical Operations Sector,” the division dedicated to the technical aspects of espionage, such as encryption capabilities, radio communications and information processing.\(^7\) I consider communications between Stasi officials and North Vietnamese statesmen to explore how the collaboration developed and, like the student program,


\(^7\) Gieseke, *Die hauptamtlichen Mitarbeiter des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit MfS-Handbuch*, 22.
geared itself towards securing North Vietnam’s infrastructure during the war and preparing for its reconstruction after it. The program was mainly carried out by the Stasi Department X, the department that handled the Stasi’s “international relations” and worked with security units of other socialist nations.\(^8\) And although the two state securities struggled to refine the details of aid and assistance, the training of intelligence was less complicated than the student program, largely because there were no young students to ruin goals and endanger relations between East Berlin and Hanoi. The newer, and more successful, form of socialist internationalism would involve technologies of repression, ending the optimistic spirit of educational exchange that launched the student program fifteen years earlier.

*A Tale of Two State Securities*

The security training program was rooted in the wars of the Vietnamese communists with the West. By 1965, Washington, under the leadership of Lyndon B. Johnson, committed itself to a large scale bombing campaign in Vietnam to defeat Hanoi and the Vietcong.\(^9\) As a result of this campaign, the American government “destroyed seventy-five percent of North Vietnam’s oil capacity” by June 1966, according to Mark Atwood Lawrence.\(^10\) Furthermore, Washington unleashed 79,000 bombing raids on North Vietnam in 1966 and another 108,000 in 1967.\(^11\) The North Vietnamese state had neither the technical nor the financial means to keep up with the American military, and under Ho Chi Minh’s leadership, it realized that it had to embrace unorthodox methods to effectively combat and deter American armed forces in Southeast Asia.\(^12\)


\(^12\) McMahon, “Turning Point: the Vietnam War’s Pivotal Year,” 191-192.
Consequently, the North Vietnamese state turned to guerilla tactics and intelligence, a combination that it previously introduced against the French in the 1950s but met with little success.\textsuperscript{13}

Vietnamese communists dabbled in intelligence and surveillance long before the wars against the West and North Vietnamese statehood. As early as the 1930s, according to Christopher Goscha, there was

a growing number of Vietnamese throughout a clandestine world stretching from Saigon to Moscow by way of Canton and Paris. A handful of Vietnamese communists had made it to the Soviet Union where they pursued advanced studies in communism and learned some basic techniques in Soviet espionage, communications, and clandestine operations.\textsuperscript{14}

After Ho Chi Minh declared North Vietnam in 1945, the North Vietnamese communists used intelligence in the “protection, institutionalization, and expansion” of the newly formed state.\textsuperscript{15}

By 1946, the state leadership had centralized intelligence and security forces with the establishment of the Vietnamese Public Security Department within the Ministry of Interior.\textsuperscript{16}

This early security department worked inside and outside of North Vietnamese borders, as police focused on “keeping the state alive and protecting it against internal and external enemies,” or the citizens who resisted the socialist leadership and the “imperialists” outside of North Vietnam.\textsuperscript{17}

One of the failures of the early North Vietnamese State Security was the lack of modern technology and aptitude needed to supplement guerilla military tactics and allow for large-scale surveillance of North Vietnamese citizens. By the early 1960s, Hanoi aimed to “[modernize] and [professionalize] the security forces” through a series of decrees to rid the state of

\textsuperscript{13} Christopher E. Goscha, “Intelligence in a Time of Decolonization: The Case of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam at War (1945-50),” \textit{Intelligence and National Security} 22, no. 1 (February 2007): 100-38,

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Ibid}, 104.

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Ibid}, 107.

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Ibid}, 107-108.

\textsuperscript{17} \textit{Ibid}, 109.
counterrevolutionary forces, as pointed out by Martin Grossheim in his article, “The East German ‘Stasi’ and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam War.”\(^\text{18}\) The state security further transformed into an “instrument of dictatorship absolutely loyal to the party.”\(^\text{19}\) It began a crusade against “disloyal” citizens to the regime; between 1961 and 1965, the state security placed 11,365 Vietnamese that it deemed “dangerous” to its leadership in re-education facilities.\(^\text{20}\) But to further develop their methods and expand operations, the North Vietnamese needed to acquaint themselves with a more modernized security force, which they found in East Germany. The leadership of the North Vietnamese State Security, then the North Vietnamese Public Ministry, sought a relationship with the Stasi leadership as early as 1957, according to Grossheim, when they sent their first request for aid.\(^\text{21}\) Not until the 1960s, however, did the North Vietnamese establish an active and collaborative relationship over state security and intelligence with the East Germans.\(^\text{22}\)

Like the North Vietnamese state security services at this time, the Stasi was also expanding its operations, even though it had already mastered the nationwide surveillance of East German citizens as a means of political control. The Stasi had a vast network of spies within East Germany and employed an estimated 20,000 in the early 1960s.\(^\text{23}\) Yet it believed that it needed to increase its control of East Germans by becoming more present abroad.\(^\text{24}\) In the 1970s and 1980s, the Ministry of State Security sent officers from different divisions to other socialist

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\(^\text{19}\) Ibid, 4.

\(^\text{20}\) Ibid, 6.

\(^\text{21}\) Ibid, 7.

\(^\text{22}\) Ibid, 8.


\(^\text{24}\) For more on the early growth of the Stasi, see Chapter 2, “The Safest GDR in the World: The Driving Forces of Stasi Growth” in The History of the Stasi: East Germany's Secret Police by Jens Gieseke, 48-76.
nations, largely to collect information on the activities of East German citizens. According to Christian Domnitz, the Stasi’s work in other socialists nations included, but was not limited to, monitoring East Germans working with foreign institutions, working on construction sites in the Soviet Union, completing military service in Warsaw Pact zones, and completing training at military institutions within the Soviet bloc. By the 1970s, the Stasi even monitored East Germans on vacation in other socialist nations.

While abroad, Stasi operatives maintained close contact with East Berlin. They contacted their headquarters often with coded messages via radio or telephone, as pointed out by Domnitz in his piece about the role of the Ministry of State Security beyond East Germany. Stasi operatives were supposed to focus on strengthening relations with the state securities of the host nations, as well as on monitoring East Germans in those nations. Arrangements between Stasi divisions and other operative groups, according to Domnitz, were predominately handled by the Main Department X, the Stasi department for foreign relations. These arrangements usually included that both security services could request information on citizens from either nation.

The East German and the North Vietnamese State Securities both had the opportunity to expand their operations and progress their capabilities through a partnership in the 1960s. While the Stasi hoped to expand its presence in developing socialist states, the North Vietnamese State Security planned to strengthen its police and security forces against both Western soldiers and its own people. The two state securities found what they were looking to achieve through their partnership by the mid-1960s, after the fall of Khrushchev, as well as in the midst of an escalated

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26 Ibid, 27.
27 Ibid, 34-35.
28 Ibid, 58.
29 Ibid, 59.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
American bombing campaign in North Vietnam. The early stages of this collaboration, consisting mainly of requests for assistance and aid from the North Vietnamese side, are exemplified in a letter from Tran Quoc Hoan, the Minister of the North Vietnamese Public Security, to Mielke in November 1965. In his letter, Hoan asked Mielke to provide the North Vietnamese State Security with “valuable” technical assistance in its covert operations against the West. Hoan praised the Stasi and the past contributions of its technical department to Hanoi’s “battle against the insidious American agents, who possess many modern technical devices.” He further explained that while the North Vietnamese State Security received “technical equipment” from East Berlin, it needed more advanced expertise in intelligence to successfully combat American forces. He therefore wanted his agents to “visit and study at the technical institutions” of the Stasi and receive additional instruction in the “development of [the North Vietnamese State Security’s] technical department.” Finally, Hoan suggested that the two state securities collaborate to compile a “list of necessary machines and devices corresponding to the needs of [North Vietnam’s] work.”

At the end of his letter, Hoan expressed his desire to “further develop and solidify the friendship” between Hanoi and East Berlin. He crafted an extremely polite and friendly letter to flatter Mielke because of his intent to advance and equip his own state security. However, he also referred to the “insidious Americans” to point out how North Vietnam single-handedly fought the United States, the nation with the most modern and advanced military tactics in the world, to secure state socialism in Southeast Asia and to further advance socialism.

34 Ibid.
internationally. Hoan therefore implied that not only was it in the Stasi’s interest to aid the North Vietnamese State Security, but that the East Germans were obligated to help because it would safeguard and promote socialism internationally. By these standards, if the Stasi did not support the North Vietnamese State Security, the East Germans would be failed socialists and faux communists.

Tricky Negotiations

Throughout the mid-1960s, the North Vietnamese continued to press the Stasi for aid and assistance in meetings and letters between the two state securities. In their appeals to the East German state security, the North Vietnamese intelligence officers and state officials copied the demeanors of both Dung and Hoan, and adopted a calculated approach: the North Vietnamese statesman would express his gratitude and admiration for the East German state and the leader that he was speaking with, while simultaneously “guilt tripping” him into providing more aid. In December 1965, one month after Hoan’s letter to Mielke, Nguyen Minh Tien employed this method when he visited East Berlin. Tien, the head of North Vietnam’s Technical Operations Department and thus the development of the use of technology in state security, met with Mielke to discuss the “situation of security institutions” in North Vietnam and the possibility of additional East German aid.35 He then informed the East German minister that the struggle transformed from “political” to “armed warfare,” because the “Americans destroyed much of the formation of the party organization” and “terrorized the masses gruesomely” in South Vietnam.36 And while the “Americans calculated that they cannot win the war quickly,” they

35 See appendix for more on the technical operations.
[used] all of the means available to smuggle espionage and sabotage groups into the North. They [sent] spies through the border between Laos and Vietnam, between North and South Vietnam, and along the coast. In addition, they [dropped] spies from the air with parachutes.37

According to Tien, Hanoi actively worked to mask state secrets from double agents and Americans who had infiltrated North Vietnam, but it was limited by its technical knowledge and struggled in developing technology. Finally, he reiterated that Hanoi lacked experience and knew neither how to organize nor how to equip the technical sector of its state security, a plea for Mielke to provide equipment and training.38

Tien, once again like Hoan and Dung, applauded the Stasi and commended the East Germans for their strong “tradition in science and technology.” The North Vietnamese had much to gain from an education in East German science and technology. And Tien needed to drastically strengthen the capabilities of his department, which oversaw the development of technical capabilities for the state security, such as encryption, radio communications and information processing.39 He therefore provided Mielke with an extensive list of requests for his department, which included:

1. Study of Experience in the following areas:
   - Eavesdropping technology (microphones, telephones
   - Countermeasures against eavesdropping technology
   - Security documents against theft
   - Safecracking (lock technology)
   - Clandestine photography
   - Surveillance of persons
   - Mail Control
   - Technical resources for the equipment of IMS (among other containers)
   - Research and production of special equipment for security work

2. Transfer of Experience
   - Establishment of institutions for control of the mail
   - Establishment of institutions for the use of eavesdropping technology

37 “Memorandum of a Meeting of Minister Erich Mielke with Nguyen Minh Tien on 13 December 1965,” BStU, CWIHP, 31-49.
38 Ibid, 31-49.
39 Gieseke, Die hauptamtlichen Mitarbeiter des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit MfS-Handbuch, 22.
- Establishment of institutions for document production
- Establishment of institutions for research and production of devices and apparatuses necessary of operational work

3. Transfer of Recommendations
- For the selection and qualification of cadres
- For the technical equipping of the technical operations sector
- For project planning of the technical operations sector (buildings, etc.)

4. Study of experience at the Criminal Technology Institute.\(^{40}\)

After requesting the Stasi minister to supply this extensive list of demands, Tien reminded him that the North Vietnamese were fighting against the “American imperialists” and that the fulfillment of these demands would “increase the fighting ability of [the East German] Ministry of Security.”\(^{41}\)

The response of the East German Minister, however, differed from his previous positions and revealed his annoyance with the North Vietnamese statesmen in their repeated requests for financial assistance and training. Mielke assured Tien that East Berlin hoped to help its socialist partners, but did not always have the resources that other socialist nations demanded of it. However, he also pointed out how his ministry planned to develop a North Vietnamese technical operations department sometime earlier, but was interrupted in these plans by the North Vietnamese, as

> we have lost many years to assemble experience. We were already prepared to deliver an entire series of technologies and suddenly there was no opportunity to realize this plan. We lost some years of experience and the [opportunity to] test our technology in Vietnam.\(^{42}\)

Mielke then voiced his concern that his organization would “embarrass” itself by helping the Vietnamese communists, because they already had a great deal of knowledge and experience in fighting the US. Furthermore, the North Vietnamese had already received assistance from other

\(^{40}\) “Memorandum of a Meeting of Minister Erich Mielke with Nguyen Minh Tien on 13 December 1965,” BStU, 31-49.
\(^{41}\) Ibid.
\(^{42}\) Ibid.
nations that might be more equipped and advanced than the Stasi, according to the East German minister.\textsuperscript{43} Here, Mielke made an indirect reference to a letter attained by the Stasi and sent the week before from the Committee for State Security of the Soviet Union to the Ministry of State Security of North Vietnam. In the letter, Moscow pledged to “provide a large amount of aid to the institutes of State Security of North Vietnam,” which included “radio interceptive devices, punched-card tabulators, facilities for forensic laboratories, and laboratories for food testing.”\textsuperscript{44}

Moreover, Mielke was angry that Tien did not visit him earlier, and his unwillingness to disclose the practices of the Stasi and provide equipment suggests that he wanted the Stasi to be the main contributor to the development of the North Vietnamese State Security. Mielke planned to train the North Vietnamese intelligence on his ministry’s conditions, not the North Vietnamese terms.\textsuperscript{45} The East German minister and his fellow party members saw themselves as competition to Moscow in providing aid to Hanoi, and they were second only to the Soviet state in sending aid to Vietnam after the Second World War.\textsuperscript{46} Thus, Mielke was not very receptive to the deal between the state securities in Hanoi and Moscow a few weeks prior to his meeting with Tien. And at the end of his meeting with Tien, he concluded that there were a “number of outstanding questions,” and reprimanded the North Vietnamese for not articulating their needs with him and his ministry earlier. According to the minister, “communists need to meet more often” and “always share their experiences.”\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{43} “Memorandum of a Meeting of Minister Erich Mielke with Nguyen Minh Tien on 13 December 1965,” BStU, 31-49.
\textsuperscript{44} “Letter from the Committee for State Security of the Council of Ministers of the USSR on Aid to the Ministry for State Security of the DRV,” BStU, 29-30.
\textsuperscript{45} Harrison, \textit{Driving the Soviets Up the Wall}, 141
\textsuperscript{47} “Memorandum of a Meeting of Minister Erich Mielke with Nguyen Minh Tien on 13 December 1965,” BStU, 31-49.
When the two statesmen met a few months later in February 1966 to confer about the progress made in North Vietnamese technical operations, the East German minister again had an authoritative attitude. This is illustrated after Tien “requested” to report his findings, as Mielke whipped back,

you don’t have to report to me, you have to report to your [own] Minister. You only have to tell me whether you are satisfied, whether you have any wishes or whether there are any issues in our work and where we will go from here. I am convinced that you have done your job. Your Minister has to check the results when you are back in Hanoi.  

Although Mielke informed Tien that he should report to Hanoi and not the Stasi minister, he still dictated how the North Vietnamese officer should respond in meetings. His demeanor ultimately points out how the Stasi acted as a patriarchal figure in its relationship with the North Vietnamese State Security.

But the North Vietnamese were not powerless and had considerable strength in bargaining, as shown by Tien’s insistence that the Stasi fulfill his demands. The head of the North Vietnamese Technical Operations Department praised how the collaboration boosted his ministry’s ability to “equip the technical operations sector” and “build a technical department.” And though some North Vietnamese officers would “come here [to East Germany] for training” and “be given some special devices,” the Stasi needed to provide more technology and architectural plans for structures in North Vietnam. Tien noted that his countrymen had to compete with the West, who “pillage” and “kill” like “the Hitler fascists and the Japanese imperialists.” If Hanoi did not effectively combat the West, according to Tien, the West “will also attack the other fraternal countries.”  

Hence, the North Vietnamese security officer believed that it was the Stasi’s socialist duty to do everything in its power to aid his ministry. His

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49 “Note on a Meeting of Minister Erich Mielke with Nguyen Minh Tien on 1 February 1966,” BStU, 50-63.
nation was on the frontline of, what he believed to be, the international struggle against the West and imperialism. Tien further made it clear that if Mielke and the Stasi did not sufficiently support his ministry in the development of its intelligence capabilities, they would sacrifice the safety of East Germany, a nation also on the forefront of the international socialist struggle.\textsuperscript{50}

The East German minister once more defended the Stasi and its efforts in its partnership with the North Vietnamese State Security and in its protection of socialism. According to Mielke,

\begin{quote}
the American imperialists are dangerous and a strong enemy. The GDR does all it can to support the struggle of the Vietnamese people. This is in line with the attitude of our party [the Socialist Unity Party] and our government on the ideas of Marxism-Leninism and with the attitude of the cadres.\textsuperscript{51}
\end{quote}

He further reminded Tien of the troubles he and his ministry encountered, and admitted that they could not defeat the “American imperialists” overnight. The requests, according to the East German minister, could only be realized if the North Vietnamese State Security had competent officers who “could master the technology” and truthfully report about whether the technology could be “used under the conditions in Vietnam.” The technology that Tien and his ministry requested was not actually needed, because “the best [security] apparatus cannot make use of so much technology.”\textsuperscript{52} Mielke thus implied that the North Vietnamese State Security could make use with what the Stasi had already provided and did not need “extraneous” materials to achieve their goals. While the Stasi officials wanted to help their “friends” in North Vietnam, they realized that it would take considerable funds and time that they did not have to offer. They also had to plan for different experiences and conditions; the Stasi worked in Northern Europe, not a war-torn jungle.

\textsuperscript{50} See Gray, \textit{Germany's Cold War}, for more on Germany as a battlefield of the Cold War.
\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{52} “Note on a Meeting of Minister Erich Mielke with Nguyen Minh Tien on 1 February 1966,” BStU, 50-63.
In October 1966, Mielke met with Tien’s head, Hoan, to settle the terms of their arrangement – a small program in which the Stasi would train North Vietnamese security officers and equip the service unit. As outlined in the memo of their conversation, the two agreed that the Stasi would train twelve officers in security. Hoan further requested that the Stasi accept one more trainee, as well as provide “official procedures for operational work.” Mielke assured the minister that his ministry was “prioritizing the shipments” for technology, which, because it would have to “operate in subtropical conditions,” had to be purchased in “the capitalist countries.” The East Germans would further provide an encryption machine from Poland, which needed to be supplemented with a calculating machine. And while the Hoan admitted that he received a calculating machine from the Soviets, Mielke insisted that his agency provide one, along with some explosives.53

Despite the disagreements in negotiating an agreement, the collaboration brought the two state securities closer together. Statesmen from both securities became frustrated because they both had large agendas to fulfill in their negotiations. The Stasi, as demonstrated by Mielke’s responses to aid provided by Moscow, hoped to be the main provider to the North Vietnamese technical operations in order to strengthen its presence and the East German role abroad. It further believed that the arrangements should be on its terms. Whereas, the officials from the North Vietnamese State Security pressed the Stasi to provide an increased amount of aid and training because they were fighting a war at home. The North Vietnamese statesmen determined that the Stasi had to expand its help through intelligence to safeguard socialism internationally.

Image 3.1. “The cause of Vietnam is also our cause.” Circa 1960s. This photo shows a meeting between North Vietnamese and East German statesmen, presumably Stasi officers. A photo of Walter Ulbricht rests in the background, along with the sentence, „die Sache Vietnams ist auch unsere Sache“ or “the cause of Vietnam is also our cause.” Thus, this photo is a physical representation of the socialist solidarity between East Berlin and North Vietnam.

The Logistics of a Technical Education in Espionage

After reaching an agreement in 1966, Stasi officers began to revise plans and further develop a course that would, by the organization’s standards, expand upon and improve the North Vietnamese Technical Operations Department. The program that the Stasi developed is manifested in a series of “in house” documents sent within its departments, primarily Department X, its division for foreign affairs. A note, numbered 32/67, expanded on the Stasi’s internal response to requests from Hanoi in July and August 1966. An excerpt, sent to Mielke from an official at the East German embassy in Hanoi, included North Vietnamese plans for a “cadre

54 MfS BV Magdeburg Aug/Fo/800 Bild 5.
apprenticeship,” the internships for the training of a Technical Operations Department, and the East German response to these plans.\textsuperscript{55}

### Requests from the Vietnamese Comrades in July/August 1966; “Cadre Apprenticeship”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Number Requested</th>
<th>Number Possible</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wireless and telecommunications including tape recorders</td>
<td>5 Engineers</td>
<td>2 Engineers</td>
<td>1 x 3 Months; 1 x 6 Months</td>
<td>It is not possible to train in the individual subject areas, so a summary is provided</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Television technology</td>
<td>1 Engineer</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Apprenticeship is not suitable because this technology does not exist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine mechanics/optics</td>
<td>1 Engineer</td>
<td>1 Engineer</td>
<td>6 Months</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metalworking and technology; surface finishing</td>
<td>1 Engineer; 2 – 3 Associates; 1 Associate</td>
<td>1 – 2 Associates</td>
<td>6 Months</td>
<td>Division is not suitable, therefore the apprenticeship is condensed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Container manufacturing</td>
<td>1 Associate</td>
<td>1 Associate</td>
<td>6 Weeks</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mail control; GS – Medium spectral analysis</td>
<td>1 Engineer; 1 Engineer</td>
<td>1 Chemical Engineer</td>
<td>3 Months</td>
<td>Condensed because of capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documentation</td>
<td>2 Engineers; 3 Associates</td>
<td>1 Engineer; 1 Associate</td>
<td>6 Weeks; 6 Weeks;</td>
<td>Condensed because of capacity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequency modulation profiling</td>
<td>2 Associates</td>
<td>2 – 3 Associates</td>
<td>10 Days</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3.2.**

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Though the leaders form the two securities reached a deal for aid, they still debated the extent of technology and experience the apprenticeships would provide to the North Vietnamese state. The Stasi planned to train less of Tien’s men than requested, either because the East Germans felt that the training did not suit the North Vietnamese needs, as in the case with “Television Technology,” or because they did not have the capacity. The Stasi wanted to aid in the development of the Technical Operations Sector, but more conservatively than the North Vietnamese had hoped. And the North Vietnamese pressed the Stasi leadership to meet their demands out of their strong desire to modernize operations and the expectation that the Stasi had the capabilities to help them achieve their goals. Despite the differing figures, both parties hoped to advance a program that focused predominately on scientific and engineering fields to improve North Vietnamese technical operations, and to enhance the encryption technology, radio communications and information processing in used in intelligence. The push towards the development of technology from both state securities speaks to the general relationship between East Berlin and Hanoi. East Berlin planned to “educate” and equip its socialist “brother” with the workforce to improve its economy and infrastructure, as well as strengthen its own presence abroad and gain an indirect role in the international conflict of the period, the Vietnam War, while Hanoi planned to modernize its state security with input from one of the top masters of intelligence in the Cold War world.

Tien continued to press Mielke and the Stasi to provide more technical aid and assistance, and he hoped to send an additional group outside of the number agreed upon in February 1967.

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57 Gieseke, Die hauptamtlichen Mitarbeiter des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit, 22.
According to a Stasi in house report, this group was “part of the WTZ,” or the collaboration on science and technology, and included.\textsuperscript{60}

a) Internship for manufacturing of specific leatherworks
   Length: 12 to 18 Months
   Number: 4 Interns, 1 Translator

b) Internship in certain areas of photography, i.e. in relation to dactyloscopy
   Length: 18 Months
   Number: 3 Interns, 1 Translator

c) Internship in production of masking, specifically with plastic materials
   Length: 24 Months
   Number: 4 Interns, 1 Translator\textsuperscript{61}

The dialogue between Hanoi and East Berlin surrounding the size and the tasks of the training program continued into June 1967, when a General Lap, a representative from the North Vietnamese State Planning Commission, and General Le Duan, a representative of the Workers Party of Vietnam, met with a Stasi official.\textsuperscript{62} According to Le Duan, Hanoi needed “not only 10 or 20,000 specialists, but hundreds of thousands and millions” of security officers, and it must further “learn from the experiences of the highly industrialized socialist brothers” to achieve success. The mentality of these North Vietnamese representatives expressed how revolutionary and extreme Hanoi was in its hopes to rapidly expand and modernize its technology and operations. The North Vietnamese state further believed its partnerships with “highly industrialized socialist brothers,” or East Berlin and the Stasi, would significantly contribute to realizing these goals. While the Stasi could afford a small training program with the North Vietnamese State Security, it did not have the means to support the training for “hundreds of

\textsuperscript{60} Domnitz, \textit{Kooperation und Kontrolle}, 73.
\textsuperscript{61} “Excerpt from the Note Nr. 32/67,” BStU: MfS Abt. X Nr. 652, 299-300.
\textsuperscript{62} Grossheim, “Fraternal Support,” 471.
thousands and millions” of North Vietnamese specialists.\textsuperscript{63} As an organization, the Stasi itself only employed around 20,000 officers in 1961.\textsuperscript{64}

Though the North Vietnamese representatives were radical in their ambitions, they distanced themselves from the revolutionary values propagated by the Chinese government to further appeal to the Stasi. The representatives assured the Stasi official that North Vietnam was independent of China and worked towards a socialist revolution, not a Chinese one. According to Lap, the North Vietnamese, along with other socialists, were obligated to “further promote the ideological and cultural revolution, but one that is not comparable with the Cultural Revolution in China.” Yet the Stasi official remained skeptical and worried that the North Vietnamese representatives were too unrealistic. He further believed that the training programs would take longer than the North Vietnamese proposed, and this did not even account for the time needed to train the apprentices in the German language, a necessity when working under the Stasi in East Germany.\textsuperscript{65} While the meeting between Lap, Le Duan and the Stasi official revealed much about the bargaining process between the two parties, it more importantly implied that the North Vietnamese State Security turned to the Stasi to modernize its technology, capabilities and intelligence force, and not the Chinese. The North Vietnamese, shown by the excerpt, did not exactly want to embark on the path towards the Chinese Cultural Revolution.\textsuperscript{66}

The East Germans, however, remained somewhat skeptical of the North Vietnamese and their ambitions, as illustrated by an “in house” note written to Mielke in 1967 from the leader of the Operational Technical Sector, the Stasi equivalent of the North Vietnamese Technical


\textsuperscript{64} Gieseke, \textit{The History of the Stasi}, 48-9.

\textsuperscript{65} “Excerpt from Note Nr. 116/67 from the Embassy in Hanoi about a Conversation with Gen. Lap,” BStU, 293-294.

\textsuperscript{66} See Lorenz M. Lüthi, \textit{The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Communist World}, for more on the Chinese Cultural Revolution within the socialist world.
Operations Department. The note concerned the training regiment for North Vietnamese trainees. According to the Stasi leader, three Vietnamese officers from the Technical Operations Department trained in “special operative technical work” in Berlin, while another two were moved to the Technical University Dresden to work as translators. The three in Berlin were chemists, two of whom had studied in the Soviet Union, and received training towards the development of a North Vietnamese department for documentation, a program in the chemical field, as well as a program in the chemical and physical control. Although the Stasi met the requests of the North Vietnamese leaders in these training regiments, the organization did not provide the interns with training or insight into the “actual orders and in the newest procedures,” the Stasi leader wrote.

The Stasi developed and executed a training program, but withheld some of its more advanced knowledge and technology, as to safeguard its own capabilities. Despite the Stasi withholding some information in its training of the North Vietnamese interns, the arrangement between the two state securities continued to be significant and expanded outside of the intelligence community. By November 1967, it involved the East German Ministry for Foreign Affairs and its embassy in Hanoi. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs acted as a middleman between the East German envoy to Hanoi and the State Security, as a spokesman for the ministry sent a summary of recommendations for the intelligence training program from the East German embassy to the Stasi. According to the spokesman, the recommendations would the complement the North Vietnamese wishes outlined in the “Cadre Apprenticeship” plan from August and July 1966.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Number Requested</th>
<th>Interpreter</th>
<th>Departure</th>
<th>Length (months)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology of plastic processing/manipulation as medium for mask building and for identification cards</td>
<td>4 Interns</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>III/67</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering of manufacturing of leather ware</td>
<td>4 Interns</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering of film development and photography</td>
<td>9 Interns</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>“</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figure 3.3.*

In including the Ministry of Foreign Relations, as well as the East German embassy in Hanoi in its negotiations with the North Vietnamese State Security, the Stasi adopted the role of East Germany’s diplomatic mission. It established itself in North Vietnam and further began to work in other socialist nations, one of the organization’s goals throughout the 1970s and 1980s. The Stasi, specifically its Department X, through its partnership with the North Vietnamese State Security in the 1960s, became East Berlin’s strongest mission to North Vietnam and a key player in strengthening the relationship between the two states.

*State Security as a Successful Form of Diplomacy*

While the student exchange program had turned into a source of quarrel, the relationship between the two state securities became a powerful form of diplomacy. This is exemplified by the communications and arrangements between the Stasi and the North Vietnamese Security to send an East German film crew to a North Vietnamese prisoner of war camp in 1967. That April, the leader of Department X, Lieutenant Colonel Damm, wrote a report labeled “top secret” that outlined a request sent from Mielke to Tien. Mielke wanted Tien, whose Technical Operations

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69 “Amount: DRV Interns,” BStU, 295.
70 Domnitz, *Kooperation und Kontrolle*, 27.
department was financially supported and trained by the Stasi, to share the following with Hoan in Hanoi.

For the support of certain operational measures of the MfS in the battle against West German and American imperialism, it is in the MfS’s interests to get two captured US pilots transferred. Through the [East German] use of these pilots, it is possible to support the struggle of the Vietnamese people, as well as make certain measures of the MfS effective.  

The East Germans further instructed Tien to “treat this matter very discretely.” 

After the Tien informed Hoan, the head of the North Vietnamese State Security, of Mielke’s request for access to the two American pilots, Hoan relayed this message to the Political Bureau of the North Vietnamese Workers Party. The Party had “complete consensus with the SED into queries in the struggle against the West Germans and US imperialism,” and in return, pledged to do “everything in its power” to support the East Germans. Yet the Workers Party did not reach a decision about the pilots, who it labeled as “war criminals.” Because Hanoi had no plans for how to transfer the American prisoners and had previously placed pressure on Washington to release Vietnamese prisoners, the Party determined that a prisoner exchange was “unfortunately not possible,” but promised to keep the East German request in consideration.

Mielke and the Stasi hoped to gain access to the American pilots so that two East German filmmakers, Walter Heynowski and Gerhard Scheumann, could film a documentary about the “American aggression” in Vietnam. The film, Mielke and his organization believed, would shed light on American atrocities in Vietnam and advance the socialist cause. The two filmmakers proposed the idea to head of Department XX, the division within the Stasi that combatted opposition to the state, as shown by a report after a “consultation” with the filmmakers. 

According to head of Department XX, the filmmakers would present the finished product at the

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72 Damm, “Top Secret,” BStU.
73 Ibid.
74 Ibid.
75 Domnitz, Kooperation und Kontrolle, 33.
Documentary and Short Film Week in Leipzig and therefore needed to travel to Vietnam in May to begin production. The Stasi official further explained that the filmmakers were permitted to travel to Vietnam by his division because the camps where the pilots were imprisoned would eventually be under the control of the North Vietnamese State Security. The filmmakers, however, believed that they needed a letter of recommendation from Mielke for them to “visit the Ministry of State Security in North Vietnam and ask [them] for support for their project.” With the help of the North Vietnamese Ministry of State Security, the filmmakers hoped to interview the two pilots and eventually as many as twenty prisoners. The letter, advised the Stasi head, should include that Heynowski and Scheumann are “very famous documentarians,” have won national prizes, and should receive help. If such a letter was not possible, he recommended that Hoan should be contacted in another way.

In advocating so strongly for the filmmakers and for a letter of recommendation from Mielke, the head of Department XX underestimated the depth of the relationship between his ministry and the North Vietnamese State Security. Like other Stasi officers, the leader of Department XX worked only within his division, which functioned to combat opposition to the state from within the state. Because Damm worked in Department X and in the realm of foreign relations, he closely networked with the North Vietnam’s Ministry of State Security and had many contacts within the ministry. Damm suggested that formally writing to Hoan would not be necessary, shown by his “notice of action” from June 1967 in which he relayed Mielke’s advice.

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77 Ibid.
78 For more on the organization of the Stasi and the structure of its departments, see Jens Gieseke, Die hauptamtlichen Mitarbeiter des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit (MfS-Handbuch). Domnitz, Kooperation und Kontrolle, 33.
It is not appropriate to write such a letter.
Comrade Minister Hoan will be notified by the [North Vietnamese] staff stationed in Berlin about the request to grant the two comrades the possibilities of all-round support in their journey.  

By the 13th of May, Hoan was notified by telegraph of the request, and by the 31st, he offered both Heynowski and Scheumann “all-round help and support.”

The previous collaborations and close relations between Damm, Mielke, Tien and Hoan paid off and allowed the two filmmakers to pursue their ambitious project. Heynowski and Scheumann filmed their documentary, *Piloten im Pyjama* or *Pilots in Pajamas*, “on site in Hoa Lò Prison, or the Hanoi Hilton, with the ‘support of prison officials and the people of Hanoi,’” according to Christina Schwenkel. They left East Berlin in June 1967 with a photographer, a cameraman and two cameras, and gained unprecedented access to North Vietnamese military and state security sites. They filmed the American pilots imprisoned by the North Vietnamese and achieved success. Their film, described Schwenkel, “[recasted] the [American] POWS as unlikely victims, not of Vietnamese brutality as portrayed in the West, but of the machinations of an imperial war waged against an innocent nation.”

The documentary project, along with the steps taken by the Stasi for Heynowski and Scheumann to produce the documentary, captured the socialist collaboration and partnership between East Berlin and Hanoi in a different light than the student program or any previous project between the two states. The scope of the project – the Stasi’s trust in the filmmakers to

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80 Ibid.
travel to Vietnam, the filmmakers’ production of a documentary in a war zone, and the help and assistance from a government agency pre-occupied by war – shows the power of the relationship between the two state securities and its positive impact on the partnership between their respective countries. In securing this project, the Stasi solidified its status as an East German diplomatic mission and a reliable ministry that could accomplish state goals with little difficulty. The Stasi therefore achieved through its training program what the student programs could not in the mid to late 1960s: the smooth transfer of knowledge, as well as a successful collaboration between two nations with dissimilar positions on the execution of socialism during a time of heightened tensions.
Conclusion: Knowledge Transfer and the Limits of International Solidarity

East Berlin and Hanoi hoped to use educational exchange in the 1950s towards exploration at a time of international division and heightened tensions. And although the two states struggled to find common ground through education, they adapted and developed exchange programs that benefited their nations, albeit through state security. They further realized that the exchange of knowledge, at both the university and the state security levels, was about the socialist partnership between their respective leaderships and, most importantly, international diplomacy. Exchange, by the 1960s, was not about the actual participants, the North Vietnamese and East German citizens. Despite the struggles of the early educational exchange programs at the university level and in negotiating a program for security training, the two leaderships benefited from these programs. This is shown by the long-lasting relationship between the East German state and Vietnamese communists, which continued until the fall of the Wall in 1989 and German re-unification.¹

The two states found common ground through shared circumstances: they were both on the frontlines of the Cold War and struggled in their existences. Their partnership was only enriched by their different economic positions and levels of development. They were able to make their partnership last largely because of the Stasi’s training of North Vietnamese State Security and intelligence. This program developed at a time when the two states had different ideologies on socialism, but similar political ambitions. Both needed to expand their state securities, either through modernizing its technology, or expanding its presence outside of the country to the other side of the globe. The Stasi’s training of the North Vietnamese State

Security modernized its technology and provided the East German security organization with space to act as a diplomatic organization. It also provided the two states with a common ground at a time of international unrest.

The knowledge exchange in the 1950s and 1960s laid the foundations for a thirty-year relationship that only ended with the fall of the Berlin Wall and German-reunification. This relationship, which lasted for almost the entirety of East Germany’s existence, required a considerable amount of diplomacy from both sides and provided the Socialist Unity Party with a sphere of influence outside of East German borders.² Because of it, East Berlin had a profound impact on Vietnam’s workforce and modernization. By 1989, over five thousand Vietnamese students had graduated from East German universities and colleges, while almost fifteen thousand more were trained in more specialized settings (businesses or factories).³

Yet the knowledge exchange between the two states in the 1950s and 1960s also reveals the limitations of international socialism, as well as problems that long plagued the East German state. First and foremost, the East German state planned everything for the North Vietnamese students and provided little leeway for the exchange programs. It treated the students as bodies fulfilling the demands of a diplomatic program, not young persons with individual needs and thoughts, and when these bodies acted out, the state worried about what effect it would have on East German citizens. While exchange was embraced as an idea in the 1950s and early 1960s, it did not occur at the university level outside of the classroom in the mid-1960s. Academic exchange is a way for people to encounter one another, to experience other cultures and to engage with other societies. This did not happen for the North Vietnamese students at East

² East Germany existed from 1949 to 1990, while its educational exchange lasted from 1953 to its end.
German universities. Given the political climate of the mid-1960s, exchange was not totally accessible on a personal level in the socialist world.

Knowledge exchange further reveals the layers of control within East German society and that the North Vietnamese wanted, i.e. the science and technology behind the Stasi’s methods to monitor East German citizens, as well as the Stasi’s plans to work outside of East Germany to further expand its surveillance of citizens. The East German state developed a complex system of control that, while most likely needed in the 1950s and early 1960s to preserve its nationhood, became unsustainable in the 1970s and 1980s.\textsuperscript{4} It permeated all aspects of society and created an environment where exchange could not effectively occur between North Vietnamese and East Germans, much less discouraged interactions between fellow East Germans.\textsuperscript{5} When this system of control cracked with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the state ceased to exist.

\textsuperscript{4} See Gray, Chapter 1 “Containing East Germany in the Early 1950s” in \textit{Germany’s Cold War} for more about the early development of the East German state.

\textsuperscript{5} See Anna Funder, \textit{Stasiland: Stories from Behind the Berlin Wall}, for more on Stasi control and how this personally impacted East Germans.
Appendix

German Institutions

*Arbeiter-und-Bauern-Fakultät.* Department of the Workers and Peasants: an institution within the East German universities under the leadership of the SED that served the children of workers and peasants, and future workers. The East German state was referred to as the Workers and Peasants’ State.⁶

*Deutsche Demokratische Republik* (DDR/GDR). German Democratic Republic: also known as East Germany, the GDR was formed on 7 October 1949 and dissolved in 1990 with the reunification of Germany. The GDR was the Socialist Unity Party’s response to the Federal Republic of Germany (BRD/FRG), or West Germany.⁷

*Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst.* German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD): the West German government funded academic exchange program. The West German government allocated part of dm 170 million in 1956 to DAAD.⁸

*Freie Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund* (FDGB). Free Federation of German Trade Unions: an organization “led by the Socialist Unity Party and the dependent parent organization of 15 single unions with millions of members.” In other words, the East German trade organization of that policed ideology.⁹

*Freie Deutsche Jugend* (FDJ). Free German Youth: the youth organization of the Socialist Unity Party and the “vanguard of the youth movement in the first socialist country of workers and farmers in Germany.”¹⁰

*Herder-Institut.* Herder Institute: the language training center in Leipzig where all foreign students studied for at least one year prior to matriculation at an East German University.

*Klub der Intelligenz.* The Club of Intelligentsia: a club for intelligentsia to discuss the sciences and arts under the jurisdiction of the state-funded Cultural Association.¹¹

*Ministerium für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten.* Ministry for Foreign Affairs: one of the fourteen initially ministries of the GDR. It responsible for building trust with nations that previously fell victim to German conquest to form relations with said nations.¹²

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⁶ For more on workers and peasants, see Caspar, Caspar, *DDR – Lexicon,* 25-26.
¹¹ Maria Nühlen, *Erwachsenenbildung und die Philosophie: Historischer Rückblick und die Herausforderung für die Zukunft,* (Berlin, Germany: Lit Verlag, 2010), 152.
Ministerium der Finanzen. Ministry of Finance.

Ministerium für Außenhandel und Innenhandel. Ministry for Foreign and Domestic Trade.

Ministerium für das Hoch- und Fachschulwesen. Ministry of Higher and Technical Education.

Ministerium für Staats sicherheit (Stasi). Ministry of State Security: the “most important instrument of repression of the SED” and was founded in February 1950 and led by Erich Mielke. According to Anna Funder, author of Stasiland: Stories from Behind the Berlin Wall, the Stasi was “an internal army by which the government kept control. Its job was to know everything about everyone, using any means that it chose.”

Neues Deutschland: the most important newspaper in East Germany and official paper of the Socialist Unity Party. It reported on the decisions of the SED, and according to Helmut Casper, it was the most important voice of the SED party.

Neue Zeit: a newspaper in East Germany.

Operativ-technischer Sektor. Operative Technical Sector: the department within the Stasi that used and developed the encryption technology, radio communications and information processing in intelligence.

Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (SED). The Socialist Unity Party: the communist party of East Germany and the party that found East Germany in October 1949. It was founded in April 1946 with the support of the Soviet state and firmly controlled East Germany until the fall of the wall in 1989.


Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO). Foundation Archives of Parties and Mass Organizations of the GDR: the federal archive in Germany that holds government documents, agreements, arrangements, etc. from the German Democratic Republic.

Technische Universität Dresden. Technical University Dresden.

Volkswirtschaftsrat. People’s Economic Council.

Hauptabteilung VII. Department VII: the division for the “German people’s police” within the Stasi.

14 Anna Funder, Stasiland: Stories from Behind the Berlin Wall, (London, England: Granta Books, 2003), 5. See Funder for more about the Stasi and life under the Stasi in East Germany.
15 Caspar, DDR – Lexicon, 228-230.
16 Gieseke, Die Die hauptamtlichen Mitarbeiter des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit, 22.
17 Caspar, DDR – Lexicon, 303-305.
18 Gieseke, Die Die hauptamtlichen Mitarbeiter des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit (MfS-Handbuch), 33, 118.
Hauptabteilung V. Department V: the predecessor to Stasi Department XX. It combatted opposition and republic flight, the flight of East German citizens to the West, through other socialist nations.19


Important Players

Adenauer, Konrad: the first elected Chancellor of West Germany after WWII. Adenauer served as chancellor from 1949 to 1963. His focus on Western integration only deepened the divide between East and West Germany.20


Ho Chi Minh: leader of North Vietnam who declared North Vietnamese statehood in 1945. Under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh, Hanoi battled the West twice; first in its war for independence against the French (1945-54), and again in the Vietnam War (Second Vietnam War).21

Hoan, Tran Quoc: the Minister of Public Security in North Vietnam.22

Khrushchev, Nikita: the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union from 1953 to 1964. Khrushchev turned away from Stalin’s leadership style and promised a path of liberalization at the Twentieth Party Congress in 1956. He aimed to distance himself, his rule and the Eastern Bloc from Stalin and Stalin’s regime, as well as work towards relations with the West.23

Mao Zedong: the Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China from 1945 to 1976. Mao, according to Lüthi, “vigorously implemented policies that destabilized the alliance [between the Soviet Union and China] and eventually led to the country’s self-imposed isolation from the world and its economic impoverishment by 1969.”24 In 1957, he launched the Great Leap Forward, a campaign aimed to make China a socialist nation through industrialization and collectivization.25

19 Domnitz, Kooperation und Kontrolle, 33, 118.
20 Gray, Germany's Cold War, 11, 229.
21 Lawrence, The Vietnam War, 27-29.
23 Harrison, Driving the Soviets Up the Wall, 49, 68-69.
25 For more on Mao and the Great Leap Forward, see Lüthi, The Sino-Soviet Split, Chapter 3.
Mielke, Erich: the Minister of State Security (Stasi) in East Germany from 1957 until German reunification.

Stalin, Joseph: the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Stalin rose to power in 1926 and remained in power until his death in 1953. He oversaw collectivization.\(^{26}\)

Tien, Nguyen Minh: the head of North Vietnam’s Technical Operations Sector.\(^{27}\)

Ulbricht, Walter: the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany from 1950 to 1971. During his tenure, Ulbricht faced questions of East Germany’s legitimacy both within and outside of the nation, as well as republic flight to West Germany until the building of the Berlin Wall, which effectively secured East Germany’s inner German border in August 1961.\(^{28}\)

Winzer, Otto: the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs in the German Democratic Republic from 1956 to 1965; the Minister of Foreign Affairs from 1965 to 1975.\(^{29}\)

\(^{26}\) For more on Stalin, see Zubok, *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev.*


\(^{28}\) Gray, *Germany’s Cold War*, 3.

\(^{29}\) Muth, *Die DDR-Außenpolitik*, 69, 129, 139.
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