

Critical Issues

East Germany

Marxist Mission in Africa

by
JOHN M. STARRELS

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Introduction

August 13, 1981, will be the twentieth anniversary of the erection of the Berlin Wall. For most people, including far too many policymakers, this monument to political control and oppression represents the sum of their knowledge about East Germany (The German Democratic Republic or GDR). The Wall, to be sure, remains important, particularly so for the people who must live and work behind it. But there are other aspects of this German Marxist state which deserve more immediate attention. East German support of, and active engagement in, Soviet policy toward Africa is one of those subjects, and it will be the focus of this study.¹

The GDR did not become a major element in Soviet African policy overnight, any more than Cuba did. Until the late 1960s, most analysts in the West (and perhaps in the East as well) brushed off the existence of the GDR as a transitional "problem" which would in some way be resolved within the framework of a re-united Germany. Yet it was during that same decade that GDR military and political cadres were beginning to establish the foundations of an African policy. Over the past two decades, this East German presence in Africa has become an invaluable adjunct of Soviet foreign policy toward that vital region. The East Germans have, in the interim, overtaken Czechoslovakia as Moscow's number-one ally throughout the Third World. Of the bloc countries, only Romania pursues a policy as assertive as that practiced by Moscow's German satellite.

At the beginning of the 1980s, the German Democratic Republic is actively engaged in the advancement of Marxist revolutionary change throughout the Third World. Its Communist leaders have openly proclaimed as much. "From the rostrum of our Party Congress," declared Erich Honecker in April of 1981, "we hail all fighters for national and social liberation in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, assuring them that they can always count on our Party and on the people of the GDR in their arduous struggle for national liberation and the happiness of their peoples."²

Before the analysis of East German policy toward Africa can proceed, however, several preliminary but vital considerations need to be disposed of now. The most important consideration is that the GDR's relative success in Africa, and in the Third World more generally, is based entirely on its ability to play a "surrogate" role on behalf of the Soviet Union. This means that East Germany can, of course, pursue

specific goals of its own. And it frequently does. But the GDR's capacity to perform is based on its ability to act "as a substitute for the Soviets in certain ways."³ In other words, East Germany conducts its African affairs as an appendage of Soviet foreign policy.

Another, and related, consideration involves a comparison of East Germany's and Cuba's surrogate roles on behalf of Soviet foreign policy in Africa. Two major points of comparison come to mind:

First, East German activity in Africa is exclusively directed to the supply of highly skilled civil and military cadres to selected Marxist clients on that continent. Cuban involvement, on the other hand, is geared to large-scale military projects which routinely require considerable numbers of its own troops. Thus, the surrogate functions of the East Germans and the Cubans complement, rather than duplicate, each other.⁴

Second, East German activity in Africa, with some notable exceptions, is covert; Cuba's, by contrast, is largely overt (or demonstrative).

A final point of concern is the special relationship between the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic. Ties between the two governments are extremely close. And since the replacement of Walter Ulbricht by Erich Honecker ten years ago, linkages across all levels have become even more intimate, if not interdependent. The "core" of Soviet-East German relations, as always, is on the Party-to-Party level. Between June 1971 and December 1976, the two respective General Secretaries (Leonid Brezhnev and Erich Honecker) met on at least twenty-five occasions.

In an era of national upheaval throughout Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union knows that it can trust the German Democratic Republic to support its most-far reaching imperial claims within the bloc. As a result, the East Germans can be expected to take the most conservative and pro-Soviet line in the defense of orthodox Marxist positions throughout Eastern Europe. GDR anxieties about the "spread" of "revisionism" in 1968 undoubtedly emboldened the Soviet Politburo to send the Warsaw Pact into Prague in August of that year. And the East Germans have been equally assertive in their condemnations of the "counter revolutionary" trends at work in Poland. In sharp contrast with the other European Communist regimes, the GDR makes a conscious effort to subordinate itself to the dictates of the Soviet Union. "Adopting a policy reminiscent of the overzealous Tito of 1945, Honecker [speaks] of integration with the Soviet Union, rather than alliance."⁵ In sum, the German Democratic Republic is the one Soviet satellite which is perfectly suited to carry out the most delicate foreign policy projects on behalf of the USSR. This holds true for the conduct of Soviet strategy in Europe, and it holds true no less for East Germany's active, and enthusiastic, support for Moscow's projects throughout the Third World.

Moscow In The Third World And The East German Role

Since its inception East Germany has conducted its own policy toward the Third World. For the first two decades of its existence, that policy chiefly involved the GDR in a campaign to win diplomatic recognition. Once recognition was achieved, however, the East Germans began to re-orient their foreign policy toward the less developed countries (LDCs). They did so in two aligned ways. On the one side, the GDR realized that it was in a favorable position to undermine the prestige of its arch German rival to the West—especially since Third World opinion, on the elite level, is traditionally anti-Western. And the East Germans have been ardent advocates of Third World critiques of the capitalist West. Next to the United States, no country plays a more pivotal role in setting the agenda of the industrial West to deal with Third World issues than does the Federal Republic of Germany. East Germany's conscious policy since the early 1970s, when the so-called GDR recognition wave crested, has thus been to weaken the influence of the FRG whenever the occasion presents itself. Such a posture obviously serves long-term Soviet policy interests in the Third World. On the other side, the GDR became a leading proponent of Soviet bloc intervention throughout the Third World. East German efforts to undermine the political influence of Bonn are treated in another part of this study. The East German effort to align itself with Soviet strategies of intervention in the Third World is examined later in this chapter. In order to understand the political and ideological framework guiding East Germany's activities in the developing areas, it is extremely important to examine Soviet thinking on this subject.

Moscow and the Third World

The doctrinal underpinning of Soviet foreign policy toward the developing areas is contained in Lenin's "Theory of Imperialism." The Leninist position, it should be remembered, was that the pending collapse of the European colonial order created major opportunities for Soviet political gains within the industrial West. The logic was decep-

tively simple: Imperialism constituted “the highest stage of capitalism,” “and the breakup of the colonial system would [accordingly] deal a major, if not lethal blow to imperialist forces.”⁶ Lenin, as did his successors, had two ultimate goals in mind: to weaken imperialism at home, in Europe, and to win converts to “socialism” in the former colonial lands. However, Stalin’s stormy relations with the Chinese in the 1930s and the Yugoslavs in the 1940s soured him on the practical possibilities of bending Soviet foreign policy to the specific needs of home-grown revolutions. Thus the Kremlin continued to pay only lip-service to the value of Lenin’s theory. In reality, however, the Soviet Union under Stalin demonstrated little interest in the formation of alliances with the revolutionary groups which were already active in the developing world by the early 1950s.

Nikita Khrushchev’s rise to political power in the mid-1950s represents a watershed in Soviet Third World policy. At the 20th Congress of the CPSU in February 1956, the new Party leader declared that “the present disintegration of the imperialist colonial system is a postwar development of world-historical significance.”⁷ In sharp contrast to Stalin, who largely discounted the revolutionary potential of the non-aligned movement in the ex-colonial areas, Khrushchev immediately grasped the significance of that development. Khrushchev called for the creation of a so-called “Zone of Peace” which would ideally include two groups of countries responsive to Soviet appeals: the neutralist governments of Western Europe (primarily in Scandinavia) and the so-called non-aligned countries who had come together for the first time at the Bandung Conference on African and Asian States held during the previous year. While the European part of that alignment would be employed by Soviet propagandists as a launching ground for nuclear disarmament proposals aimed at the United States, the so-called non-aligned countries would be weaned away from the West and, gradually, brought into the sphere of influence of the socialist world system.

In large measure, however, Soviet support of the non-aligned movement did not result in major breakthroughs for the Kremlin. Soviet involvement in Egypt and India — the unofficial heads of the movement during the 1950s — significantly increased. And Moscow’s general standing in the non-aligned community improved as a result of its support of Nasser against the ex-colonial powers and Israel during the Suez crisis of 1956. Soviet readiness to undertake the financial obligations for the construction of the Aswan Dam, which the Eisenhower administration had earlier abandoned, also provided the Kremlin with a propaganda triumph in Egypt.

At the same time, Khrushchev soon learned that diplomatic breakthroughs in the ex-colonial areas did not automatically translate themselves into permanent political gains. Undoubtedly the most painful

setback experienced by the USSR occurred during the Congo (Leopoldville) episode of the early sixties. As one writer describes it:

In practice, the USSR found many ex-colonial states far less tractable than it had anticipated. Perhaps the most notable case—and certainly the most grievous to Moscow—occurred during the Congo (Leopoldville) imbroglio of 1960–61. The Afro-Asian nations unanimously approved the dispatch of UN troops to the Congo in July 1960 in the wake of the mutiny of the Congolese *Force Publique*, the intervention of Belgian troops, and the secession of Katanga Province; but differences quickly developed among them regarding the UN operation. These eventually led to a major split in Afro-Asian ranks after Congolese President Joseph Kasavubu dismissed the country's Soviet-backed premier, Patrice Lumumba. To Soviet dismay, the UN General Assembly, with major Afro-Asian support, recognized a Kasavubu delegation as the legal representative of the Republic of the Congo and spurned a Lumumba delegation.⁸

It became clear to Moscow, largely in the aftermath of the Congo experience, that a more assertive *and* discriminating strategy toward the emerging areas was required. The assertive portion of the new doctrine consisted of Soviet readiness to provide military and political assistance to countries which gave evidence of a truly revolutionary (i.e., Marxist) potential and those that clearly did not. The discriminating element, of course, was that the USSR would not devote further effort to win allies for Marxism in countries which were clearly choosing a capitalist mode of development. Khrushchev enunciated the revised doctrine at the Twenty-Fifth Congress of the CPSU in 1961: “neutrality” would be respected by the Soviet Union as it had been in the past. But the thrust of future Soviet assistance to the ex-colonial areas would henceforth be directed toward both governments (such as Ghana) and insurgencies (such as those that were already taking place in the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique) actively engaged in the “anti-imperialist” struggle.

As things turned out, the USSR's ability to provide material assistance to its Third World friends—in the form of military aid and economic support—proved quite limited throughout the 1960s and up to the beginning of the 1970s. In part, limited Soviet assistance to a more select group of Third World countries, such as that which was given to Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana, was to be explained by Moscow's relative strategic and political inferiority *vis-à-vis* the United States and her European allies. The ability to move large numbers of troops and material by air was not a capability possessed by the Soviet Union until the early 1970s. Beyond that, of course, was the continued realization on the part of the Kremlin that there were few countries in that vast area which could be called truly Marxist—or even potentially Marxist. Furthermore, the overthrow of two major Third World allies, Sukarno

of Indonesia in 1965 and Nkrumah in 1966 only tended to reconfirm the USSR's ingrained caution on the subject of how to go about winning friends in the LDCs.

Starting in the early 1970s, the conduct of Soviet policy in Asia, Africa, and Latin America represents a major—perhaps even radical—break with the immediate past. Nowhere is that change more pronounced than in the shipment of Soviet arms to the LDCs. As one analyst reports, “Between [1955] and the end of 1977, it is estimated, the USSR supplied these states with 21,035 million dollars worth of arms. . . . Of this amount 12,925 . . . were delivered in the 1973–1977 period alone. In other words, 61 percent of all Soviet arms deliveries (in the twenty-three-year period concerned) . . . were made in the last five years. This is clearly a tremendous acceleration in the development of military ties with the Third World.”⁹ Soviet economic assistance to the LDCs over a comparable time period (1954–1977), on the other hand, was nearly 50 percent less than its military assistance—\$12.9 billion.¹⁰ In other words, the Soviet Union's predominant policy interest in the developing countries today is one of providing them with military, rather than economic, assistance.

Preliminary data on Soviet activities in the past four years further substantiate this point. Estimates of Soviet arms sales to the Third World rose from \$9.6 million in 1977 to \$14.9 million by 1980, or an increase of 55.5 percent. In contrast, arms sales from the U.S. rose by only 13.2 percent, from \$7 billion to \$7.9 billion. Thus by 1980 Soviet arms sales to the Third World nearly doubled the total value of U.S. sales. Moreover, Soviet deliveries of individual weapons to the Third World totalled 41,001 during the four-year period, while the U.S. and major Western European weapons delivered amounted to only 28,899. The table on page 5 provides a complete breakdown of the weapons.

Various explanations for the USSR's more aggressive (and “historically more optimistic”) posture toward the developing countries include: the collapse of the United States in Vietnam, which increased already significant domestic pressures toward isolationism in the U.S.; the fourth Arab-Israeli war which galvanized the OPEC nations together in an anti-Western coalition on matters of oil pricing policy; the outbreak of revolutionary movements in Rhodesia and in South Africa; and most significantly, the sudden demise of the Portuguese empire in Africa. But two more immediate developments need to be examined as well, both of which have a direct effect on the conduct of East Germany's more precise policies toward the Third World.

First, no assessment of Moscow's Third World activities is complete without an assessment of its increased dependence on military force to effect political outcomes. In fact, there should be no cause for surprise on the use of military force as an instrument of Soviet foreign policy. On three separate occasions, the USSR has employed its own troops to

Weapons Delivered to the Third World, 1977-80

Weapons Category	USSR	Major West European	U.S.
Tanks and/self-propelled guns	6,022	795	3,036
Artillery	10,523	2,068	2,270
APC's and armored cars	7,642	2,615	7,167
Major surface combatants	25	34	22
Minor surface combatants	107	367	24
Submarines	5	12	3
Guided missile boats	43	17	N/A
Supersonic combat aircraft	1,761	251	510
Subsonic combat aircraft	296	54	202
Helicopters	676	916	187
Other aircraft	247	407	273
Surface-to-air missiles	<u>13,654</u>	<u>2,049</u>	<u>5,620</u>
Total	41,001	9,585	19,314

(Source: Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, 1981)

quash unrest in Eastern Europe (1953 in East Germany, 1956 in Hungary, and 1968 in Czechoslovakia). That it has now chosen to do so in regions outside its direct sphere of influence, as in Afghanistan, should seem logical enough. As regards present Soviet intentions toward Africa, for example, the Kremlin continues to insist on the "primacy of nonmilitary" factors in the evolution of "progressive" regimes on that continent. These nonmilitary factors include, from the USSR's perspective, the emergence of both revolutionary and progressive movements throughout Africa which are "objectively" allied with the positions of the Soviet bloc on a wide range of matters. This may indeed be the case, but it is also the case that the Soviet Union is attempting to influence the evolution of those favorable trends in very direct, as well as dangerous, ways. In Vernon Aspaturian's words: "While one can plausibly explain revolutionary movements and social ferment as the product of underlying historical forces and trends, one can hardly burden history with the decision to airlift and support thousands of Cuban soldiers in Angola and Ethiopia, or to send 85,000 Soviet troops into Afghanistan."¹¹ That East Germany and Cuba *both* play a major role in this military strategy can be demonstrated in various ways; though the GDR's place in that military policy is what interests us here.

Second, as the military component in Soviet policy toward the Third World, particularly in Africa, has grown, so has Moscow's dependence on substitutes, or surrogates, increased as well. In the case of the German Democratic Republic, its value to Moscow has been three-fold: its previous experience in cultivating ties with Third World countries; its acknowledged bureaucratic and technical skills, which

are in short supply throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America; its readiness to undertake adventures in the Third World as a Soviet surrogate. These subjects, and others, are examined below.

East Germany in the Third World

East Germany's original reason for involving itself in the developing area stemmed directly from its desire for diplomatic recognition. In large measure, those efforts turned out to be fruitless. West German insistence that it alone would speak for the German nation proved itself to be a lethal diplomatic weapon when combined with the Hallstein Doctrine. This doctrine, named after its originator, Walter Hallstein (Konrad Adenauer's first secretary for foreign affairs and former EEC president), was formulated in 1953 by the West German government in an effort to deprive East Germany of diplomatic recognition. It specified that the Federal Republic would enter into diplomatic relations only with governments that refused to recognize the GDR. The doctrine contained a retroactive element as well: that any country which subsequently recognized the GDR and with whom Bonn had relations would have its ties suspended. The withdrawal of diplomatic ties carried with it the withdrawal of economic ties, a threat which most of the LDCs were not prepared to accept.

The product of West German efforts to deny diplomatic recognition to the GDR was East Germany's virtual exclusion from the world political community, minus the Soviet bloc. East German leaders made a continuous effort to get around the Hallstein Doctrine in various ways. But the GDR's major successes were largely confined to the so-called sub-diplomatic level. While Bonn continued to wield substantial political clout throughout the Third World through the 1960s, it was not always able to prevent those governments from entering into consular, general economic, trade, and cultural relations with the GDR. By 1965, for example, the East Germans were able to point to some limited success in the establishment of trade missions in a number of African countries. The list included Algeria, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Sudan, and Zambia. As with the Soviet Union, East Germany's interest in expanded economic ties was subordinated to the more important goal of forging long-term political alliances with emergent Third World elites. By the late 1960s, the GDR's commitment of foreign aid to the LDCs came to about 0.02 percent of its gross national product.¹³ Furthermore, throughout the 1970s, East German trade with those countries remained in the range of 3-5 percent of its total trade turnover.¹⁴ However, the political gains turned out to be substantial, if not immediate. For what was gained from such activities was the opportunity to establish intimate working contact with government specialists who would come eventually to occupy top-executive positions in their na-

tional bureaucracies. By the end of 1979, long after East Germany had successfully terminated its campaign to achieve diplomatic recognition, the GDR had commercial or other forms of economic relations with fifty-two Third World countries. While the GDR now has a more diversified range of interests which it is pursuing in its relations with the LDCs, including the desire to attain secure access to Middle East oil, the economic importance of the LDCs to East Germany remains negligible.

Today, one can identify two fundamental goals pursued by East Germany in its policies toward the Third World: to undermine the influence and prestige of the Federal Republic of Germany, its long-time opponent throughout the Third World, and to undertake complex support functions of a political and military-security nature. This second goal is the object of discussion now.

East Germany's interest in the developing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America has expanded rapidly over the past decade. As a Soviet surrogate, the GDR sticks closely to Soviet interpretations of Third World developments; and East German initiatives toward specific governments, such as Angola or Ethiopia, are invariably coordinated with Soviet strategies. Furthermore, the East Germans know that the risks associated with being closely tied to one or another contending faction within an African or Asian country can bring political difficulties, and occasional diplomatic humiliations, in their wake. For example, the GDR's own relations with Somalia have suffered as a result of Moscow's decision to switch sides in support of Ethiopia in its war with the Somalis over the Ogaden region in the late 1970s. Of more recent concern, of course, the East Germans, along with the USSR, have found themselves on the political sidelines in the wake of Robert Mugabe's electoral victory in Zimbabwe in early 1980. The result has been a humiliation for the Soviet Union and its satellites who, as things turned out, picked the wrong side in the Rhodesian insurgency. And in the Middle East, the GDR, again like the Soviet Union, has been forced to absorb political defeats—in Egypt, Somalia, Sudan, and to a lesser degree in other Arab countries which remain suspicious of Soviet overtures.¹⁵

Nonetheless, the East Germans have demonstrated an ability to work closely with the Soviet Union in areas of the Third world which are open to the political influence of Moscow. Most of these countries lie in sub-Saharan Africa, but there are now indications that a number of Central American countries, most prominently Nicaragua, are falling into the category of what Soviet-bloc theorists call the "national democratic state." This designation covers a variety of LDCs in various stages of economic and political transition today. The vast majority of them, however, remain outside the Marxist political framework. Furthermore, as Soviet analysts themselves admit, most of these countries

will remain dependent on the industrial West for their future economic well-being. Their chief selling point for the Soviet Union, however, is their verbal commitment to pursue a "non-capitalist way of development" over the longer term. It is the self-imposed responsibility of the Soviet Union and its various surrogates (but crucially for the GDR) to assist those countries in the management of that transition from pre-capitalism to "real socialism." Such a task is a complicated one, and the East German role in that process is multi-faceted. Some of its more important political activities in support of that goal include the following.

International and Domestic Propaganda Support Activities

Since the Korean War, East German leaders have been active in Soviet-led efforts to mobilize international and domestic opinion against the West. Under the banner of "anti-imperialistic solidarity," GDR propagandists have employed a variety of forums which are organized to promote the spread of anti-Western opinion throughout the Third World. In the United Nations, for one pertinent example, the GDR has vigorously supported a number of Soviet positions geared to enlist Third World political support. This involves, among other things, the LDC demand for a "New International Economic Order"; for a policy of military and economic confrontation with South Africa; for a strategy designed to isolate Israel within the U.N. and in support of the claims of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

On the domestic front, East German propaganda activities are organized around so-called Solidarity Committees (Kurt Krüger is the General Secretary responsible for the administration of these organizations) whose purpose is to mobilize domestic opinion on behalf of East Germany's various campaigns to demonstrate its fealty to the "anti-imperialist" banner. There are separate Solidarity Committees for the various geographic regions which compose the Third World. And there are specific country-to-country Committees for East Germany's major political allies, all of which are located in the Middle East and in Africa. In addition to these established entities, the East Germans have also created special forums in order to take advantage of specific issues which enjoy the immediate concerns of their various Third World allies. In support of the "Struggle against Colonialism, Racism, and Apartheid," for example, the GDR has, under UN auspices, established its own anti-apartheid commission. Created in March of 1978, this forum has been used as an organizational focus around which East Germany's various anti-apartheid actions, on the home front, have been directed. According to one Western source, these various "Solidarity Campaigns" carried out on the home front have netted approximately \$150 million. Most of that went to the various

guerrilla groups, such as the African National Congress and the South-West Africa People's Organization (the two groups which are carrying out insurrections against the South African and the Namibian authorities, respectively).¹⁶

GDR Foreign Aid and Trade with Third World Countries

In comparison with the Federal Republic of Germany, the GDR is not a generous aid donor to the LDCs. On average, the FRG donates about 10 billion marks on an annual basis (this includes private investment and commercial loans). East German sources do not divulge their monetary contributions, but Western sources calculate that it comes to about 6 billion marks for the entire period from 1949 to 1976.¹⁷

East German support also extends to the training of Third World students in the GDR. Honecker announced recently that since 1976, a total of 8,500 students from Asia, Africa, and Latin America had received instruction in the technical areas. The GDR has proved to be especially helpful in providing the following types of instruction: journalist training, which is provided to aspiring students who are expected to join (or found) newspapers in their home countries; instruction in engineering, which includes anything from harbor design to the development of national highway systems; and telecommunications education, which is geared to assist students from the LDCs in the establishment of radio and television systems in their home countries.

The GDR's trade with the LDCs is relatively modest, but it has grown. From a paltry \$4.2 million in 1949, it reached about \$2.8 billion in 1979. The following table highlights East Germany's trade turnover with a number of African countries over the past decade:

GDR Trade with Africa

Country*	1970	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
Angola				236.0	233.7	311.6
Ethiopia	0.6	0.2	0.2	278.2	316.5	63.3
People's Republic of the Congo	0.3	0.1	8.0	3.8	1.0	0.4
Mozambique				24.9	130.5	277.3

*Note** Since 1973, the GDR has not usually reported separate import and export entries; figures are in millions of valutamarks, approximately two valutamarks equal to one dollar.

Sources: *Statistisches Jahrbuch der Deutschen Demokratischen Republic* (East Berlin: Staatsverlag, 1979); *Annuaire statistique de la République Démocratique Allemande 1980* (East Berlin: Staatsverlag, 1980), p. 79.

While its trade with Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique has increased substantially over the past few years, these three countries of-

fer the GDR little in the way of raw materials which could be exchanged in return for East Germany's manufactured goods. It seems to be the case that GDR trade with those important African regimes is based essentially on political considerations. A possible exception to that rule, of course, is Mozambique which has sizable deposits of oil. In any event, one of the more noteworthy points in the above table is the substantial drop-off in East German-Ethiopian trade. GDR sources do not provide any reason for this, but it is a development which bears scrutiny.

Trade between the Middle East and the GDR, alternatively, is more robust. While the total trade turnover in East Germany's commerce with its three major African allies (Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique) came to 652.2 million valutamarks in 1979 (about \$326 million), GDR-Iraq trade in the same year alone came to 912 million valutamarks (about \$456 million). The table below supplies a more precise overview of these developments:

GDR Trade with the Middle East

Country	1970	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
Egypt	389.7	639.6	559.2	546.3	442.2	520.7
Iraq	48.7	764.2	779.0	595.0	724.7	912.3
Libya	6.4	12.1	63.3	84.8	13.3	54.7
Syria	67.0	211.2	348.6	344.4	405.7	436.6

Sources: Statistisches Jahrbuch der Deutschen Demokratischen Republic, and Annuaire statistique, pp. 79-80.

The major contrast between East German trade with the Middle East and Africa is oil, which the former has in abundance. Nevertheless, the GDR has attempted to coordinate its foreign commercial and political relations where it has been possible for it to do so. Notably, East Germany's most important trade partner, Iraq, is also the GDR's major political client in the Middle East. At the same time, political vicissitudes do not entirely dominate East Germany's foreign economic policy. Witness the "relative" stability of East German-Egyptian trade. In fact, despite Sadat's expulsion of Soviet military advisers in 1972, and his more recent closing of the GDR's consulate in Alexandria in December 1977, trade between the two countries has not fluctuated in the manner that the GDR's trade with Libya, for example, has.

In general, East Germany's foreign commercial relations with other LDCs outside of Africa and the Middle East are relatively modest. Its combined trade with India and Brazil in 1979 came to approximately 848 million valutamarks (about \$424 million). By way of comparison,

the much smaller countries of Belgium and Luxembourg transacted a total of about 1 billion valutamarks (\$500 million) worth of trade with the GDR in the same year. Explanations for why LDC trade remains unimportant to the GDR vary. But two points deserve to be mentioned in this regard. First, the non-covertibility of the East German mark means that the GDR must usually conduct its trade on a straight barter basis: For all intents and purposes, most of the LDCs have little of direct value to the GDR, so trade in and of itself makes little sense for East Germany. Second, as with the Soviet Union, so for the GDR, the non-market economies are not major actors in the global economy; the LDCs, along with the industrial countries, are. For the foreseeable future, while various Marxist developing countries will increase their political and security ties with the East Germans, they will remain directly dependent on the West for their economic well-being. There is little, if anything, that the GDR can do about this.

International Educational Support Activities

Throughout the Third World, but particularly so in Africa, the GDR is engaged in the work of educating thousands of “cadres” “in the techniques of managing centrally directed economic and political institutions and by inculcating Soviet-style Socialist doctrine in the process, the GDR is seeking to build what may be called a Marxist-Leninist infrastructure in a number of closely allied Third World states (such as Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Angola).”¹⁸ An integral part of the educational process is the use of trade union delegations, women’s organizations, and youth groups throughout the developing world in the service of Marxist education.

Of special importance for the GDR are the activities of so-called Friendship Brigades which are currently working in seven African countries. According to Honecker, 2,750 apprentices have been trained by these brigades, almost all of which come from African and Arab countries.¹⁹ These Brigades belong to the Free German Youth, which is the official youth group of East Germany. That most members of these Friendship Brigades probably have an interest in careers in the diplomatic service (or in the international military security apparatus) is a point not lost on East Germany’s political leaders.

Substantive comments on the nature, and extent, of East Germany’s military and security assistance activities are reserved for the next two chapters. In brief, however, it is clear that the GDR is playing an increasingly significant role in these two related areas. Throughout the Near East and in Africa, East German military and security cadres (estimates run between 5,000–10,000) are actively involved in the establishment of intelligence services, in the training of guerrilla commandos, and in the organization of national military systems. As East

German activity in this sensitive sphere has increased over the past decade, the number of missions undertaken by East German military and security leaders has correspondingly grown. It is rare that GDR official sources ever admit that East Germany is directly helping its Third World clients in these areas. In most instances, one has to scrutinize the content of the various public treaties and agreements which are entered into by the East Germans and their various clientele. It seems, however, that a good deal of military and security assistance is funneled through "scientific-technical" channels.

East Germany's Third World Problems

The brief history of East Germany's relations with the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America is characterized by failures as well as successes. The failures largely involve the futile efforts undertaken by the Ulbricht regime to achieve diplomatic recognition from the non-aligned camp. The most notable aspect of that campaign was the hesitance of those countries to accord diplomatic recognition to the GDR. Undoubtedly, a number of those countries were concerned that if they did so, Bonn would promptly break diplomatic relations with them and in the bargain terminate its generous program of economic assistance. Even now, there is little doubt in the minds of Third World leaders that the Federal Republic constitutes a significantly more important economic factor in their development than does the GDR.

On the other hand, it would be incorrect to maintain that East Germany's strained ties with countries such as Egypt or Somalia have much to do with the comportment of the GDR. One of the major disadvantages which a surrogate must assume is that the actions of its patron will largely influence its own fortunes as well. There is limited documentary evidence that the East Germans have attempted to avoid those dangers. Notably there is the effort undertaken by Honecker during one of his African forays to convince Robert Mugabe that he should abandon the Chinese and come over to the Soviet side. Open-source literature does not provide information as to whether Honecker was specifically authorized by the Soviets to make this overture to Mugabe. However, it is hardly possible to assume that the East Germans would have asked the future leader of Zimbabwe to change sides without Soviet concurrence.²⁰

A more critical problem which faces the GDR, as it does the Soviet Union, is the tricky question posed by the Third World demand for a "New International Economic Order." This is a subject which has been enthusiastically exploited by the East Germans, especially in the conduct of their propagandist campaigns against the "neo-colonial" designs of the Federal Republic of Germany. But the extremely modest foreign assistance program of the GDR has also opened it up to criticism by

various Third World countries who have accused East Germany of making promises that it could not (or would not) subsequently fulfill. The most notable example of that vulnerability was President Bokassa's decision to break diplomatic relations between his Central African Empire and the GDR in 1971. Bokassa's reason for that action was that the East Germans had not made good on their previous foreign assistance promises.

But the German Democratic Republic has two additional problems, which are in fact interrelated. In the first place, the GDR is considered to be an affluent country, and the Third World knows this. In the second place, the East Germans are probably aware that even if they were inclined to be more generous in their foreign assistance policies, one major disincentive for them is the insistent Israeli demand that the GDR pay indemnification for the depredations of the Third Reich. There are major differences between the LDCs' demand for indemnification for the "plundering" which the colonial powers allegedly subjected them to, and, on the other hand, the Israeli contention that the GDR, as an internationally recognized German state, must also pay its share for the suffering imposed upon the Jewish people. Since the end of World War II, the East Germans have paid in excess of \$14 billion to the Soviet Union alone. As East German writers see it, in any event, the East Germans and the LDCs are "objectively" on the same side of the issue in so far as their joint opposition to capitalist exploitation is concerned. In some instances, however, it is asserted that Third World countries seem incapable of distinguishing "between socialism and imperialism and as a result end up making unjustified demands on the socialist states."²² Or as Honecker charged during an international conference of Third World groups, held in East Berlin (the GDR's capital) in October 1980:

... (P)oliticians in the USA and the Federal Republic of Germany... miss no opportunity to boast of their so-called development aid. However, they prefer to maintain a discreet silence over the rising profits taken out of these countries. After all, between 50 and 100 billion dollars in profits are squeezed out of these countries each year. This far exceeds the total volume of government-owned and private capital invested in these countries.²³

For the foreseeable future there is no evidence to suggest that the Third World is about to hold a referendum on whether the Soviet-bloc is doing all that it can to advance their economic development. The next several chapters examine what the GDR is specifically doing to make the Soviet Union's influence felt in that diverse region in a major way.

1. Consult the following sources on GDR Africa policy: Henning von Löwis, "Das politische und militärische Engagement der Deutschen Demokratischen Republic in Schwarzafrika," in *Beiträge zur Konfliktforschung* (January 1978), pp. 5–54; Melvin Croan, "A New Afrika Corps," *Washington Quarterly* (Winter 1980), pp. 21–37; George A. Glass, "East Germany in Black Africa," *The World Today* (August 1980), pp. 305–312; Michael Sodaro, "The GDR And The Third World," in Michael Radu, *Eastern Europe & The Third World* (New York: Praeger Special Studies, 1981), pp. 106–141; Jiri Valenta and Shannon Butler, "East German Security Policies in Africa," in *ibid.*, pp. 142–168.
2. Press Release, GDR Embassy, Washington, D.C. (Foreign Policy Report, May 1981), p. 6.
3. Samuel T. Francis, *The Soviet Strategy of Terror* (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 1981), p. 5.
4. There is no published information specifically devoted to the organization of East German-Cuban policy in Africa. A brief summary is provided by William F. Robinson, "Eastern Europe's Presence in Black Africa," *Radio Free Europe Research* (Washington, D.C.: RFE, June 21, 1979), p. 9.
5. Norman M. Naimark, "Is It True What They're Saying About East Germany?," *Orbis* (Fall 1979), p. 556.
6. David E. Albright, "Soviet Policy—The USSR And Africa," *Problems of Communism* (January–February 1978), p. 22.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
9. Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 5.
10. Rogert E. Kanet and Boris Ipatov, "Soviet Aid And Trade in Africa," in Warren Weinstein and Thomas H. Henniksen (eds.), *Soviet and Chinese Aid To Africa* (New York: Praeger, 1980), p. 7.
11. Vernon V. Aspaturian, "Soviet Global Power and the Correlation of Forces," *Problems of Communism* (May–June 1980), p. 12.
12. Hans Siegfried Lamm and Siegfried Kupper, *DDR und Dritte Welt* (Munich and Vienna: R. Oldenbourg, 1976), pp. 48–63. This section describes the GDR's approach to the Third World *vis-à-vis* the "recognition" issue.
13. Sodaro, *op. cit.*, p. 112.
14. *Ibid.*
15. That Arab countries are suspicious, and frequently hostile, in no way means that they are not prepared to deal with Communist countries. Consult Kurt Seliger, "Solidarität und Staatsraison: Am Beispiel der Beziehungen DDR-Irak," *Deutschland Archiv* (November 1979) pp. 1185–1192.

16. Consult Kurt Krüger, "Solidarität der DDR mit den Völkern Asiens, Afrikas und Lateinamerikas," *Deutsche Aussenpolitik* (October 1979), pp. 52-64.
17. Peter Ludz (ed.), *DDR Handbuch* (Cologne: Science and Politics, 1979, 2nd edition), p. 101.
18. Sodaro, *op. cit.*, p. 115.
19. Press Release, GDR Embassy (Foreign Policy Report, May 1981), p. 6.
20. Colin Legum (ed.), *Africa Contemporary Record* (New York and London: Holmes And Meier, 1980), p. A19.
21. For a discussion of the Israeli demand on the GDR, and the GDR's response, see, Peter Dittmar, "DDR und Israel (I)," *Deutschland Archiv* (July 1977), pp. 751-754.
22. Friedel Trappen and Ulrich Weishaupt, "Aktuelle Fragen des Kampfes um nationale und soziale Befreiung im subsaharischen Afrika," *Deutsche Aussenpolitik* (February 1979), p. 34.
23. From Erich Honecker's Opening Address, contained in *The joint struggle of the working-class movement and the national liberation movement against imperialism and for social progress* (Dresden: Time in Pictures, 1981), p. 16. (German title for publication house: Verlag Zeit im Bild.)

The German Democratic Republic in Africa

Since the mid-1970s, East Germany has earned the reputation of being the “pace setter” in the establishment of a Soviet-bloc presence in Africa. Over this short period, seven of the thirteen members of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) Politburo have visited that continent. These activities do not include the thousands of trips taken by mid-and low-level members of East Germany’s Party and governmental apparatus to that continent. Nor do such actions include the special brand of GDR African diplomacy which was the trade mark of Werner Lamberz, who was until his death in a helicopter crash in Libya three years ago the foremost political expert on Africa in East Germany.¹

There has also been a reverse flow of African government and guerrilla leaders who have travelled to the GDR in growing numbers as of late. That list prominently includes Samora Machel of Mozambique, the late Agostinho Neto of Angola, and Mengistu Haile Mariam of Ethiopia. Together with Congo Brazzaville (plus South Yemen), these are the countries which have enjoyed the vast bulk of East Germany’s attention over the past few years. And the GDR has also been an important place to visit for the two most prominent figures of the African guerrilla movement today: Sam Nujoma of SWAPO, and Oliver Tambo of the African National Congress (ANC). Until it achieved independence in 1980, East Germany was also a major point of destination for Joshua Nkomo, co-leader of the Patriotic Front—and Moscow’s candidate to take power in that country.

Erich Honecker’s two trips to Africa in 1979 clearly represented the high point of East German involvement on that continent. During his first trip in February, Honecker visited Libya, Angola, Mozambique, and Zambia. The yield from his visit with Colonel Qadhafi was reported to be meager. But the East German Party chief made up for that in his negotiations with the Neto and Machel regimes. On this occasion, Honecker entered into two “Treaties of Friendship And Cooperation,” both of which are designed to increase the pace of political, economic, and military collaboration between the GDR and two of its most prized Marxist clients.

Honecker also went to Zambia where he reportedly attempted to improve East Germany's previously tense relations with Kenneth Kaunda. Kaunda had closed the East German Trade mission in Lusaka in 1971 in retaliation for East German covert activities against his country.¹ The other purpose of Honecker's visit to Zambia may have been of higher priority for the SED chief, however. For it was also on this occasion that Honecker reportedly met for an hour with Joshua Nkomo. Honecker subsequently announced that East Germany would donate about \$2 million worth of "Solidarity Goods" to support the armed insurrection in Rhodesia. Nkomo thanked his German patron and then praised the GDR for its contribution to the guerrilla forces.²

In November 1979, Honecker journeyed to Ethiopia where he signed another Friendship Treaty with the Marxist regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam. The high point of his visit to Addis Ababa, however, was the dedication of the first Karl Marx monument on the African continent.³

The East German version of "shuttle diplomacy" however was undoubtedly the three-trip sequence which Werner Lamberz made to Africa in 1977. Lamberz was then a full member of the Politburo and Secretary of the SED's Central Committee. This second post enjoys considerable status and prestige through the Soviet bloc, largely because it involves duties which require a high degree of security and diplomatic training. These were the skills which Lamberz put to intensive use in his African trips of February, June, and December of 1977. During his February trip, Lamberz attended the Third Frelimo Congress in Maputo (the capital of Mozambique). During his time there he met with *both* Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe, as well as with Oliver Tambo and Sam Nujoma. The June 1977 trip to Africa took Lamberz to South Yemen, Ethiopia, Angola, Congo-Brazzaville, Nigeria, and Zambia. While in Ethiopia, the East German Party leader visited training camps of the "People's Militia" whose administrators were reportedly being schooled by East German security specialists. Lamberz's final journey took him to South Yemen, once again, and to Ethiopia and Libya.

Contacts between the East Germans and Qadhafi had been dormant until a meeting was arranged in Tripoli (the Libyan capital) in October 1977 with Hermann Axen, another member of the SED Politburo. Lamberz's subsequent December visit with the Libyan leader was supposedly designed to lay the foundation for more active and collaborative relations between the two governments. But the respective parties apparently were unable to get beyond a vaguely-worded agreement which spelled-out those steps which would need to be taken in order to establish a closer partnership. While specific details on these negotiations are not available, the fact that Lamberz once again travelled to Libya in March 1978 (a trip from which he never returned) suggests that the East Germans may have been attempting to negotiate a long-

term oil contract with the Libyans. And there is some circumstantial evidence to suggest that Lamberz might have opened the way for East German assistance in the training of Libyan commandos. It is reported in this vein that there are now about 400 East German military advisers in Libya and some of them undoubtedly carry out those responsibilities.⁴

Added to these various travels of high-ranking East German political leaders is the militant role which the GDR takes in the promotion of the guerrilla movement throughout the African continent. The PLO, the ANC, SWAPO, and until March of 1980 the Patriotic Front, all have official standing in East Berlin.⁵ As George Glass writes, "East Germany was the only European Communist country where all these . . . movements were represented with missions enjoying a semi-diplomatic status, and their organizations received approximately 30 million marks in GDR assistance in 1978 alone. The GDR was also the first East European country to take up relations at a party level with Frelimo and the MPLA . . ."⁶

In other words, the GDR has taken significant initiatives to establish extraordinarily close (if not intimate) ties with both the revolutionary states and movements of Africa. This, in turn, means two basic things. It means that the Soviet Union must accord special value to the East German contribution to its foreign policy toward Africa. And it also means that the East Germans have an aptitude for those specific tasks which the Soviet Union requires the GDR to perform as a surrogate. What are those tasks?

The East German purpose in Africa is to help establish Marxist regimes in countries where the conditions allow for that to occur. Once these regimes have been established, the GDR's responsibility is then to ensure their survival. Responsibilities of this kind require a variety of assets, all of which the GDR possesses in abundance. Those assets include a high level of administrative competence, a sophisticated knowledge of the military and security sciences, and a core of mid-level functionaries who are dedicated to the spread of Marxism in Africa.

One specific East German responsibility, which utilizes this skill mix to the greatest possible extent, and is of fundamental importance in the Soviet Union's effort to bring Marxism to Africa, is the provision of military and security assistance. It will be the focus of attention here. The first part of this discussion focuses on the GDR's activities in Black Africa, while the second part devotes attention to East German military and security assistance to the PLO.

Military and Security Assistance to Black Africa

East Germany's military tradition, its unmatched loyalty to the Soviet Union, and the military instability of its African clients are the

major factors which explain the GDR's military and security role in Black Africa today. As one analyst describes the overall role of the GDR in this area:

The GDR sends highly skilled military cadres (9,000 soldiers and advisers in Africa and in the Near East) and specialists in other areas generally connected with the military (doctors, engineers). It runs three training camps for Palestinian commandos in South Yemen and trains security forces in Angola, Mozambique, Benin, and South Yemen. Further, it trains administrative, political, and journalist cadres. Since 1963 the GDR Solidarity School has graduated over 400 Third World journalists. Many leaders of the Zimbabwe Liberation Movement (Rhodesia), the PLO, Namibia, Guinea Bissau, Congo-Brazzaville, Guinea, Angola, the Cape Verde Islands, and St. Thomas and Prince's Island have studied in the GDR. In 1977 the so-called solidarity fund was granted over 200,000,000 marks. The overall sphere of contacts with developing countries is supervised by Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade Alex Schalk. An East German military delegation lead by Minister of Defense H. Hoffmann was in Angola, Guinea Bissau, and Congo-Brazzaville at the end of April and beginning of May 1978. It is obvious that Hoffmann represented more than GDR interests alone since, at the same moment, a session of the Military Council of the Warsaw Pact was taking place in Budapest, each country represented by its minister of defense. The absence of the East German minister clearly showed where the priorities of the whole group lay.⁷

East Germany hardly operates alone. While the Soviet Union is responsible for the supply of heavy equipment and the provision for the higher ranking military and political officers, Cuba supplies the ground troops. The GDR's presence throughout Africa (Black Africa and the Middle East) is, in comparison with the efforts exerted by its Communist counterparts, a relatively modest one. Estimates of East German military forces (advisers plus troops) never go beyond 10,000. In a comprehensive report on East German military and security assistance to its Marxist and non-Marxist clients on the continent, *Spiegel* magazine calculated (as of early 1980) that there were: 250 military advisers in Algeria; 400 in Libya; 300 in Ethiopia; 20 in the People's Republic of the Congo; 600 troops and advisers in Mozambique; 1000 troops and advisers in Angola; 150 advisers in Zambia. This comes to a total of 2720.⁸ The West German journalist, and expert on East German military-security policy, Joachim Nawrocki has further maintained that there were some 950 East German military advisers in Iraq in the late 1970s.⁹

While their numbers are small, the GDR has played an important role in the spread of Soviet-style Marxism in Africa. And in other instances, such as with the cases of the Libyan regime of Colonel Qadhafi or with the PLO, East German assistance clearly contributes to

the maintenance of Soviet influence over the course of developments in the Middle East. Before examining specific instances of East German military and security assistance, it would be well to highlight the general dimensions of that role.

One of the more pertinent aspects of East German military and security policy in Black Africa and in the Middle East is the denial by its leaders that it is even involved in these activities. Speaking to a recent meeting of Third World representatives held in East Berlin, Erich Honecker asserted that the support provided by the Warsaw Pact to the "National liberation movements" had "nothing in common with the export of revolution."¹⁰ But in the same breath, the SED chief then asserted that the Soviet Union and its satellites would of course "take a determined stand against any export of counter-revolution."¹¹ This is a self-serving, if ideologically defensible, position on the part of the Soviet bloc as a whole, and it certainly serves East German foreign policy interests. The GDR has consistently maintained that it is a bastion of order in Eastern Europe and a militant advocate of a "socialist peace policy" throughout the world. In practice, nevertheless, what the GDR has ended up doing is to support the use of the Brezhnev Doctrine, originally employed against "counter-revolutionary" Czechoslovakia in 1968, to justify its limited military and security support of various client states in Africa and in the Middle East.

Another major consideration associated with East German military and security policy is its two-fold nature. On the one hand, East German analysts are now convinced that many of the so-called Marxist states of Africa are politically, as well as economically, under-developed. It is the responsibility of the Soviet bloc, but particularly so for the GDR, to help these weak allies "secure their power" (*Die weitere festigung der Macht*). This is a task which East German military and security organs are uniquely positioned to do. On the other hand, once Marxist political power (with the exception of South Yemen; this is an issue which only drives GDR activities in Black Africa) has been "secured," there is the ongoing need for a secure political apparatus. As the GDR leadership sees it, revolutionary gains must be defended from "subversion," of an external and internal nature.

Added to these major points is the Soviet, as well as the East German, view that the clients of the Soviet bloc must be gradually introduced to a new "world system" in which socialist order will replace the capitalist one. This is not a mere theoretical issue in the Soviet and East German view. For after numerous previous disappointments, notably in Egypt and Somalia, Soviet bloc theorists are soberly aware that their hold on new allies can be a tenuous one at best. The GDR's larger political role, therefore, is to ensure that the economic and governmental apparatus of its various clients is infused with a Marxist dynamic from top to bottom. Along with that concern is the East German enthu-

siasm for educating political cadres who will be able to spread the Marxist doctrine throughout the elite and the mass population.

In practical terms, Western analysts have calculated that between 1955 and the end of 1977, the Eastern European bloc countries exported about \$2.1 billion worth of arms to the LDCs as a whole. Approximately \$1 billion worth of these were sent to that diverse region between 1973 and 1977.¹¹ *Vis-à-vis* the GDR's exports to its African clients (this includes the Middle East as well), The Research Institute for Political Science of the University of Cologne "estimated in 1978 that the GDR was spending 200 m. Marks (111 m. US dollars) per year on weapons and military equipment to be sent to Africa . . . and that an additional 300 m. Marks (167 m. US dollars) was allotted each year for non-military 'solidarity goods'."¹² It is also possible, however, that some East German military supplies are sent to Czechoslovakia, and from there to an African recipient country. This is not simply a hypothetical point. Data compiled by the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency in 1977 indicate that the GDR shipped about \$190 million worth of military material to the Czechs.¹³ (Prague has been the traditional funnel for Soviet-bloc arms to Third World countries.) The ACDA data do not show that any arms shipments went directly from the GDR to Third World recipients, but the Czechs are reported to have sent \$330 million worth of arms to what are called unspecified recipients—which one can infer are LDCs. All East German arms shipments may in fact be going through Czechoslovakia, in which case they might be shipping as much as 600 million Marks to their African clients. Or, alternatively, the arms shipments of the GDR which are directed toward Africa are not being picked up in the ACDA report, in which event the West German figure may be more accurate.

In the event that the 200 million mark figure is an accurate approximation of East German military expenditures, it hardly tells the whole story. For in fact, the GDR is now a pivotal influence in the military and security picture in Africa. Following is a case-by-case overview of the major East German activities in this arena.

Angola

East Germany's involvement with the MPLA regime goes back to 1961 when the official foreign policy journal of the SED—*German Foreign Policy*—published the MPLA's statutes. Relations between the Honecker regime and the MPLA since that time—under Agostinho Neto and Jose Eduardo dos Santos—have been intimate. Prior to the departure of the Portuguese from Angola in the early 1970s, the East Germans supplied the insurgent movement with military equipment. During the civil war of 1975–1976, waged between the MPLA and the anti-communist forces of the UNITA and FNLA, East German mili-

tary assistance is said to have been decisive. It was during this period of revolutionary turmoil that more than 700 East German military advisers, who were working closely with Cuban and MPLA forces on the ground, apparently were successful in saving Neto from military defeat. As Henning von L owis, a West German expert on East German military policy in Portuguese Africa, puts it:

With three ships laden with war material, including heavy weapons, East Berlin played a crucial role in saving the hard-pressed forces of the MPLA from certain defeat. When Agostinho Neto announced the independence of the People's Republic of Angola on November 11, 1975 Neto's troops were only in control of the capital of Luanda. It took the combined efforts of Soviet generals, Cuban soldiers, and East German military advisers to provide the MPLA leader with a secure position of power.¹⁴

In the aftermath of his victory over UNITA and the FNLA, Neto drew closer to the GDR. On February 20, 1979, the highpoint of East German-Angolan relations was undoubtedly reached when the two Parties (the SED and the MPLA) signed a twenty-year treaty of Friendship and Cooperation. This event took place during Honecker's first African journey of that year. Analysts have since compared the content of that document with a similar one signed by Honecker less than one week later in Maputo, Mozambique, with Frelimo. And there are relevant points of difference, of which the most obvious is the inclusion of a bilateral military agreement in the Mozambique Treaty (Article 5), and the total absence of such a provision in the Angolan document.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the practical aspects which surround East Germany's military and security relationship with Angola clearly include a large element of such assistance. The GDR's State Security Service (SSD) has been active in the training of Angola's new security service. And it is noteworthy that the Angolans formally established their own Ministry for Internal Affairs not long after Honecker's visit.

The East Germans have also been engaged in developing the "infrastructure" of the country. Both civilian and military advisers from the GDR have in this regard devoted particular attention to the modernization of that country's transportation and telecommunications system. According to an East German official source, East German maritime pilots had safely guided some 3,300 ships from nearly fifty countries into the Angolan ports of Luanda and Lobito by mid-1978.¹⁶

As with East German military and security assistance to other clients, so Angola also has access to the GDR's excellent facilities at home. Angolan paratroops, for example, have been able to practice with the crack GDR paratrooper battalion number 40. These joint exercises are reportedly being carried out on the North Sea island of R gen.¹⁷

Ethiopia

The GDR has become Ethiopia's "defense patron" as one analyst puts it.¹⁸ As in Angola and in Mozambique, the East German Security Service has trained its Ethiopian counterpart in domestic intelligence gathering and analysis. The SSD has even been responsible for ensuring the personal security of Mengistu Haile Mariam, that country's Marxist leader.¹⁹ Somalian sources assert that the East Germans have provided the Mengistu regime with assistance in the telecommunications area, radar technology, and in the erection of military defense points throughout Ethiopia.²⁰

East German military assistance to Ethiopia has included machine guns and panzers, and East German army officers have been active in the training of Mengistu's troops. In May 1979, bilateral military relations were formalized in an agreement entered into by the two governments. Like his Marxist counterparts in Angola and Mozambique, Mengistu Haile Mariam also signed a twenty-year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with the East Germans on November 15, 1979. This document calls for significant increases in bilateral cooperation in politics, economics, trade, science, culture, and technology. Special attention was given to the coordination of foreign policy positions, a concern entirely appropriate in light of the fact that the Treaty was signed by the two leaders in their capacities as Party spokesmen.

East Germany's interest in the "progress of the Ethiopian revolution," as SED leaders have been known to refer to it, dates back to the original military putsch which disposed of the traditional monarchy in Fall 1974. Nevertheless, the GDR took its time before it became fully engaged in that country. One of the obvious reasons why it seemed to hold back such support was its then close relationship with Somalia. As things have since turned out, the East Germans have been able to maintain a limited presence in Somalia, despite the fact that they, following the lead of the Soviet Union, changed sides during the Somali-Ethiopian war.

1977 was the crucial year for East Germany in its effort to forge a political alliance with the Mengistu regime. On three specific occasions during that year, SED Party leader Werner Lamberz travelled to that country (February, June, and December). Lamberz is credited with the responsibility for the coordination and direction of the military operations of the South Yemeni forces that fought in the Ogaden desert against the Somalis in late 1977. Additionally, East German troops may have actually been involved in direct combat in the Eritrean offensive in the spring of 1979. The Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF) made a formal complaint to the Organization of African Unity in July 1979 to that effect.²¹

Mozambique

East Germany's political and economic presence in Mozambique is a formidable one according to Western observers. When Samora Machel held Frelimo's first independence day celebration on June 25, 1975, only one German state, the GDR, was invited. The East Germans have certainly made a significant effort to earn the trust of the Machel regime. According to one source, the GDR's military role in Africa actually began in 1969 with its support of Frelimo forces.

As of late 1980, East Germany had entered into more than fifty treaties, agreements, and partial understandings with Machel. East German military and security assistance to that country has prominently included provisions of supplies for the combat of domestic unrest mounted by the "National Resistance Movement of Mozambique." These supplies include anything from blankets and tents to infantry weapons, helicopters, and heavy vehicles. The GDR State Security Service has trained Mozambique's National Service for Popular Security, while also providing for the personal protection of Machel himself. Furthermore, the East Germans train that country's border troops and assist them in carrying out anti-guerrilla operations against the domestic insurgency movement.²²

The integration of Mozambique into the Soviet-bloc is probably the most advanced of any African country.²³ Military ties with the GDR are specifically provided for in Clause 5 of its twenty-year Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, which Machel and Honecker signed on February 26, 1979. Of the three separate treaties of this nature entered into by the GDR with its African Marxist clients, only the one with Mozambique contains such a provision. In October 1979 and again in October of 1980, military delegations from Mozambique visited the GDR. On this second occasion, Defense Minister Chipande met with his East German counterpart Heinz Hoffmann, as well as with Erich Honecker. When Samora Machel visited the GDR in September 1980 he further cemented his close political and security relations with the East Germans by signing a new Party-to-Party (SED/Frelimo) cooperation agreement for the years 1981 and 1985.

The strategic location of East Germany's African clients is a major consideration in shaping the Soviet Union's larger strategy in the area. Frelimo has been a militant supporter of SWAPO's insurrection inside Namibia and was an earlier backer of the Patriotic Front. In both cases, East German military advisers are said to have assisted these movements from Mozambique's territory. East German officials make significant note of the fact that Mozambique's confrontation of South Africa and its location on the Indian ocean ("a sea which plays a special role in the strategic calculations of the United States" as one East

German radio commentator has referred to it) are of major importance to the Soviet bloc as a whole.²⁴

The military importance of Mozambique to the Soviet Union is especially pronounced *vis-à-vis* South Africa. In fact, roughly sixty percent of that country's hard currency earnings comes from trade with the Republic of South Africa. Nevertheless, Machel is a strong supporter of the outlawed African National Congress. During his visit to East Berlin, Machel asserted that his country would prevail in any military confrontation with Pretoria because "our state is a socialist state, and because proletarian internationalism is an integral part of our Marxist-Leninist worldview."²⁵

Zaire

Two different instances of East German military and security support of insurgent movements in Africa also deserve mention. In the first place, there is substantial evidence that East Germany played a major role in the abortive second invasion of Shaba province in Zaire. The GDR actively assisted in the preparation, and partial execution, of that invasion by helping in the training of the so-called National Liberation Front of the Congo (FLNC) which launched its invasion of Zaire from Angolan territory. The respected British expert on Africa, Colin Legum, has specifically accused the GDR of having worked to engineer the destabilization of the Mobutu government by its support of that invasion which was launched in May of 1978.

Legum's account maintains that the East Germans were assigned this subversive responsibility by the Soviets, just prior to the convening of the SED's Ninth Party Congress in the spring of 1976. Specifically, the GDR was to be responsible for the provision of military equipment (Czech-produced personnel carriers and Soviet surface-to-air missiles, SAMS) to the FLNC. A military contingent under the leadership of Lieutenant General Helmut Poppe (an African expert and a close aide to General Heinz Hoffmann) was given the job of preparing the FLNC for the actual invasion. Based in Angola, the FLNC was to "create 45 pockets of continuing resistance inside Shaba itself [while] . . . [being] supplied from the three main support bases inside Angola."²⁶ Legum also maintains that the East German military contingent under Poppe's command was given strict orders not to enter Zaire itself. But "The East Germans reportedly aided the retreat of the defeated FLNC forces by providing tank cover from inside the Angolan border . . ."²⁷

Prior to this abortive invasion effort, both the East German and the Soviet press had conducted a sharply worded campaign against the establishment of a rocket-research and launching operation in Shaba province. That project had been entered into by a small West German rocket firm (OTRAG) and the Zaire government. For what now ap-

pear to be purely propaganda reasons, the Soviets and East Germans decided to play up this bilateral agreement as a primary example of West German “neo-colonialism.” In fact, the People’s Republic of China had a strong interest in the success of the OTRAG project, since it would have provided the Chinese with an inexpensive rocket-launching capability which it needed for its own satellite program. The GDR and the Soviets accused the West German government of attempting to test Cruise missiles under the protective guise of the program. The charge was false from the outset, but the invasion forced OTRAG’s director, Lutz Kayser, to cancel the project.

East German official sources have subsequently charged the NATO countries with “military intervention in the internal affairs of Zaire, epitomized in the suppression of the Shaba province uprising.”²⁸ Aside from the fact that the Shaba province “uprising” was in reality a Soviet-backed invasion of a sovereign country, the French troops which were sent into the province can hardly be considered members of NATO.

Zimbabwe

Both the Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellites have absorbed a major propaganda defeat in the aftermath of Robert Mugabe’s rise to power in Zimbabwe. As of mid-1981, the Soviet Union is just beginning to set up its diplomatic quarters in Salisbury. The Eastern European countries have yet to embark upon even that modest task. Nevertheless, Soviet and East German support of the Patriotic Front threatened to make that country into another example of Soviet-bloc success in cultivating yet another Marxist client, or a potential one in either event.

Prior to the electoral victory of Robert Mugabe over Joshua Nkomo early in 1980, however, the East Germans were strongly supporting the Nkomo wing of the Patriotic Front. In a report carried in the *New York Times* (November 18, 1979), the East Germans were reported to have assisted “Mr. Nkomo’s Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army with training in flying MIG interceptors, and operating tanks, heavy artillery, and ground-to-air missiles such as those which shot down two of Air Rhodesia’s Viscount airlines.”²⁹ The same report also says that East German military advisers had been spotted in Angola and in Zambia where they were advising a guerrilla deployment (presumably from Nkomo’s army, or allied with it) en route into Zimbabwe.

As with the other African insurgent groups (ANC, PLO, and SWAPO), the East Germans have been the most assertive member of the Soviet-bloc in according diplomatic recognition to movements such as Nkomo’s. He himself visited the GDR on various occasions in the 1970s. In 1976, the Patriotic Front set up its own bureau in East Berlin. When Honecker made his much-heralded African trip of Feb-

ruary 1979, as previously mentioned, Nkomo was able to spend an hour with the East German leader while Honecker was visiting with Kenneth Kaunda in Lusaka. Three months after the Nkomo-Honecker meeting, Heinz Hoffmann took a twenty-person military delegation to Zambia, Mozambique and Ethiopia. While in Zambia, it is reported that Hoffmann committed the GDR to “massive” military aid to the “Front line” states in Southern Africa and to the guerrillas which were in opposition to the Muzorewa government in Rhodesia. Hoffmann further asserted that East Germany would continue to provide such assistance “even after their enemies had been vanquished.”³⁰

At this juncture, future Soviet, East German, or perhaps even Cuban, military engagement in Zimbabwe seems remote. Mugabe is on good terms with Samora Machel of Mozambique, the country which would play a major part in the support of guerrilla operations against Zimbabwe, as it has in the past against Rhodesia. But as long as Nkomo has what one reporter calls “a potential guerrilla army in the bush,” there is the possibility that the USSR will decide, again, that the East Germans should become engaged in that country.³¹

Total Number of East German Military Advisers and Troops as of Early 1980

Country	GDR military presence
Algeria	250
Angola	1000
Ethiopia	300
Libya	400
Mozambique	600
People's Republic of the Congo	20
Zambia	150
	<u>2720</u>

How Valuable is East German Military and Security Support?

Since reports on East German military adventures burst upon the scene several years ago, analysts have wondered about whether, in fact, the GDR can play a major role in determining those African conflicts. Certainly there is a strong case to be made that its support has been crucial. In the cases of Angola, Ethiopia, and Mozambique, East German military assistance has probably made the difference between the defeat and survival of these Marxist regimes. At some point in the future, perhaps, the need for such a military assistance role on the part of the GDR may no longer be necessary. But for the moment, East German military and security advisers seem to make a crucial difference in that volatile region. As far as its support of movements such as the PLO goes, this may be another matter entirely. That organization

receives more diversified forms of assistance than most of the GDR's African clients do. And, in any event, the Soviet Union's fortunes have not held up as well in the Middle East — on balance — as they have in Africa.

1. Consult, Henning von Löwis of Menar, "Das afrikanische Erbe von Werner Lamberz," *Deutschland Archiv* (April 1978), pp. 348-351.
2. See, William F. Robinson, "Eastern Europe's Presence in Black Africa," *Radio Free Europe Research* (Washington, D.C.: RFE, June 21, 1979), p. 8.
3. Consult, Henning von Löwis of Menar, "Die DDR als Schrittmacher im weltrevolutionären Prozess," *Deutschland Archiv* (January 1980).
4. Bulgarian and East German instructors are reported to be training Libyan commandos in Libya. *The New York Times*, May 27, 1981.
5. This writer notes that the PLO was listed as an Embassy in the 1979 East Berlin telephone book.
6. George A. Glass, "East Germany in Black Africa," *The World Today* (August 1980), pp. 306-307.
7. Quoted from Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
8. The 10,000 figure is the high side of an estimation made by *New York Times* reporter John Burns. 2720 comes from *Spiegel* (No. 10, 1980), p. 43.
9. Taken from Kurt Seliger, "Solidarität und Staatsraison," *Deutschland Archiv* (November 1979), p. 1188.
10. Honecker, Opening Address, contained in *The joint struggle of the working-class movement and the national liberation movement against imperialism and for social progress* (Dresden: Time in Pictures, 1981), p. 19.
11. *Ibid.*
12. Figure originally taken from Joachim Nawrocki, "Hoffmanns 'Afrika-korps,'" *Die Zeit* (May 26, 1978).
13. *World Military Expenditures And Arms Transfers* (Washington, D.C.: ACDA, October 1979).
14. Henning von Löwis of Menar, "Das politische und militärische Engagement der Deutschen Demokratischen Republic in Schwarzafrika," *Beiträge zur Konfliktforschung* (January 1978), p. 40.
15. For provisions of the two treaties, consult *Deutschland Archiv*, DOKUMENTATION (April 1979), pp., 425-439.
16. ADN News Service (East Berlin, June 3, 1978).
17. "Wir haben euch Waffen und Brot geschickt," *Spiegel* (No. 10, 1980), p. 44.
18. Taken from Henning von Löwis of Menar, "Das afrikanische Erbe von Werner Lamberz," p. 349.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 350.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Taken from Jiri Valenta and Shannon Butler, "East German Security Pol-

- icies in Africa,” in Michael Radu, *Eastern Europe And The Third World* (New York: Praeger Special Studies, 1981), p. 155.
22. Henning von Löwis of Menar, “Machtpolitik südlich des Sambesi,” *Deutschland Archiv* (November 1980), p. 1170.
 23. *Ibid.*, p. 1161; Mozambique has applied for membership in COMECON.
 24. *Ibid.*, p. 1171.
 25. *Ibid.*, p. 1168.
 26. Valenta and Butler in Radu, *op. cit.*, pp., 153–154.
 27. *Ibid.*, p. 154.
 28. *Jahrbuch Asien Afrika Lateinamerika* (1978) (East Berlin: German Science Publishers, 1979), p. 201. (Publisher in German reads, Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften.)
 29. John Burns, “East German Afrika Korps,” *The New York Times* (November 18, 1979).
 30. Taken from Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 8.
 31. Martin McCauley, “East German on Safari,” *Soviet Analyst*, September 10, 1980, p. 4.

The German Democratic Republic in Saharan Africa

East Germany has, in general, had rather different political experiences in its dealings with the Arab states. South Yemen and the PLO are major exceptions to that rule. But, in general, the GDR confronts two major difficulties in this region which it does not confront in Black Africa:

First, as a Communist system, the GDR must deal with the fact that Islam is a powerful religious force throughout the Middle East and the political force of Islam frequently works against the influence of Marxism. The result is that even the more radical Arab states are not willing to embrace the political and religious demands which the creation of a “socialist” society requires. Arab leaders in countries such as Libya, Iraq, and Syria, may—and do—forge alliances of political convenience with the Soviet Union and its satellites. But they demonstrate a monolithic unity when it comes to the adoption of Marxian principles to the organization of their societies. Whether the influence of Islam will remain strong, of course, remains a question of some importance. But it cannot be answered here. Nevertheless, an awareness of East Germany’s opportunities and limitations throughout the Middle East begins with that fundamental reality. Again, South Yemen is an exception to that rule.

Second, the other major difficulty which East Germany confronts is its need for secure sources of oil supplies *outside* Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. With the exception of Mozambique, which possesses an abundance of raw materials including oil, East Germany’s economic ties with its major African clients are relatively unimportant. But the GDR’s relations with the Arab countries are economically important to it, and will probably remain so—so long as the Soviet Union continues to limit the amount of oil it exports to its Eastern European satellites and as long as highly industrialized countries like the GDR continue to need increasing amounts of oil. The first major problem facing East Germany is assumed to exist, but is not analyzed in this chapter. The oil issue, on the other hand, is dealt with.

Up to the beginning of the 1970s, Egypt occupied a pivotal role in

Soviet and in East German diplomatic and political activity. In large measure, the USSR, and its satellites, saw in Gamel Abdel Nasser's "Egyptian socialism" a common point of ideological reference. For the East Germans there was the additional hope that Nasser would recognize the GDR, either on the merits of East Germany's case (a socialist and anti-imperialist state), or because such an action would help the Arab leader counterbalance the influence of West Germany in that region. The East Germans were continuously frustrated in their effort to achieve that goal however. As one analyst puts it:

Not even Walter Ulbricht's loudly trumpeted state visit to Egypt in 1965 brought about the desired breakthrough in relations with the developing world. Although this was the first time the leader of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) had been formally received by a non-Communist government, the trip did not result in the establishment of diplomatic ties. Nor did the revelation that the FRG was supplying arms and reparations to Israel, an action which induced several Arab states to break relations with Bonn in 1965, lead to the hoped-for normalization between these countries and the GDR. It was not until two years after the June war in the Middle East that the GDR scored its first triumphs in this region, gaining recognition by Iraq on May 10, 1969. . . . Soon thereafter, formal relations were established with Sudan (June 3, 1969), Syria (June 5), South Yemen (July 10), and Egypt (July 11).¹

As in the case of East German activity in Black Africa, there is little doubt that the GDR's first (and final) motivation for its Middle Eastern policy stems from its political and strategic obligations to the Soviet Union. As Bernard von Plate maintains, "the political and strategic interests of the Soviet Union in this region" are largely served by the GDR.² If anything, that statement may be more pertinent today, now that diplomatic recognition has been attained by the GDR, than was the case before then. Again, the major qualification must be that the GDR has a strong desire of its own to gain access to Arab oil supplies.

This chapter focuses attention on two subjects which, in turn, provide an overall view of GDR activity in the Moslem world: its engagement with Iraq and Libya and its sponsorship of Marxist South Yemen and of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The GDR has forged alliances of political, and where possible economic, convenience with the radical Arab states over the past decade. That effort has been based on a negative factor, namely the Soviet Union's interest in the reduction of Western influence throughout the region, a goal shared by the leaders of Iraq, Libya, and Syria. Their motivation, however, is also directed specifically toward the "struggle" against Israel, and Soviet, as well as East German, foreign policy has been consistently directed against the influence of the "Zionist" state—and especially so since the June 1967 War, when the

Soviet Union broke diplomatic relations with Israel. Added to this picture is the dramatic break in Soviet-Egyptian relations which occurred in 1972 when Anwar Sadat ordered Soviet advisers out of his country and, in effect, switched sides by joining the United States. In large measure, it is considerably easier for the East Germans to concentrate their attentions on the anti-Israeli than on the anti-Egyptian side of this equation in its dealings with the Arab countries.

“Solidarity and Reasons of State”* East German/Iraqi Relations

The ambiguities and difficulties which confront the GDR in the Middle East are nowhere more evident than its relations with the Baathist regime of Saddam Hussein. Because of Iraq's undoubted strategic importance to the Soviet Union as the most dangerous enemy of Egypt and the most uncompromising of the “steadfast” front against Israel (save Libya), East Germany has had powerful incentives to solidify its ties with that country. Official exchanges between Baghdad and East Berlin have in fact been increased significantly since diplomatic relations were established between the two in 1969. Over that twelve-year period, there have been twenty-five high and secondary level bilateral exchanges between the two governments. These exchanges included visits to Iraq in 1971 and again in 1977 by General Heinz Hoffmann. Furthermore, as previously noted, there have been reports that up to 950 East German military advisers were stationed in that country during the latter part of the 1970s. Unfortunately, corroborating evidence on the presence of those advisers is not available. But there is abundant information that East German technical advisers have been active in helping the Iraqis expand and modernize the country's railway, shipping, and telecommunications systems.³

East Germany's need to secure additional oil supplies has played an important part in the conduct of relations with Iraq. As of 1978, Iraq was the most important trade partner of the GDR in the Middle East, the second major source of petroleum supplies after the Soviet Union. Between 1972 and 1976, shipments of petroleum from Iraq to East Germany moved upward, from 369,000 metric tons to a high of 1,576 metric tons. In 1977, however, shipments dropped by nearly one third, largely as a result of Iraq's interest in selling larger amounts of oil to the capitalist countries, including West Germany.⁴ “As if to demonstrate its declining interest in doing business with the GDR, Iraq did not attend the meeting of the joint GDR-Iraq Standing Committee for Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation scheduled for the

*This title is adapted from the article, “Solidarität und Staatsraison,” which is a study of GDR-Iraq relations by Kurt Seliger, *Deutschland Archiv* (November 1979), pp. 1185-1192.

first quarter of 1979. The meeting was held subsequently only after an SED Politburo delegation under Günther Kleiber visited Baghdad in late April.⁵⁵ As of early 1981, however, the Joint Committee once again appears to be conducting its business on a regular basis.

At the same time, Honecker and the SED find themselves in a compromised position when it comes to the question of ties with the Iraqi Communists who are frequently the object of official repression. Between March 1978 and late 1979, for example, it is reported that forty-five thousand Iraqi Communists were either “interrogated, jailed, murdered, or shot.”⁵⁶ Of that number, about ten thousand were arrested. As with the Soviet Union, so the GDR has chosen not to play up its objections to such behavior. In the specific case of the Iraqi Communists, the East German admonition to the Baathist regime was indeed mild. Such measures, in the SED’s view, undermine the “atmosphere of trust and cooperation between those forces engaged in the struggle against the common enemy.”⁵⁷ As long as Iraq remains a pivotal ally of the Soviet Union in the Middle East, however, there is every indication that East German policy toward the Baghdad government will remain an opportunistic one.

East Germany and Libya

East Germany’s more-recent engagement with the Qadhafi regime in Libya is an even more persuasive bit of evidence that self-interest alone drives its policies toward Tripoli. Diplomatic relations between the GDR and Libya were not established until 1973. However, things have changed, and in a major way.

By the mid-1970s, the Libyan regime of Colonel Qadhafi had become a “natural ally” of the German Democratic Republic. On the doctrinal level, Libya is clearly the most hostile country toward both the United States and Israel in the Middle East today. Over the last several years, however, Qadhafi has become a more significant presence in Soviet Near East strategy, using his country “as a transfer point for Soviet arms supplies to the Ethiopian government.”⁵⁸

As a result of increased Soviet interest in the Libyans, the tempo of East German-Libyan contacts increased substantially. And part of that increase may have been based on an unpublicized effort by the East Germans to enlist the Libyans’ aid in funneling additional arms to the Ethiopians. Inferences of this kind are hard to draw, because the formal content of GDR-Libyan meetings through the end of the 1970s, as previously noted, appears on the surface to be exceedingly bland. Nevertheless, between October 1977 and February 1979, four separate trips were made to that country by high-ranking members of the SED’s Politburo: Hermann Axen (October 1977); Werner

Lamberz (December 1977); Lamberz again (March 1978); and, finally, Erich Honecker himself (February 1978).

At the tenth anniversary of the Libyan revolution, Harry Tisch, also a member of the SED Politburo, represented the GDR. The following day, September 2, 1979, Tisch then met with the PLO's Yassir Arafat. Furthermore, Qadhafi stopped off in East Berlin during his tour of the Soviet bloc in mid-1978. On that occasion, he signed a Ten Year Agreement on Political, Economic, and Scientific-Technical Cooperation with the GDR. This agreement calls for East German assistance in the development of Libya's petroleum industry, among other things. There could be provisions in the agreement for expanded Libyan oil shipments to the GDR as well, but the tempo of trade between the two countries remains exceedingly modest as well as uneven. Between 1977 and 1979, for example it went from 84.8 million to 13.3 million valutamarks, and then moved up to 54.7 million.⁹

If "proletarian internationalism" is any longer taken seriously by the Soviet Union and its satellites, the doctrine seems to have been put aside in dealings with the radical Arab states.¹⁰ The Libyan government has made no secret of its intention to liquidate "communists within the Arab world" despite its simultaneous readiness to cooperate with the Soviet Union on matters of foreign policy.¹¹ Nonetheless, the rationale behind closer contacts between the East Germans and the Libyans is an obvious one, and it is a source of growing concern to the United States. For there is powerful evidence that East German security personnel are actively engaged in helping Qadhafi expand his international network. Both the Egyptian and Sudanese governments have specifically accused the GDR of as much. In the case of both Sadat and Numeiri, their immediate concern, of course, is Libyan subversion directed toward them. As far as terrorism in general is concerned, there is evidence that Qadhafi is in fact now relying on Bulgarian and East German instructors who are skilled in imparting para-military techniques to Libyan commandos.¹² There are further reports that some 400 East German military advisers have been operating in that country.¹³ The function of those advisers remains an open question; but one source has maintained recently that East Germany is assisting Libya in its support of Polisario against Mauritania.

East German Sponsorship of South Yemen

The major political success registered by the Soviet Union and its East German surrogate in the Middle East remains the People's Republic of Yemen (South Yemen). Nowhere else in the Middle East has the East German presence been as pronounced and as influential as in that country. In fact, Ethiopia and South Yemen appear to occupy

parallel positions in both Soviet and East German policy-planning in the region as a whole. (These two countries, after all, are separated from each other only by a very narrow strip of the Red Sea.) In more practical terms, the GDR has signed Treaties of Cooperation and Friendship with both governments, which are in most respects identical to each other. The two treaties were signed during Honecker's trip to Aden and Addis Ababa (November 12–17, 1979). As in the cases of the Angolan and Mozambique treaties, the documents were signed by the respective Party leaders—the most authoritative political level on which the Soviet Union and its satellites conduct foreign policy.

East German involvement with the regime of Abdel Fattah Ismail began in 1969 when its newly-installed revolutionary leaders began to embark on an anti-Western course. In June of that year, South Yemen and the GDR established diplomatic relations, and ties have been exceedingly close since then. Areas of bilateral cooperation, which means East German assistance to South Yemen, include cooperation in the agricultural, industrial, transportation, and telecommunications sectors. That Soviet interest in both treaties was pronounced can be gathered by the fact that Alexei Kosygin, then Chairman of the Council of Ministers, paid an official visit to both South Yemen and Ethiopia just prior to Honecker's visit (from September 10–15 in South Yemen, and from September 16–7 in Ethiopia).

East Germany's commitment to the South Yemeni regime is attested to by the high level official attention which that Marxist country has received from the GDR. Within the space of a little more than two years (April 1975–December 1977), five major trips were made by East German officials to that tiny country. Of particular significance were visits by Werner Lamberz in June and Heinz Hoffmann in October of 1977. There is good reason to assume that these two trips to Aden were made to help South Yemen prepare for operations against Somalia in the Ogaden.¹⁵ It is clear that in South Yemen, East German hopes for the creation of a Marxist regime appear to be well-founded.

East Germany and the PLO

East Germany has been no less a militant supporter of the Palestine Liberation Organization. It has feted Yassir Arafat, the PLO's leader, on numerous occasions and was the first Soviet bloc country which accorded diplomatic representation to that organization. In fact, the GDR took that step in 1973 in the aftermath of the Xth World Youth Festival, which East Germany hosted, and which provided Honecker with an opportunity to demonstrate his government's strong support of the Palestinians.

Part of the rationale behind East Germany's backing of the PLO is related to its effort to win Third World approval at the expense of

West Germany. In 1972, to select one prominent (as well as infamous) example, the East Germans reaped a major propaganda victory in the radical Arab world after the Munich massacre when they volunteered to take the Palestinian students into their country after the West German government acted to expel all of them. Since that time, official GDR sources report that an average of one hundred Palestinian children from refugee camps are invited to spend their vacations in the GDR. While precise numbers are not provided by GDR sources, they do say that hundreds of Palestinians are now studying in that country's colleges and technical schools. Moreover, as with the treatment accorded to other guerrilla fighters, East German hospitals and sanitariums are open to wounded PLO "battlers."¹⁶

The core of East German-PLO military and security ties is contained in two secret agreements signed in 1973 and again in 1979. There is evidence that in both cases, the East Germans committed themselves to supply the PLO with civilian and non-civilian equipment in those agreements. Arafat has made light of that potential by declaring that a "friendly and strategically [important] relationship binds us [i.e., the GDR and the PLO] together."¹⁷

The kind of East German military and security support is not always easy to identify. One analyst nonetheless maintains that East German military security officers "run three training camps for Palestinian commandos in South Yemen."¹⁸ Additionally, PLO guerrillas reportedly are being provided with para-military instruction in special schools run by the East German National People's Army within the GDR itself. Samuel Francis further maintains that the PLO, as a Soviet surrogate, has since 1972 been supplied with weapons, "and since 1977 the Soviets have supplied the PLO with heavy weaponry."¹⁹ It is at least possible that East German assistance is now channeled to the Palestine Liberation Organization through Libya, which remains one of the most outspoken Arab countries in its support of Arafat's organization.

East German motivations for backing the PLO are based on the GDR's effort to advance Soviet interests in the Middle East and on the SED's own specific view of its role in that region. In terms of this latter consideration, it should be remembered that East Germany's relations with Israel are crucial. Since the creation of the Jewish state in 1948, East Berlin has found itself in a difficult situation. For while some of the East German leadership itself suffered at the hands of the Nazis, the GDR, as a Soviet satellite, has been required to take a strong anti-Israeli line since the middle 1950s. But the GDR's official hostility toward the "Zionist state of Israel," as its propagandists prefer to call it, also serves the purpose of deflecting the world's attention away from the material claims which Israel has the right to demand of the GDR as one of the two successor states of the German Reich.

While the issue is complicated in a legal, as well as in a moral sense, the East German support of the PLO is one way for the GDR to refuse to honor Jewish material claims against it, and it has persisted in doing so.

1. Michael Sodaro, "The GDR And The Third World," in Michael Radu, *Eastern Europe And The Third World* (New York: Praeger Special Studies, 1981), p. 108.
2. Bernard von Plate, "GDR Foreign Policy to Africa and Arabia," *Aussenpolitik* (January 1978), p. 78.
3. For example, consult, *DDR Aussenwirtschaft* (January 1977), p. 3, and Barbara Gutmann, *Horizont* (August-September 1975), p. 26.
4. Sodaro, *op. cit.*, p. 124.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 124.
6. Kurt Seliger, "Solidarität und Staatsraison," *Deutschland Archiv* (November 1979), p. 1189.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 1188.
8. Bernard von Plate, *op. cit.*, p. 79.
9. Sodaro, *Ibid.*, p. 126 and *Annuaire statistique de la République Démocratique Allemande* (East Berlin: Staatsverlag, 1980), p. 79.
10. This is Seliger's conclusion.
11. Seliger, *op. cit.*, p. 1191.
12. *The New York Times*, May 27, 1981.
13. *Spiegel* (No. 10, 1980), p. 43.
14. Samuel T. Francis, *The Soviet Strategy of Terror* (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 1981), p. 13.
15. Sodaro's conclusion, *op. cit.*, p. 129.
16. Kurt Krüger, "Solidarität der DDR mit den Völkern Asiens, Afrikas und Lateinamerikas," *Deutsche Aussenpolitik* (October 1979), p. 62.
17. Peter Dittmar, "Uneingeschränkte Unterstützung," *Deutschland Archiv* (August 1978), p. 807.
18. Taken from Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
19. Francis, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

The Two Germanies in Africa

Though East Germany has attempted, first and foremost, to win political influence on the African continent as a Soviet surrogate, she pursues her own interests as well. Fortunately these interests usually can be reconciled with the demands of Soviet policy. However, beyond demonstrating loyalty to the USSR, for favors that they can in turn receive closer to home, the East Germans are also engaged in a competitive struggle with the Federal Republic of Germany.

East German activities directed against the Federal Republic fulfill three functions: *First*, they advance East Germany's effort to demonstrate that it is an indispensable ally of the Soviet Union. From this vantage point, the GDR's ability to weaken West Germany's influence within various African nations advances Moscow's larger strategies. For, next to the United States, the People's Republic of China, and perhaps France, no country plays a larger role in framing Western strategy toward Africa than does the Federal Republic of Germany.

Second, to the extent that the GDR can demonstrate a common cause with the aspirations of Black Africa or the Middle East, it frequently does so at the expense of West Germany. Nowhere is that effort more pronounced than in the GDR's effort to link Israel and South Africa together as allies of the Federal Republic and as enemies of East Germany.

Finally, East Germany's effort to make points in Africa at Bonn's expense is the product of the GDR's campaign to influence African public opinion in ways that advance East German fortunes at home. The last two reasons used by the GDR in its competition with the FRG are examined below.

West Germany's "Neo-Imperialism"

The original justification for East Germany's propaganda campaign against its West German relative was the Hallstein Doctrine which forbade other countries from establishing diplomatic relations with the GDR. It might even be that East Germany would not be as hostile toward West Germany today if Bonn had not been so insistent upon this

claim that only it represented the interests of the German nation. But this is a doubtful proposition—for the GDR has always needed an ideological enemy to its west as a means which would allow it to divert the attention of its own people from the weaknesses of the regime at home.

The GDR's campaign against the Federal Republic in Africa began in earnest in 1965, when the Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee (which is the precursor of the present "Solidarity Committee") published a document titled "The Neo-Colonialism of the West German Federal Republic."¹ The document charged that West Germany was an "opponent of the national liberation movement [and] an enemy of the aspirations for independence on the part of the African, Asian and Latin American peoples."² The Committee further asserted that the Federal Republic was "actively engaged in all of the barbarous repressions and applications of force . . . against those movements . . . [while] using economic assistance to the young national states as a means of interfering in their internal affairs."³

The 1967 and 1973 Middle East Wars and the collapse of the Portuguese empire in Africa gave East Germany some additional opportunities to portray West Germany as an enemy of the "national liberation movement." In the Middle East, the East Germans regularly charge Bonn with complicity in "plots" hatched between Washington and Tel Aviv to undermine the Arab states in the region. East Germany already had established relations with the insurgency movements in Angola and in Mozambique, while the Federal Republic had dealings only with the Portuguese authorities at that time. Portugal's membership in NATO made it relatively easy for the East Germans to charge that Bonn was indirectly helping to suppress the "liberation movements" in Lisbon's colonial territories. Likewise in Namibia, which was administered by Germany as Southwest Africa before World War II, East Germany strongly condemned West Germany's effort to arrive at a peaceful solution to that problem as part of the Western "contact group." The GDR has, alternatively, been a long-standing supporter of SWAPO and has invited its leader, Sam Nujoma, to the GDR on numerous occasions. SWAPO's representatives refer to the GDR as "a sister country with which Namibia, through SWAPO, has strong and indestructible ties of friendship."⁴

Bonn's generous program of economic assistance to the LDCs in general, and to Africa specifically, is routinely dismissed by the East Germans as an effort to conceal the profits which West German companies make at the "expense" of former colonial countries throughout the Middle East and Africa. As mentioned previously, the East Germans feel embarrassed whenever Third World leaders put the GDR in the same camp as the capitalist countries. Nevertheless, the ideological side of the North-South issue—apartheid in South Africa, Israel's

position in the Middle East, and Zimbabwe's transformation to a black-controlled society—is used by the Honecker regime as a major propaganda weapon to depict Bonn as an ally of political reaction throughout the African continent. That East Germany maintains such good relations as it does with a large number of African countries suggests, at a minimum, that it has been able to make common cause with the elites who run those countries. Furthermore, the identity rests on issues which do not require the East Germans to provide anything close to what Bonn provides in material assistance.

In practical terms, the East Germans make special efforts to prejudice African countries against the West Germans. As one analyst observes, “. . . (T)he GDR was probably responsible for Ethiopia's expulsion of the West German ambassador in 1978 and for the collapse of the negotiations between the FRG and Mozambique and Cape Verde in the same year.”⁵ Of the two recognized German states, only the GDR was in attendance at Mozambique's first independence day celebration in 1975. And, of course, the Soviet-East German effort to discredit Bonn over the OTRAG affair must be counted as a major success in the GDR's campaign to discredit Bonn.

At the same time, the Honecker regime's attempt to influence African public opinion in its favor, *vis-à-vis* West Germany, has had ramifications for the GDR closer to home. In fact, the East Germans have attempted to reverse the diplomatic tables on the Federal Republic when the occasion has allowed it to do so. In mid-1978, for example, the Federal Republic was on the verge of signing an agreement which would have provided Guinea-Bissau with a large supply of rice. At the last moment, however, the African negotiators suddenly demanded that Bonn remove the so-called Berlin clause from the document. That clause states that West Berlin must be automatically included in all international agreements which West Germany enters into. Guinea-Bissau has close relations with the GDR, and the GDR ambassador (at that time, Kurt Roth) apparently insisted that continued good relations between his government and Guinea-Bissau required that the Berlin clause be stricken from the document. Further, a number of ministers in Luis Cabral's government had previously studied in the GDR, so that their views may have been influential in that decision. The West Germans agreed to delete the clause, but the original delivery of rice was about to spoil and had to be diverted to neighboring Gambia.⁶

East Germany's leaders have domestic political interests which can also be pursued through its African policy. Of particular concern to the Honecker regime is the relationship between the GDR and West Germany. Over the past decade, an extraordinary effort has been made by the SED to convince her people that they live in a “better,” indeed in a superior, Germany. This assertion falls on deaf ears when it comes to direct comparisons between the two German states. Though

GDR citizens below retirement age cannot travel to the West, they have frequent occasion to meet their West German peers in their own country. The differences in living standards and political traditions are striking enough to convince most East German citizens that the Federal Republic is in many respects worthy of imitation by the GDR.

However, the SED has also realized that the very hunger for international news and excitement, which is powerfully stimulated by a closed-border policy, can be manipulated by regime propagandists. Nowhere is that manipulation more pronounced than in the crude depictions of what each German state represents to the Third World, and particularly to Africa. One might laugh at such transparent and unconvincing efforts to make West Germany appear to be a bastion of support for apartheid, "neo-colonialism," and reaction. But the constant trooping of African leaders and delegations to the GDR — 30 separate Party and state delegations from that continent visited the GDR between 1976 and 1978 alone — and the amount of media attention now devoted to the subject could ultimately have a powerful impact on East German public opinion. And it would not be one that is favorable to the Federal Republic.

What about the West German reaction to all of this? With some exceptions, they have chosen to ignore it. An exception to that rule occurred several years ago when Chancellor Helmut Schmidt was moved to attack East Germany's Africa policy in general. The Chancellor is reported to have said on that occasion that East Germany was advocating and employing violence as the chief means for effecting political outcomes in Africa.⁸ But in general, there seems to be little interest in directly answering East German charges against them.

Where limited possibilities for cooperation arise, West German diplomats attempt to take full advantage of them. In sharp contrast with the era when the Hallstein Doctrine reigned supreme, West German diplomats and policymakers make every effort to demonstrate their enthusiasm for joint German ventures. Furthermore, within the ruling Social Democratic Party, and within the trade union movement closely aligned to the SPD, West German "Third World Policy" frequently reflects a left-wing tilt. This can be seen in SPD criticism of the new U.S. administration's policy toward El Salvador. And within the left-wing of the SPD, American support of Israel and allegedly South Africa is considered to be a greater danger than anything the Soviet Union or its surrogates are doing in Africa.

1. Afro-Asiatisches Solidaritätskomitee in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, *Der Neokolonialismus der westdeutschen Bundesrepublik* (Dresden, 1965).
2. Taken from Henning von Lönninghoff, "Das politische und militärische Engagement der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik in Schwarzafrika," *Beiträge zur Konfliktforschung*, January 1978, p. 24.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
4. Moses Garoëb, SWAPO Spokesman at *The joint struggle of the working-class movement and the national liberation movement against imperialism and for social progress* (East Berlin: Verlag Zeit im Bild, 1980), p. 255. V. I.
5. Michael Sodaro, "The GDR and the Third World," in Michael Radu, *Eastern Europe and the Third World* (New York: Praeger Special Studies, 1981), p. 135.
6. This episode is covered in Erich Wiedemann, "Reibungslos läuft nur die Schälmaschine," *Spiegel* (No. 10, 1980), pp. 58-59.
7. Klaus Willderding, "Zur Afrikapolitik der DDR," *Deutsche Aussenpolitik*, August 1979, p. 12.
8. *The Guardian*, May 22, 1978.

The GDR in the Third World: A Challenge to the West

West German disinterest in confronting the GDR in Africa raises the obvious question of whether, in fact, the United States and its major Western European partners should—or can—do anything to deal with East German activities there. In order to answer this question, several related considerations are explored.

The GDR and Cuba

Western analysts have yet to uncover the precise nature of Cuban-East German cooperation in Africa and throughout the Third World more generally. But there is little question that Havana and East Berlin work intimately together. Both countries are dependent on the Soviet Union, and both have an interest in ensuring that Moscow will continue to supply them with their requisite raw material needs—i.e., oil. And the GDR and Cuba have superb military and security apparatuses which are of undoubted value to the Soviet Union. As if these assets were not adequate to the task, both Erich Honecker and Fidel Castro are ardent advocates of the “national liberation movements” which are currently afoot throughout Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

Bilateral ties between Havana and East Berlin are accordingly close. Fidel Castro visited the GDR in June 1972 and again in April of 1977. There is speculation that his most recent journey to East Germany was largely for the purpose of consulting with his German allies on African policy. Honecker, alternatively, visited Cuba in February 1972 and more recently in May 1980.

This recent trip of Honecker's appears to have been of special importance for the GDR leadership. In the aftermath of his triumphant visits to Africa in the previous year, the East German Party chief undoubtedly had a good deal to talk about with his Cuban hosts. For that reason, it is not surprising that Honecker was accompanied by three full members of the SED Politburo (Guenter Mittag, Erich Mielke, and Willi Stoph) and two foreign policy leaders (Foreign Min-

ister Oscar Fischer and Gerhard Weiss, East Germany's representative to COMECON).¹ On this occasion, East Germany signed another "Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation," making this the sixth such treaty that the GDR has signed with an LDC. The other signatories are Angola, Ethiopia, Mongolia, Mozambique, and Vietnam. While there is no military clause in the document, as there is in the GDR-Mozambique text, there is little doubt that military and security ties between these two allies are very close.

Beyond the conduct of a joint African policy, however, the GDR and Cuba clearly have some common interest in developments within Latin America itself.² A report prepared by the U.S. Department of State maintains that the Cuban role in channeling weapons to the insurgent movement in El Salvador, via Nicaragua, is a pronounced one.³ And there is additional speculation that the GDR may also be supplying those insurgents with weapons as well. As Soviet surrogates, both the Cubans and the East Germans have a limited ability to influence political events in this area of turbulence. And it has already been demonstrated that Havana and East Berlin have been of inestimable value to the Soviet Union and its Marxist allies.

The GDR in the Third World

Beyond its intimate relations with Cuba and the Soviet Union, however, the German Democratic Republic is a major presence in the Third World, acting on its own merits. Since 1954, East Germany has been involved with India. In that year the two countries signed a trade agreement between themselves. Following Soviet policy toward that large country, the GDR has supported New Delhi's side of the argument in its confrontation with Pakistan, as well as in India's occasional difficulties with China. In Asia proper, the GDR has been particularly interested in Vietnam. "Solidarity Campaigns" were waged in the GDR during the early 1950s and again in the 1960s on behalf of Vietnam's liberation from French and American "colonialism." Trade between the two governments has been growing steadily, if modestly, over the past fifteen years: from 45.9 million valutamarks in 1965 to 347.6 million valutamarks in 1979.⁴ Finally, East Germany's continuous search for new sources of raw materials, and particularly oil, has justified an enthusiastic policy of accommodation with Mexico. Total trade between these two countries was a modest 87.9 million valutamarks in 1979; and up to now, the Mexicans have not been willing to sell oil to the GDR, though prospects for some limited sales may arise in 1983.⁵

Throughout the regions of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, then, the German Democratic Republic has interests of its own which it is committed to advance. Nevertheless, as in Africa and in the Middle

East, the GDR is valuable only to the degree that it demonstrates an ability to work closely with the Soviet Union. Prospects for revolutionary change, and the Soviet Union's role in at least exacerbating and channeling it, provide the GDR with new targets of opportunity.

Policy Questions For the West

West Germany, as previously mentioned, has so far not demonstrated a strong interest in analyzing the GDR's role in Africa and in the Middle East. The same holds true for East Germany's increasingly significant involvement in other parts of the developing world. The question is: Should the Western countries attempt to deflect East German activities in these strategically vital regions? The answer is yes, but only to the degree that it can be demonstrated that a GDR presence in those areas is dangerous and politically destabilizing.

Do the East Germans contribute to instability in the developing areas? That the GDR, on its own, cannot support an African adventure, for example, only means that its importance today is as a surrogate of the Soviet Union. As a "substitute for" the USSR, the East Germans have certainly played a role in bringing to power governments which—for a complex variety of reasons—are hostile to the United States, if not always to the other Western countries. In many instances, East German advisers and troops are preferred to Soviet and even Cuban ones. By all accounts they frequently are more disciplined and more reliable than the Cubans. In contrast with the Soviets, East Germans continue to represent the image of Prussian efficiency which Third World leaders frequently admire in Germans be they from the GDR or the FRG. Furthermore, within the context of their modest military and security roles, the East Germans have demonstrated their competence in those crucial organizational and technical skills which are in such short supply on that continent. If the East Germans are not ten feet tall, neither are they midgets. On their own, they cannot determine the shape of politics or society within any single Third World country. But, as has been demonstrated in Africa, they can exercise a decisive residual influence.

In contexts where the GDR actively works to create instability, what can the West do? Part of the answer to that question lies with the Federal Republic of Germany. Bonn has frequently ignored East German activity in the Third World. Claire Sterling, for example, has reported that West German government figures frequently deny the existence of military security of the GDR in countries such as South Yemen.⁶ Yet Soviet and East German, as well as Cuban, security involvement in that country is pronounced. Nevertheless, the FRG, as the country which shares a common nationality with the GDR, must make a determination on the nature of East German activities. This determination

must be one which illuminates the precise nature of East Germany's activities throughout the Third World. So far, Bonn had not done so.

For the other Western allies, and crucially for the United States, there are also responsibilities in this admittedly murky arena. That the Soviet Union employs surrogates in the Third World is hardly in doubt any longer. As long ago as 1956, Nikita Khrushchev declared it to be the responsibility of the Soviet Union to support "national liberation movements." And the growing turbulence throughout the Third World has provided the USSR with major targets of opportunity to expand the influence of Marxism-Leninism. In that process, reliable allies, such as the GDR and Cuba, have demonstrated their value to Moscow. It is unrealistic to expect the East Germans to conform their behavior to American dictates. But there is abundant reason for the United States to point out that, just as with our relations with the Soviet Union, East German activities in other countries invariably have an effect on our bilateral relations with them.

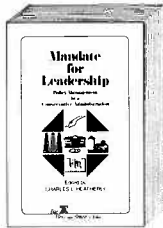
The Third World countries also have responsibilities in this area as well. In reality, most of the LDCs are largely dependent on the Western industrial countries. This includes most of the Marxist systems in Africa. A case can be made for publicly asking them what, if any, role they believe the Soviet Union and its surrogates should play in their future evolution. Press commentary since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan gives the impression that the developing countries have roundly condemned Moscow's aggression. In a relative sense this may be true. But the ability of the Third World to forget Soviet transgressions seems infinitely greater than its willingness to forget alleged American ones. In other words, many of the developing countries have inadvertently made the USSR's task an easier one in its effort to carry its brand of revolution to the areas of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Is this what they want? In the short term, American interests are at stake throughout this region, and they must be defended. But over the long term, it is the future of the LDCs which is being shaped by these interventions in which the GDR has also played an important part.

Actions rarely take place in a vacuum, of course. And there is little doubt that much of the turmoil at work in the developing areas, but particularly so in Africa, is the product of the collapse of colonial authority. Nowhere is that reality more pronounced than in formerly Portuguese Africa. Both Angola and Mozambique are "front line" states in the confrontation of Black Africa with the Republic of South Africa. Whether it is possible to cleanly delineate Soviet-East German-Cuban activity in this region from inherent "regional" problems remains an important, but open, question. The shape of the Reagan Administration's Africa policy remains unclear, but there is little question already that its approach will be a different one than its predeces-

sors. *If* it is in the U.S. national interest to combat Soviet influence on that vital continent – and it is – then a plausible solution to the conflict between Pretoria and its neighbors is a vital necessity.

1. Johannes Kuppe, "Honecker zum Staatsbesuch bei Fidel Castro" *Deutschland Archiv* (July 1980), pp., 684–687.
2. See Kuppe's remarks, *Ibid.*, p. 686.
3. "Communist Interference in El Salvador," U.S. Department of State, February 23, 1981.
4. *Annuaire statistique de la République Démocratique Allemande* (East Berlin: Staatsverlag, 1980), p. 80.
5. See Michael Sodaro, "The GDR And The Third World" in Michael Radu, *Eastern Europe And The Third World* (New York: Praeger, 1981), p. 133.
6. Claire Sterling, *The Terror Network* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1981), pp., 186–187.

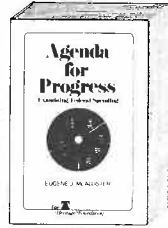
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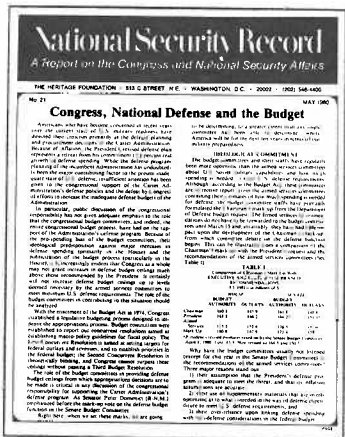
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Critical Issues

East Germany Marxist Mission in Africa

August 13, 1981, is the twentieth anniversary of the erection of the Berlin Wall. For most people, including far too many policymakers, this monument to political control and oppression represents the sum of their knowledge about East Germany (The German Democratic Republic or GDR). The Wall, to be sure, remains important, particularly so for the people who must live and work behind it. But there are other aspects of this German Marxist state which deserve more immediate attention. East German support of, and active engagement in, Soviet policy toward Africa is one of those subjects, and it is the focus of this study.

Over the past two decades, the East German presence in Africa has become an invaluable adjunct of Soviet foreign policy toward that vital region. The East Germans have, in the interim, overtaken Czechoslovakia as Moscow's number-one ally throughout the Third World.

At the beginning of the 1980s, the German Democratic Republic is actively engaged in the advancement of Marxist revolutionary change throughout the Third World. Its Communist leaders have openly proclaimed as much. "From the rostrum of our Party Congress," declared Party chief Erich Honecker in April of 1981, "we hail all fighters for national and social liberation in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, assuring them that they can always count on our Party and on the people of the GDR in their arduous struggle for national liberation and the happiness of their peoples."

Professor John Starrels documents East Germany's extensive economic and military assistance to the developing nations of the Third World—especially those in Africa—and demonstrates how the GDR functions as an appendage of Soviet foreign policy.

He concludes that West Germany must do much more to deflect its Communist neighbor's influence and that the Reagan Administration must adopt an Africa policy different from that of its predecessors in order to protect American interests and contribute to the stability of the area.

John Starrels is Adjunct Professor at the American University School of International Service in Washington, D.C., and a freelance writer. He is co-author of *Politics in the German Democratic Republic* and many shorter articles on international affairs.


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