

SECRET

MC0

25X1

43

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
31 May 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Soviet Policy Toward Germany, 1952-1954

SUMMARY

We are not aware of any conclusive evidence to support the contention that the USSR ever was willing to, or contemplated, abandoning East Germany. Much of the speculation regarding Beria's alleged willingness to sell out East Germany stems from Khrushchev's partisan rewrite of Soviet history of the period. We are prepared to believe, however, that Beria might have been willing to replace the Ulbricht clique in mid-1953 as a means of placating popular opposition in East Germany, heading off West German rearmament and stabilizing Central Europe.

25X1
25X1

State Dept. review completed

25X1

SECRET

25X1

SECRET

25X1

OCI No. 1559/63

**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
31 May 1963**

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Soviet Policy Toward Germany, 1952-1954

1. Most speculation about Moscow's having indicated in the early and mid-1950's a willingness to compromise on the future of Germany can be traced to the Soviet note of 10 March 1952 proposing a peace treaty for all of Germany and to allegations--seemingly confirmed by Khrushchev and Ulbricht--that Beria and, perhaps, Malenkov contemplated a pullback from East Germany. Moscow's current dubious claim--most recently advanced in the Soviet note of 17 May to Bonn, protesting the Franco-German Treaty--is that Allied and West German intransigence vis-a-vis what was to become the East German state and the question of reunification caused the period 1952-54 to become one of "lost opportunities." An examination of the record does not support this contention.

2. Moscow's ostensible aim in the 1952-1954 period was to create a united Germany which, although "neutralized," would be easy prey for subversion. The Soviet note of 10 March 1952 followed by two months the promulgation of a Soviet Zone electoral law, which ensured that the Ulbricht-led Socialist Unity (Communist) Party would control the vote in its half of the divided country. The "political principles" in the draft treaty which accompanied the note specified that a unified Germany should not be allowed to join any coalition directed against any of the former Allies and that "anti-democratic" and "anti-peace" parties and organizations would be prohibited.

SECRET

25X1

SECRET

25X1

3. The proposals for a unified Germany clearly were designed to forestall signature of the Bonn Conventions (which restored sovereignty to West Germany) by appealing to nationalist sentiment in West Germany. Although the "Potsdam decisions" on the German-Polish frontier were upheld, the hypothetical united Germany was to have national armed forces and sufficient arms industry to support them; ex-Nazis and veterans were to enjoy full political rights. The note called for the immediate convocation of a four-power conference to discuss a peace treaty and the "means of forming an all-German government," but failed to mention elections.

4. On 25 March, the three Allies replied that the conclusion of a treaty required prior formation of a German government and that this, in turn, necessitated free elections--for which the machinery, in the shape of UN commissions established in December 1951, already existed. They argued that a future Germany must be free to conduct its own foreign policy, denied that the German-Polish border had been settled at Potsdam and claimed that the idea of a German national army was a step backwards. The USSR countered on 9 April 1952, charging that the West was delaying the conclusion of a treaty by dispatching diplomatic notes rather than appearing at the conference table.

5. Moscow did, however, agree indirectly to the idea of supervised elections. The Soviet Government, in rejecting the proposal for UN-supervised elections, proposed instead that the four powers oversee a plebiscite. But the USSR did not commit itself to elections in advance of the formation of a German government--the kernel of the western argument. By way of compromise, on 13 May the three western powers confirmed their willingness to negotiate. They did not rule out four-power supervision of all-German elections; rather, they maintained that a UN commission would be preferable and suggested that the UN Commission exercise its mandate and report back to the four powers which then would decide upon the holding of an election. Two weeks later, Moscow charged the Allies with willful delay and protested the imminent conclusion of the Bonn Conventions and the European Defense Community (EDC) Treaty.

SECRET

25X1

SECRET

25X1

Again the USSR did not allude to all-German elections.

6. The conclusion of those accords by the West led to the inauguration of a new policy in the Soviet Zone, i.e., all-out communization. At the Second SED Congress, 9 - 12 July, Ulbricht proclaimed his regime's foremost task was "to construct Socialism." A series of measures quickly followed--the drafting of a new penal code, abolition of the traditional Laender and the establishment of Soviet-style administrative districts, pressure on the peasants to collectivize and the creation of "barracked People's Police," the nucleus of an East German Army.

7. Opposition to Ulbricht grew as the regime's problems multiplied; 1953 was a year of acute economic dislocation, serious party strife, and the highest refugee flow since 1949, when statistics were first kept. In the wake of the Slansky trial in Czechoslovakia and the "Doctors' Plot" in the USSR, Ulbricht initiated what threatened to be a sweeping purge. Disciplinary proceedings were opened against Franz Dahlem, a "native German" party leader, as distinguished from Ulbricht and the Moscow-trained faction. This was the internal East German situation confronting Stalin's successors after his death on 5 March.

8. In their first few days, they gave clear evidence of vacillation and abrupt changes of policy both toward Germany and toward the Ulbricht regime. On 17 April, two days after Ulbricht had publicly reaffirmed his policy of "rapid socialization," the political adviser to the Soviet Control Commission, V. S. Semenov, was recalled. His replacement by P. F. Yudin, a party theoretician and one-time editor of the Cominform Journal, left no prominent Soviet Foreign Ministry official in Germany. On 1 May the Soviet press announced Semenov's elevation to the collegium of the Ministry in Moscow, but on 28 May the USSR revamped its representation in Germany by dissolving the Control Commission and naming Semenov to the post of High Commissioner in Germany. Semenov's return to East Berlin 37 days after his replacement as political adviser to the Control Commission was interpreted at the time as a sign of indecision in Moscow and the failure of the Soviet leadership to agree

SECRET

25X1

~~SECRET~~

25X1

on either organization or personnel for administering its policy in Germany.

9. Through late May Ulbricht persisted with his program to enforce higher work productivity, although a series of strikes already had shown the workers were dangerously close to rebellion. We now know that Semenov returned to East Berlin with a "new course." Moscow was prepared to sacrifice Ulbricht, or at least downgrade him, to placate the populace. But whatever Soviet intentions were, the uprising of 17 June overtook them, largely because Ulbricht had maintained his rigorous domestic policies.

10. Khrushchev and Ulbricht have since accused Beria and Malenkov of advocating in early 1953 a policy which they charge would have led to abandonment of East Germany. In so far as Beria is concerned, there is evidence that Stalin's erstwhile henchman strongly advocated a moderate economic policy for all of Eastern Europe in order to stabilize Central Europe and head off West German rearmament. He supported a group within the East German leadership led by Minister for State Security Zaisser. Zaisser allegedly sought the removal of Ulbricht and his clique, and called for a remodeling of the Socialist Unity Party into an all-German labor party and for negotiations on reunification, on the assumption that it was impossible to build Socialism in a divided country.

11.

25X1

25X1

But the 17 June riots apparently convinced Khrushchev and Malenkov that Beria's German policies would lead to catastrophe and, shortly thereafter, the Soviet leaders allied themselves against Beria in Moscow. Beria's "radical notions" evidently were made known to the Communist bloc elite soon after his fall.

25X1

~~SECRET~~

25X1

SECRET

[REDACTED]

25X1

[REDACTED]

25X1

12. After Beria's downfall the remaining Soviet leaders moved to restore Ulbricht's primacy in East Germany. Ulbricht pounced on Beria's proteges in his party, accusing them of treachery to the party and its program. At the 15th SED central committee plenum in July 1953, he publicly linked Beria with Zaisser and his clique; [REDACTED]

25X1

25X1

The Soviet leadership renewed its endorsement of Ulbricht during an August 1953 visit to Moscow.

13. After Adenauer's victory in the West German elections of 6 September, the USSR replied non-committally to a western proposal of 2 September for a foreign ministers conference at Lugano on 15 October to discuss elections and the formation of an all-German government. At the meeting, which finally convened in Berlin on 24 January 1954, Molotov called for the deputies of the ministers to prepare a draft treaty within three months and the convocation of a peace conference, with German participation, within six months. The provisions he suggested as suitable for inclusion in any treaty were meant to ensure a neutralized Germany with armed forces adequate only for internal security and border defense. The boundaries of the new German state were to parallel those suggested at Potsdam and all foreign troops were to be withdrawn. Later, he insisted that all-German elections must be supervised by the Germans themselves, and not by the occupying powers. On 10 February, he further proposed that a reunited Germany--or failing that, the existing governments in East and West Germany--should be allowed to join a 50-year collective European security pact. The conference ended in deadlock on 18 February 1954.

14. Even assuming that there had been a chance for German reunification prior to this time, there was none after. Subsequent Soviet policy was directed at building up the prestige of the East German state. As Khrushchev ascended, Soviet policy gradually hardened until in 1955 he bestowed "full sovereignty" on the GDR. Having failed to block West Germany's entry

SECRET

25X1

~~SECRET~~

25X1

into NATO and Bonn's rearmament, Moscow sought to gain western acceptance of the concept of two Germanies.

15. We conclude that the former Soviet police boss aimed at the pacification of East Germany-- rather than its outright abandonment. His motives probably were related not only to the domestic situation in East Germany, but to the emerging power struggle in the Kremlin.

~~SECRET~~

25X1