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Transforming German universities during the Cold War

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Chapter V

German students in American and Soviet policy, 1945 through the early 1960s

Introduction

Archival records provide us with an opportunity to make a comparative analysis of American and Soviet student policies in Germany from 1945 until the early 1960s. It turns out that their policies regarding students moved in very similar directions, much more similar than in regard to the professorship, and this, despite divergent political systems, values, and state ideology. It was a range of available archival records which unexpectedly exposed certain similarities and comparable features that defined the criteria for both policies and thus provided a narrative for our analysis. Relying on archival records, we have defined the following elements of American and Soviet policy towards the German student body that will be discussed in this chapter: 1) purging students and modification of admissions rules in the universities; 2) instilling German students with new ideological values; 3) creating student organizations in universities; 4) student opposition and the response of the American or Soviet governments; and 5) new changes in German student daily life under the influence of reforms.

This chapter will have the same structure as former one: The first part will examine American policy towards German university students. The second part will investigate Soviet policy towards German university students. The third part will be a brief comparison relative to both policies.

I. German university students in American policy

1. Purge of students and modification of admissions rules in the universities

Denazification of the student body and the policy aimed at revising German traditions in terms of admission of fresh students to the universities are very interrelated. After purging the Nazis three times within the student body, the American authorities widened access to

universities to a small degree for both the less aristocratic social groups and for refugees from the Soviet Zone. They established special preparatory courses for those who had insufficient knowledge to study at the university level, and blocked access to universities for those who supported procommunist ideas.

The German student body: state of affairs in the American Zone

American reforms in German universities eventually affected students who were considered to be the main force that would lead Germany along the road to democracy. These university students were under pressure in terms of all the transformations coming from the United States. As a result, students, as compared to the professoriate, turned out to be the focus of American attention and American commentary.

The OMGUS left more eyewitness accounts about the conditions of life of German students than its Soviet counterpart did. In observing the student body, the American authorities emphasized their poor physical condition. According to American documents, German students were very sick, undernourished, disabled and poor, most were paupers, and they often suffered from tuberculosis. A yet more detailed and dramatic picture of the life of German students was left by Bauer, Rector of the University of Heidelberg, who appealed to the OMGUS. He wrote that “the general picture of the student body of today is somewhat different than it was before. The students, whose studies were interrupted by the war, are now coming back to complete their education. They believe that the university will give them a position compatible with their former exalted status as officers. Practically none of the students have an independent income, most of them are relying on their parents’ savings which, in many cases, are dwindling away rapidly. They were deceived by lies and cheated out of their youth. Their personal life and the German future are still uncertain for them. They are still supersensitive against any form of a sudden outward stimulus. They need time, indulgence and much love. They do not yet dare firmly to believe in the idea of humanity. They have seen and witnessed too many inhuman acts. When they venture to speak of it, they are moved in their very depths by the German fate in the East. Many have come from there, and they have seen there still too much inhuman cruelty in a time when the war is at an end and when the realization of humanity alone can preach in a persuading

way the idea of humanity.”⁵⁰² The rector made this appeal to save those German students who had been members of the Nazi Party and were now being subjected to the purge, and his observation was thus highly sympathetic.

Other information which was of interest to the American authorities concerned the age of the student body and the number of students coming to the universities. The Education Division of the OMGUS tracked statistical data such as this in detail. Most students were older than those who had attended universities before the war. On average, they were 25 to 30 years old, and they might well have been members of the Nazi Party and soldiers of the *Wehrmacht*. Moreover, in contrast to the Soviet authorities, the OMGUS regularly fixed the number of students who entered universities. Comparing available statistics relative to student enrollment, we can conclude that the initial number of students in six⁵⁰³ of the reopened universities in the American Zone in 1947 exceeded that of students in the six reopened universities in the Soviet Zone by almost twice as many (*Table 2*).

Table 2
*Number of German Students in the Universities of the American Zone, 1938/1939, 1947.*⁵⁰⁴

University	1938/1939	March 1947
University of Erlangen	831	5,283
University of Frankfurt am Main	1,597	4,731
University of Heidelberg	1,684	3,969
University of Marburg	1,209	3,290
University of München	4,802	9,997
University of Würzburg	1,253	3,199
Total	11,376	30,469

⁵⁰² NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS. Württemberg-Baden. Records of Education and Cultural Relations Division, 1945-1949. Box 913-917A.

⁵⁰³ There were 7 universities in the American Zone after the division of the University of Berlin in 1949.

⁵⁰⁴ *Handbook of Education Statistics. US Occupied Area of Germany. Education and Cultural Division* Berlin: Office of Military Government for Germany, 1949), 54.

As follows from this table, the student population increased from 11,376 in the 1938/39 academic year to 30,469 in 1947, despite the war and the denazification.

However, the only thing which was not tracked by American experts concerned the attitudes and views of those students who had survived the Nazi times, the war, and the Occupation.

Purges

By December 1945, most universities had begun functioning again and denazification in terms of expulsion of members of Nazi organizations from the student body was immediately initiated. In contrast to the Soviet authorities, American experts of the Education Office at the OMGUS elaborated very precise criteria for the purge of students. In addition to the general principles about dismissing active Nazis, the American model of denazification implied two characteristic rules which were absent in the Soviet model of denazification: the first rule allowed for the enrollment of former Party members at up to ten percent of the total student body,⁵⁰⁵ and the second rule was the compulsory admission of student refugees from the Soviet Zone.

Emphasizing these two specific limitations, the Military Administration of the United States established the following criteria for the purge in 1945. Excluded from admission to universities were: 1) those applicants who were officials in the National Socialist student movement, actively participated as leaders in that student movement or as leaders of students of the former *Ordensburgen*;⁵⁰⁶ 2) all members of the NSDAP who joined the Party prior to May 1, 1937, or those who had been more than nominal Party members; 3) all members of the NSDAP who, after four years of service in the *Hitlerjugend*, *HJ*,⁵⁰⁷ and, once past their eighteenth birthday, had been taken in by the Party; 4) all leaders of the *Hitlerjugend* and of the *Bund Deutscher Mädel*, *BDM*;⁵⁰⁸ 5) all other applicants such as public officials; 6) all the officers of the SA,⁵⁰⁹ SS,⁵¹⁰

⁵⁰⁵ Requirements of the 10 percent quota in the Directive from OMGUS, AG 350 (IA) dated 2 March 1946: *Non-admittance of Persons with former Nazi Affiliations as Students to Institutions of Higher learning*. See, Hallstein, "The Universities," 159-161.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ordensburgen* were schools for the training of the elite Nazi military.

⁵⁰⁷ HJ is the German abbreviation for *Hitlerjugend*. It was the youth organization of the Nazi party.

⁵⁰⁸ BDM is the German abbreviation of *Bund Deutscher Mädel*, the female youth organization in Nazi Germany.

⁵⁰⁹ SA is the "Brown Shirts" (*Sturmabteilung*), the paramilitary organization of the Nazi Party.

and *Waffen-SS*;⁵¹¹ 7) all who were members of the SA prior to April 1, 1933; 8) all professional officers; 9) all recipients of certain medals and decorations; and 10) all applicants against whose admissions objections were made by the Military Government.⁵¹² In other words, “no active Nazi could be admitted to the University”⁵¹³ and, according to the tenth criterion, those students who did not gain the confidence of the Occupation authorities, considered communists and leftists, could be subject to dismissal. Hence, the OMGUS elaborated tough criteria for the selection of students. Moreover, the American Military Administration, like the Soviet authorities, introduced another criterion to purge students: those students who spread Nazi or anti-democratic doctrines,⁵¹⁴ implying by the term “anti-democratic doctrines” those values incompatible with American ideology, were expelled.

Purge, denazification, or screening – these three notions, used by the American curators to define the process of expulsion of German students – went through several stages. Originally, the entire responsibility for the purge was assigned to the rectors of universities. All rectors were required to form a selection committee composed of reliable students together with approved faculty members. They made a preliminary examination of the biographies of students and submitted recommendations for exclusion to the rector. A rector was responsible for excluding all students who fell into a mandatory removal and exclusion category. Initially, rectors were authorized by the Americans to take final action on each student.⁵¹⁵ Screening was based on the analysis of written questionnaires filled out by the students. Each student was required to submit a *Fragebogen* at the time of registration, screened by the selection committee. The *Fragebogen* consisted of 131 questions about their previous lives as students. It was a physical, family, biographical, and religious profile. The most important part of the *Fragebogen*, of course,

⁵¹⁰ SS is the “Protective Squadron” (*Schutzstaffel*), the major Nazi military organization.

⁵¹¹ *Waffen-SS* is the “Armed SS,” the combat arm of the SS.

⁵¹² NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS. Württemberg-Baden. Records of Education and Cultural Relations Division, 1945-1949. Box 913-917A.

⁵¹³ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation. High Commissioner for Germany. Office of OMGUS, Hessen. Education and Cultural Relations Division, 1947-48. Box 702.

⁵¹⁴ *Documents on Germany*, 142.

⁵¹⁵ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS. Württemberg-Baden. Records of Education and Cultural Relations Division, 1945-1949. Box 913-917A.

related to membership of a respondent in various Nazi organizations. We have taken one *Fragebogen* to illustrate the American approach to the purge (*Annex 2*). The respondent had studied at both the Universities of München and Heidelberg before the war. During the war, he had been a colonel in the *Wehrmacht* and then a pilot in the *Luftwaffe*. He had participated in the military operations in Russia and had received medals and decorations. Then finally, when 25 years old, he was held in American captivity. In addition, he had been a member of several Nazi organizations.⁵¹⁶ Despite the formal criteria for the purge, which rejected the admission of such a category of German citizen, this young man was admitted to the University of Heidelberg. Such cases were reported to have been repeated over and over. Numerous questionnaires bear witness to the fact that student selection committees did not follow the criteria elaborated by the OMGUS for the purge. There are a number of reasons to explain this disobedience.

First of all, the efficiency of screening depended on the sincerity of respondents in clarifying their past lives and the honor of the student selection committees, primarily consisting of German university professors, trusting them not to cover up former Nazis. However, it turned out that rectors and these committees did try to save students who had formerly been members of Nazi organizations. Moreover, according to the documents, the initial members of these committees turned out to be those professors who had cooperated with the Nazi Party. Rector Bauer at the University of Heidelberg, for example, appointed as chief of a student selection committee a professor who had been a member of the SA since 1933. Similar situations were observed in other universities, which led, according to American accounts, to the admission of students who “were mild with the National Socialists.”

Second, the efficiency of the purge was undermined by the huge amount of *Fragebögen* to be read and eventually judged. The committees had to evaluate daily about 500 to 600 questionnaires, and personal interviews were non-existent. American experts noticed that the purge was simply non-existent or masked by rectors. Investigating the University of Heidelberg, an American expert noted that the committee of the University processed 3,000 *Fragebögen* in four days, with all students

⁵¹⁶ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS. Württemberg-Baden. Records of Education and Cultural Relations Division, 1945-1949. Box 913-917A.

being admitted.⁵¹⁷ The American Occupation authorities were shocked by this finding and by the statement made by Rector Bauer that no student was removed for political reasons. Further investigation revealed that this university had actually made no attempts to even begin the purge of the student body.⁵¹⁸ In addition, members of the committees accepted bribes in the form of sugar and bread from parents of students, and thus members of Nazi organizations were easily readmitted.

Evidently, this state of affairs ensured the admission of active and nominal Nazi members, and the percentage of Nazis within the student body was high. After the enrollments at universities in 1946 and 1947, the OMGUS recognized the fact that the number of students, who were former members of the NSDAP, enrolled at the universities was in excess of the quota permitted by the OMGUS, which was no more than ten percent. The American governor in Germany, Lucius Clay, mentioned in a report that “Nazi influence is said to be considerable in universities, where students, often too young to have held responsible positions which would require their removal, band together in associations under leadership of former *Wehrmacht* officers and others who proved their ‘leadership worth.’”⁵¹⁹ And he added: “Many former officers are the senior students. They are seen walking about the campus in almost complete uniform with shining boots and medals, lacking in some cases only the insignia of rank. Their studies were supported by the *Wehrmacht* and they were trained to be leaders of propaganda. No attempts have been made to have these dangerous elements removed.”⁵²⁰

However, university administrations tried to convince the Military Administration that “all students have proved worthy of the confidence to [sic] put in them. No sign whatever could be observed of an underground movement or ‘Fascist spirit’ in student [sic] body.”⁵²¹ After that the OMGUS decided to deprive rectors of the right to admit students to

⁵¹⁷ Ibid.

⁵¹⁸ Ibid.

⁵¹⁹ “Intelligence and Confidential Annexes. Monthly Report of Military Governor, #7. US Zone. February 20, 1946,” in *Documentary History of the Truman Presidency*, vol. 3: 198.

⁵²⁰ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS. Württemberg-Baden. Records of Education and Cultural Relations Division, 1945-1949. Box 913-917A.

⁵²¹ Ibid.

university, and rectors instead had to submit the *Fragebögen* of students for further screening by American authorities.⁵²²

Having discovered that about 26 percent of the students at universities were former Nazis, 16 percent more than admissible, the Occupation authorities made a decision on the second screening to find those who had written down false data in the *Fragebögen* and those who had admitted former Nazis to the universities. The previously elaborated criteria for selection were curtailed, and there was only one criterion applied in order to lower the percentage of Nazis within the student body: "All those who had joined the Party prior to 1941 had to be immediately dismissed and referred to a public prosecutor, and others should be given an opportunity to prove before the selection committees that their falsification was not intentional."⁵²³ The fate of those who were expelled during this second purge and who awaited a court decision during the period of Occupation is not known. In addition, we do not know the precise numbers of students expelled during the second purge. We do know that the screening became more thorough, because the OMGUS itself approved or disapproved each student by means of an interview.⁵²⁴

However, in implementing the first and second purges, the American authorities were faced with a problem which concerned those students expelled, who turned out to be out on the street without families and money. While in the Soviet Zone this category of students fled to the Western Zones, these dismissed students in the American Zone had nowhere to go or to flee to. The Military Administration noted that in Hessen alone, where Marburg and Frankfurt universities were located, approximately 9,000 students⁵²⁵ were admitted to institutions at the university level, but some 20,000, at best estimate, who applied for

⁵²² NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS, Berlin. Education and Cultural Relations Branch, 1945-49. Box 128-134; NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS. Württemberg-Baden. Records of Education and Cultural Relations Division, 1945-1949. Box 913-917A.

⁵²³ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS, Berlin. Education and Cultural Relations Branch, 1945-49. Box 128-134.

⁵²⁴ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS. Württemberg-Baden. Records of Education and Cultural Relations Division, 1945-1949. Box 913-917A.

⁵²⁵ Later, about 1000 students would be dismissed.

admission, had been rejected.⁵²⁶ These men and women remained without higher education and work. This problem was of course socially dangerous, because nobody could guarantee the proper behavior of these rejected students under the circumstances of the recently ended war, the Occupation, and political chaos. To resolve this problem, the experts of the Education and Cultural Division proposed the establishment of work camps for expelled students. These camps were considered by the American authorities as the best way to avoid any consequences from the purge. In 1946 and 1947, the first work camps were established combining real labor with education in the form of lectures, reading, and discussions. To impose certain values on these students, the United States invited German prisoners of war, who had been captured and trained in camps located in the United States,⁵²⁷ to become instructors in these work camps for students.⁵²⁸ In the American Zone there were 27 camps containing 120,000 political internees. According to the documents, the great majority were educable German youth of the same average age as university students, that is, 25 to 30 years old. The question of providing opportunities for these interned young men was discussed in the Education Division and some of these men, whose folly or whose fate had led them to join SS organizations, were freed and were allowed to enter the universities, others were provided with some ideological training at the principal camp of this sort located near Darmstadt in Hessen.⁵²⁹ According to the researcher James Tent, courses for these student-veterans included compulsory lectures about world thought and history within the past ten years in order to reorient them.⁵³⁰

However, after implementation of these two purges the percentage of students, former members of the NSDAP, was in excess of ten percent of

⁵²⁶ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation. High Commissioner for Germany. Office of OMGUS, Hessen. Education and Cultural Relations Division, 1947-48. Box 702.

⁵²⁷ The United States established schools for their German captives in 1942. They called these schools the "Idea Factory." In contrast to the Soviet Union, which encouraged these "students" to join the German Communist Party, the United States did not make liberals of these German soldiers. However, some German prisoners of war cooperated with the United States and helped them in building a new Germany // Tsvetkova, "*Cultural Imperialism*", 87-89.

⁵²⁸ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation. High Commissioner for Germany. Office of OMGUS, Hessen. Education and Cultural Relations Division, 1947-48. Box 702.

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

⁵³⁰ Tent, *Mission*, 57-69.

the total student body. Lucius Clay, the first American governor in Occupied Germany, in a third attempt decided to find and exclude members of the Nazi Party from universities so as to be at a level of ten percent of former Nazis admitted to the universities. The third version of the criteria for selection emphasized the following: no new former Nazis could be admitted to universities, and all the students who were already admitted had to fill out new *Fragebögen* indicating whether or not they had been members of the NSDAP.⁵³¹ This third purge caused indignation on the part of students and professors, who appealed through letters and visits to the American Occupation authorities to stop the purge. The Americans, familiar with the student opposition that had occurred in the Soviet Zone and comprehending that additional tensions should not be allowed, smoothed over these negative attitudes by declaring that regular officers of the *Wehrmacht* might be admitted, except those officers who had entered this career in peace time (before October 1938).⁵³² This was a well-timed proposal and proved a correct decision: while the number of former Nazis did not fall in the universities, the opposition that had been emerging from the student body grew silent.

New admissions rules

These purges were followed by new admissions rules elaborated by American experts. They proposed rules different from the admissions rules in the Soviet Zone. While the SMAD strongly emphasized social status as a main criterion for admission or rejection, the OMGUS did not demolish the German elitist approach to admission, but they did, at the same time, propose to rectors that they enroll students from lower strata, whose skills and knowledge were sufficient to study at the university level. However, the American authorities, like their Soviet counterparts, introduced certain political preferences in the admission system for German universities. The following groups received preferential treatment: 1) persons who had suffered for political reasons; 2) war veterans (!); 3) war widows with children; 4) students and refugees from the East; 5) students who only required two or three terms at most for completion of their studies; and 6) students who were politically clean.

⁵³¹ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS. Württemberg-Baden. Records of Education and Cultural Relations Division, 1945-1949. Box 913-917A.

⁵³² NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation. High Commissioner for Germany. Office of OMGUS, Hessen. Education and Cultural Relations Division, 1947-48. Box 702.

Members of the Nazi Party could only be admitted if vacancies existed for them and their number did not exceed ten percent of all students admitted. Only after evaluating the suitability of every student according to these criteria was the Military Administration interested in his or her scholastic skills.⁵³³ Students did pass entrance examinations. However, during the Occupation period, German universities were compelled to pay more attention to these politically oriented preferential criteria than to the scholastic aptitude examination.⁵³⁴

Jumping ahead, we should note that, in contrast to the Soviet purge model, the Nazi past of students played a more significant role in the American version of purging the student body. At the same time, the American authorities had no intention of crucially modifying the privileges of the traditional social groups of the aristocratic and middle classes as far as their admission to the new universities was concerned. However, the United States actually did face a higher percentage of former Nazis in the universities than the Soviet Union did.

Special admissions to universities: refugees from the Soviet Zone

Another challenge that influenced the admissions policy of the United States concerned those students who had fled from the East Zone. This stream of students from the East was caused by the modification of admissions rules carried out by the Soviet Military Administration. According to American records, all the students from the Soviet Zone who had sought but were denied admission to universities stemmed from “bourgeois” families. There were none from the lower social groups. All of them claimed that their applications for admission to East German universities were turned down either because they had failed to meet communist ideological requirements or because of the middle-class status of their families. In the list of criteria for the selection of students, the American Administration included these categories of student-refugees from the East. This category was granted privileges over other citizens when being admitted. As a whole, during the period analyzed, these

⁵³³ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS, Berlin. Education and Cultural Relations Branch, 1945-49. Box 128-134.

⁵³⁴ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation. High Commissioner for Germany. Office of OMGUS, Hessen. Education and Cultural Relations Division, 1947-48. Box 702.

refugees comprised from two to six percent⁵³⁵ of the total student body in every university of the American Zone. At the Free University they comprised from 40% to 45% of the total student body.⁵³⁶

This stream of students from the Soviet Zone influenced the traditional German admissions rule known as the *numerus clausus*, the limitation on enrollment of students in universities. When the first 400 students at the University of Jena, located in the Soviet Zone, were replaced by working-class students and fled to Heidelberg in 1946, the American authorities asked the University of Heidelberg to raise the number of students that could be enrolled, thereby changing this old German *numerus clausus* rule.⁵³⁷ The University of Heidelberg agreed to this, and this change was followed by the rest of the universities. In the 1950s and 1960s, the quota for student enrollment was permanently increased in West German universities.

Consequently, the number of refugees became too large by the mid-1950s,⁵³⁸ particularly in West Berlin and in its Free University. The Free University alone, which had been established for 6,000 students at most, now accommodated more than 9,500 due to 3,500 refugees who had obtained scholarships to be admitted to the University.⁵³⁹ The Berlin authorities introduced a bill to limit the enrollment of students coming to the Free University from the Soviet Zone and Eastern sector of Berlin in 1956. The government of the United States blocked this initiative by

⁵³⁵ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS, Berlin. Education and Cultural Relations Branch, 1945-49. Box 128-134.

⁵³⁶ NARA. Record group 466. Records of US High Commission for Germany. Berlin Element. Public Affairs Division, 1943-1953. Box 1, 2, 4, 5, 9.

⁵³⁷ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS. Württemberg-Baden. Records of Education and Cultural Relations Division, 1945-1949. Box 913-917A.

⁵³⁸ Until the mid-1950s, students from the East were accepted without question by West German universities, since their educational achievements were considered adequate to meet the required standard. In the succeeding years, however, it became increasingly evident that, whereas their knowledge of natural science and mathematics remained good, and Latin and English language accomplishments were fair, they showed an almost complete lack of background in ancient and medieval history and only a one-sided familiarity with modern history and German literature. But they were skilled in discussion techniques and surpassed the average student from the West in this respect. In the words of documents, "the DDR educational scheme was beginning to show its effect." See, NARA. Record group 59. Bureau of Public Affairs. International Exchange Service 1950-58. Box 1, 3.

⁵³⁹ NARA. Record group 59. Confidential US Department of State. Central files. FRG. Internal Affairs 1955-1959. Microfilm. Reel 30.

raising additional funds for scholarships. However, the infrastructure of this university was developing more slowly than the increase in number of students, and that became one of the factors for student dissatisfaction in the 1960s.

Moreover, the government of the United States saw political potential in these student refugees in the context of the ideological confrontation with the Soviet Union. While in 1953 the National Security Council, the NSC,⁵⁴⁰ articulated in its policy papers the aim of American educational policy in Berlin as the “penetration of the ideals associated with the United States in the surrounding area of Communist domination,” students were considered as “one of the single most dynamic and potentially powerful of the elements of Berlin’s resistance and the center of carrier [sic] contacts with the Eastern Zone.”⁵⁴¹ The NSC elaborated a special policy towards the East German student body called *the policy of defecting students from the Eastern Zone*. It took up the active encouragement of German youth to leave East Germany in order to undermine the potential of the communists. This covert defection plan was conducted through contacts and radio programs that persuaded students to flee from the Eastern Zone; the government of West Germany was provided with additional funds to accommodate these refugees.⁵⁴² In 1955, the new American Occupation authorities, the Office of United States High Commissioner for Germany, built a special camp in Berlin called *Eichkamp International Student Work Camp*. This camp was the “student collector” where students from the East were interviewed and sent to West German universities.⁵⁴³ In one document there is mention that this camp was built for the benefit of the youth of the Eastern Zone of Germany: food, visits, education, and recreation.⁵⁴⁴ After the construction of the Wall, 200 students from East Germany and East Berlin arrived in the camp in 1963, obtained a scholarship from the

⁵⁴⁰ The National Security Council, the NSC, is the main foreign policy decision-making agency. It was created in 1947 to advise the President on international and security problems. The NSC elaborated the strategies for international educational policy.

⁵⁴¹ NARA. Record group 466. Records of US High Commissioner for Germany. Berlin Element. Public Affairs Division, 1943-1953. Box 1, 2, 4, 5, 9.

⁵⁴² NARA. Record group 59. Records relating to the Department of State Participation in the Operations Coordinating Board and National Security Council, 1953-1960. Entry 1586. Box 18.

⁵⁴³ NARA. Record group 59. International Information Administration. Field Program for Germany 1945-1953. Box 1-7.

⁵⁴⁴ NARA. Record group 59. Bureau of Public Affairs. International Exchange Service 1950-58. Box 1, 3.

special student organization, *Das Sozialamt*,⁵⁴⁵ and continued their education at universities.⁵⁴⁶

Winning students to their side, the United States must have been faced with the problem of espionage emanating from the side of the Soviet Occupation authorities who monitored this permanent flow of students. In the mid-1950s, as a result of investigation by Berlin's *Kampfgruppe gegen Unmenschlichkeit* (the Fighting Group against Inhumanity), headed by Rainer Hildebrand,⁵⁴⁷ seven University of Marburg students were accused of being Eastern Zone government agents. One of these accused students was a member of the student council at the University of Marburg. HICOG sent Marburg students to Berlin to confer with a committee which screened Eastern Zone applicants for universities in the Western Zones in order to develop a more rigid screening process as a precaution against a recurrence of this situation.⁵⁴⁸ When this committee found certain connections between these students and Soviet security agencies, the American Occupation authorities elaborated one more criterion for the admission of students to Western Zone universities – that student members of the SED and its affiliated organizations should not be admitted to the universities.⁵⁴⁹

Consequently, a point system for admission was introduced. It awarded scientific, social, and political points towards admission. The political points took priority and implied non-membership of prospective students in communist organizations.⁵⁵⁰ The communists were rejected for admission to universities in the American Zone just as members of liberal parties were expelled from universities in the Soviet Zone.

⁵⁴⁵ *Das Sozialamt* is *die Sozialfürsorge*, the social service agency.

⁵⁴⁶ NARA. Record group 59. Central Files 1963. Box 3559.

⁵⁴⁷ Rainer Hildebrandt (1914-2004) founded this anti-communist group in West Germany. He was a historian and after the end of the Cold War he founded the Checkpoint Charlie Museum in Berlin. During the Occupation period, he fought Soviet terror by disseminating information about it. According to his files, during the Soviet Occupation in East Germany 12,000 citizens disappeared into Soviet prisons. See, *Time*, 1949, August 01.

⁵⁴⁸ NARA. Record group 59. Decimal Files. Box 2436-2449.

⁵⁴⁹ Tent, *The Free University*, 141.

⁵⁵⁰ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS, Berlin. Education and Cultural Relations Branch, 1945-49. Box 128-134.

Preparatory courses in American admissions policy

The United States officially declared that all social groups should have access to university education. The Military Government tried to encourage German universities to broaden its student social base by facilitating admission to university studies by students from all classes of the population. The American promotion of an egalitarian system of higher education in Germany was not as radical as that of the Soviet Union and the German Communist Party. The United States only attempted to create an egalitarian university system; opposition and the power of tradition that existed in German universities, however, sought to block this United States policy.

To implement its policy aimed at democratizing German elitist education, the American military administration was able to establish so-called preparatory courses for those German students who could not meet academic criteria for admission. Previous research says little about this element of American policy and these preparatory courses are barely touched on in books and papers. This situation in the literature is determined by the fact that documents relative to the American establishment of preparatory courses are very scattered: there are no confidential data about the duration of studies (they must have lasted one year); there are also no statistics on how many students were educated in these preparatory courses and how many achieved the status of full-fledged students. However, these courses did exist at German universities in the American Zone and, later on, in West Germany, and we can point out the following features of American policy in this field in comparison to the Soviet one.

Hessen became the first *Land* where a plan for enabling lower social groups to gain student status was approved by the *Landtag*. According to this plan, students from the working class who did not have the necessary graduation certificate (*Das Abitur*) could, nevertheless, after being interviewed by university officials, be admitted provisionally to university study, and, after passing special examinations at the end of the second semester, be granted full university status.⁵⁵¹ The similar experience was noted in other states in Germany. However, resistance from the universities, from Bavarian universities (such as Würzburg and Munich) in particular, to this American proposal was strong. When the

⁵⁵¹ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation. High Commissioner for Germany. Office of OMGUS, Hessen. Education and Cultural Relations Division, 1947-48. Box 702.

rector of the University of Erlangen, upon recommendation by the American military administration, proposed that the advantages of university training should be extended to all social classes, the Bavarian Ministry of Education and the rectors of the Universities of Munich and Würzburg stated, for example, that they were opposed and would never agree to this. The American authorities attempted to discuss this problem with both the opposing Minister and the rectors, but their position remained unchanged. The OMGUS consequently decided to admit lower strata on a limited scale and only at the University of Erlangen and without the approval of the *Landtag*. According to this reform, all young people aged 18 to 30 who had the “abilities and inner aspiration for higher education were permitted to attend universities.”⁵⁵² However, final acceptance of these students only occurred after two probationary terms at the university and after passing academic examinations at the end of that period.⁵⁵³ Consequently, the rectors from all German universities agreed in a conference arranged by the OMGUS to accept some gifted students coming from working-class social groups.⁵⁵⁴ Later, even oppositional universities such as Würzburg and Munich were reported to be offering remedial courses to students whose standard of knowledge was not considered high enough to begin university studies. These future students were given the chance to improve their knowledge in the following studies: 'classical languages, mathematics, a compulsory reorientation course and philosophy.⁵⁵⁵

By establishing these preparatory courses, the United States was able to insert into the study plan such disciplines as “*Weltanschauung*” aimed at the democratization of students while participating in these special classes. This course included some information about the United States, and students were furnished with publications and films on American history and on the life and institutions of the United States.⁵⁵⁶ In addition, a reorientation course was introduced, which gave factual presentations of world thought and history during the past decade, which put special

⁵⁵² NARA. Record group 59. Confidential US Department of State Central Files. Germany. Internal and Foreign Affairs 1945-1949. Microfilm. Reel 7.

⁵⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁴ NARA. Record group 59. International Information Administration Programs 1949-1952. Box 7, 12, 25.

⁵⁵⁵ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS, Bavaria. Office of Education and Cultural Relations Division, 1945-49. Box 57-63.

⁵⁵⁶ NARA. Record group 59. Bureau of Public Affairs. International Exchange Service 1950-58. Box 1, 3.

emphasis on Germany's relations with the world, politically and economically.⁵⁵⁷ Finally, the students in these preparatory courses were awarded a scholarship. The amount in 1956 was DM 80 per month (vs. DM 150-180 in East Germany) for room and board, awarded by the government of West Germany. American experts noted that this was not enough to do much in West Germany, such as going to the theater once a while.⁵⁵⁸

Still, an egalitarian university educational system was not really thoroughly developed due to the permanent resistance of the administration of the universities and, more importantly, due to the fact that creating such an educational system was, in fact, not the main goal of American reforms. Recognizing the fact that the plan for democratizing the German university system was not able to be successfully implemented, the American authorities simply stopped proposing any additional ideas for modifying the rules of admission somewhere around the mid-1950s. In one of the reports relative to those German universities located in Baden-Württemberg, an American curator noted "the admission of students has been made much more democratic than it formerly was in Germany: a larger percentage of students now came [sic] from classes not economically favored, although the large majority still earn [sic] from families of business, professional, and official classes. As yet, a very small number of persons in Germany are enrolled in higher institutions, compared with the numbers enrolled in the United States and in other democratic countries."⁵⁵⁹ In 1964, American diplomats remarked that out of 100 students who attended the universities of West Germany, only one student originated from a farming family, four came from families of the self-employed, four were children of white collar and civil service employees, and 0.4 from the working class. Those diplomats who prepared this report were reminded of a popular German cartoon from that time showing a worker scolding his boy, saying, "If you don't behave, I'll send you to university." So, the diplomats concluded that the

⁵⁵⁷ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS, Berlin. Education and Cultural Relations Branch, 1945-49. Box 128-134.

⁵⁵⁸ NARA. Record group 59. Confidential US Department of State Central Files. FRG. Internal Affairs 1955-1959. Microfilm. Reel 30.

⁵⁵⁹ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS. Württemberg-Baden. Records of Education and Cultural Relations Division, 1945-1949. Box 913-917A.

lower classes did have a chance to enter universities but that they did not want to take advantage of this chance.⁵⁶⁰

Concluding our discussion about the primary element of American policy towards students, we can argue that the United States elaborated very detailed and strict criteria for the purging of Nazis. Selecting students through a complex system of denazification, the American authorities were faced with two problems: the first problem concerned the high percentage of former Nazis admitted to universities and the second was that the number admitted exceeded the number of students that the universities had admitted before the Occupation period. Evidently, student migration from the East, provoked by Soviet oppression and American policy encouraging defection, also contributed to the growth of the student body. Consequently, the government of West Germany reaped the fruits of this American policy when the infrastructure of West German universities lagged behind the increasing numbers of the student population, which, in turn, caused dissatisfaction and student opposition in the early and mid-1960s. The United States, like the Soviet Union, established preparatory courses to educate less favored students and to rebuild the traditional admissions system of German universities. However, this project was blocked for the most part by the universities, and hence the idea of creating an egalitarian system in Germany was not so strongly promoted by the United States as it was in the Soviet Zone.

2. Instilling German students with new ideological values

The introduction of political science in order to impose the ideology inherent in the American political system on German universities was considered to be the main tool for fostering a new generation of Germans. However, the American authorities understood that the introduction of new disciplines alone would not be sufficient to produce a new student who would have a deep belief in the values of liberal ideology under such adverse circumstances as the economic crisis, monetary reform, deterioration of living conditions among the population, and ideological propaganda from the Soviet Union. Quite the contrary, all these circumstances were bound to produce a student with a belief in the values of socialism. The United States therefore developed additional programs to familiarize German students with American life and its political system, and to convince them that liberal economics and ethics were

⁵⁶⁰ NARA. Record group 59. Central Files 1964-1966. Educational and Cultural Exchange. Box 385.

more advantageous than communist ones. The American government educated students on a mass scale during the holidays (summer schools), and invited student leaders to visit America and participate in special training programs (exchanges).

Summer schools

Summer schools became the most popular method of American public diplomacy to influence students. The first summer school was simultaneously arranged in the Universities of Heidelberg, Erlangen, Marburg, and Frankfurt in 1947. The OMGUS came to an agreement with the German universities on the main course programs. Courses lasted three weeks, delivered in both German and English, and covered such themes as *Grundlagen des amerikanischen Verfassungsrecht* (American public law), *der Schweizer Verfassung* (the Constitution of Switzerland), *Die Krise des modernen Menschen des Geisteswissenschaftlers und Medizin* (the crisis of individuals from the perspectives of psychology and medicine), *Gemeinschaft und Gruppenbildung an den Deutschen Universitäten* (political associations in German Universities), which were delivered in German by those German professors who had emigrated to the United States and had now returned. Additional courses covered topics such as political theology, the Catholic Church, and ideology and social structure in Russia. They were delivered in English by American professors. Moreover, there were courses on music and ancient history. In Marburg, university authorities agreed to add courses which primarily touched on the United States. Students attended five lectures on the history of the American constitution, one lecture on American government, and two lectures on American literature in America. In Heidelberg, there were courses such as *Dialectical Idealism, Materialism, and Idealism as leitmotif for explanations of history and for political education*, which were similar to the program of the first Soviet summer school. The Military Administration of the United States invited about fifty professors from England, Sweden, Denmark, Italy, Switzerland, Greece, Czechoslovakia, America, and Hungary. About one hundred and fifty students from each university participated.

The American authorities invited students from the Soviet Zone; however, Russian representatives stated that the invitation had come too late to find and send students. Despite this rejection, forty students from the East came to Marburg without any official invitation. The arrival of these students raised problems for the American authorities. Initially, the

Americans asked them to leave the university and the American Zone because they did not have proper interzonal passes to travel between zones. However, the other participants in the summer school held a secret meeting and suggested going home in protest. After debate, the American authorities allowed these forty students to remain, providing them with hotel rooms and ration cards for meals.⁵⁶¹

Moreover, American visiting professors and politicians were urged to give vacation-period lectures for German students devoted mainly to American history or political science. In 1952, for example, lectures at the University of Heidelberg about the American political system were delivered by an American politician and congressmen. More than 160 students participated.⁵⁶² The *Amerika Haus* at the University of Heidelberg presented a series of lectures concerning the history of the United States (*Annex 3*).⁵⁶³ According to the documents, the first and subsequent summer schools were very popular among German students.⁵⁶⁴

Short-term training of German students in the United States

The system of education, and those who worked and studied within it, had first priority among all the target areas for educational exchange programs (*Table 3*). German students, who demonstrated leadership potential for future careers as politicians, state officials, heads of student organizations, and researchers were involved by the American authorities in so-called exchange of persons programs.⁵⁶⁵ This program of exchanges, aimed at creating a new elite in German society, was implemented with highest intensity during the period from 1947 through 1953. It was during this period that future politicians and Chancellors of West Germany were trained in the United States. In the years that followed, up until the early 1970s, German students were offered a range of other exchange programs from the American government, and, as

⁵⁶¹ Ibid.

⁵⁶² NARA. Record group 59. Decimal Files. Box 2436-2449.

⁵⁶³ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁴ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS. Württemberg-Baden. Records of Education and Cultural Relations Division, 1945-1949. Box 913-917A.

⁵⁶⁵ University of Arkansas Libraries. Special Collections. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Historical Collection. Manuscript Collection 468. Box 239. Germany. Folder 18. [Articles on German Exchange, 1949-1962, n.d.].

earlier, they were given priority over all other students from West European countries.⁵⁶⁶

Table 3
Exchange of Persons Program
*German leaders to the U.S., 1947-1953*⁵⁶⁷

Program Areas	Cumulative number	%
Education	887	18.1
Political & Governmental Leadership	705	14.4
Labor	673	13.7
Youth Activity	611	12.5
Information Service	461	9.4
Cooperative Action	318	6.5
Religious Affairs	276	5.6
Women's Affairs	262	5.4
Agriculture	254	5.4
Public Health & Social Services	185	3.8
Libraries and Museums	108	2.2
Miscellaneous	9	0.2

Initially, exchange programs aimed at students were elaborated and developed with a certain amount of trouble. A segment of the Washington establishment cast doubt on the necessity of bringing German students to the United States. It is known that the main arguments of opponents of the Truman Administration asserted, first, that students could bring leftist ideas and infect the American student body⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁶ *A Statistical Profile of the US Exchange Program, FY 1971* (Washington, DC: Department of State, 1973).

⁵⁶⁷ NARA. Record group 59. International Information Administration. Field Program for Germany 1945-1953. Box 1-7.

⁵⁶⁸ The negative position of some congressmen and American academics could be illustrated by the process of the passing of two significant public laws relative to American educational policy around the world. The first was the Fulbright Act of 1946 introduced by Senator Fulbright, and the second was the US Information and Educational Act of 1948 sponsored by his friend, Senator Mundt. These two acts opened up a new era in American educational policy, because for the first time they authorized budget funds for educational programs to be expanded by the United States *globally*; also, these laws

and, second, that students were young people who had not yet demonstrated their potential for maintaining the values of American society in West Germany. Therefore, they, in the opinion of opponents, should not be a main target of influence. These circumstances resulted in a slow-down in the elaboration of exchange programs for general students until the mid-1950s.

However, the sharpening of the situation centered on Berlin, and the popularity of the communists among Germans and Europeans as a whole influenced Washington to shut its eyes to these possible problems relative to exchanges and, instead, to focus on enhancing the training of German youth. In 1947, the State Department began training leading German students at American universities in order to create a new, favorable elite in Germany. Initially, the State Department, knowing the high quality of work of the American officers in the Zone, assigned the American Governor in Germany, Lucius Clay, to elaborate the criteria for the selection of such students. General Clay, as an official who was keen on saving those budget funds allocated to the first exchange program, decided that only students from theology departments, as well as those students who could pay for their travel to the United States, should be selected. His choice of the theological departments as the primary participants in the exchanges was determined by the very close cooperation between these departments and the American military Administration. Theology departments became the first educational establishments who declared their intention to cooperate with the new Occupation regime. General Clay appraised the warm relations with the professoriate and student body of these departments and decided to promote exchange programs for them. However, this choice on the part of Clay aroused indignation in Washington, because the students who came to American universities turned out to have no aspirations to study or to build a new democratic pro-American Germany. They came to visit relatives and friends in the United States.⁵⁶⁹

tied education to foreign policy and the government, and, more importantly, they designated ideological preferences as to the selection of countries and persons for participation in American educational programs. However, the passing of these laws through Congress awakened the isolationists, who argued that the global educational exchange program would bring communism to American universities. See, in detail: Tsvetkova, *Cultural Imperialism*, 58-61; 65-67; *HR. 3342. US Information and Educational Exchanges Act 1947. Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Relations. US Senate, 80th Cong., 1st sess.* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1947).

⁵⁶⁹ Clay, *Decision in Germany*, 282-305; Kellermann, *Cultural Relations*, 25-30.

After this initial failure, the State Department sent its own envoy to the OMGUS, the president of Indiana University, Herman Wells, who set about elaborating new criteria and procedures of selection, notably, that those young and loyal students with leadership potential should be selected, checked by the Ministry of Defense, interviewed, and then sent to Washington.⁵⁷⁰ After several years of selection, training begun in 1951 and would include famous future politicians of West Germany such as the Chancellors Kurt Kiesinger, Ludwig Erhard, and Gerhard Schröder.⁵⁷¹

According to their applications, students with anti-communist views were primarily selected. The Nazi past of students was already no longer a hindrance for participation in American exchange programs sponsored by the government. Now former members of the Nazi Party and its youth organizations were selected in meritorious cases. However, students who were members of any organization affiliated with or controlled by the German Communist Party were not selected. The process of screening and selection remained long and intense. Students were first screened by special Education Exchange Staff in the *Ländern*, then in the OMGUS, and then in Washington.⁵⁷² Finally, no rigid standards were applied as to scholastic ability and the achievements of the students; criteria for leadership and political affiliation, however, were taken into consideration.

We have selected several applications to illustrate the American approach to this selection. Charlotte Homann, a German student and a scientific assistant at the Free University, applied for the program called “Study and observation of political life and governmental administration in the United States” (*Annex 4*). During the Nazi regime she had been a member of the BDM. Since 1945 she had studied at Humboldt University and worked at the same time at the famous Osram Company.⁵⁷³ Yet, she left Humboldt University in the summer of 1948, and took part in the

⁵⁷⁰ Kellermann, *Cultural Relations*, 3-39.

⁵⁷¹ *International Exchange, 1968. A Report of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, Department of State* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1968), 3.

⁵⁷² NARA. Record group 59. International Information Administration. Field Program for Germany 1945-1953. Box 1-7.

⁵⁷³ The Osram Company enriched uranium. There are now many speculations in Russia that the availability of uranium and of facilities for its enrichment built by the Nazis in the eastern part of Germany contributed to the decision made by Moscow on the division of Germany.

foundation of the Free University.⁵⁷⁴ Siegfried Duebel,⁵⁷⁵ a student of psychology, philosophy, and journalism at the Free University, had seen war experience on the Russian front. He then studied at the University of Halle in the Soviet Zone, but he decided to leave the Russian Zone.⁵⁷⁶ The third student, Gisela Conrad, was a student at the University of Tübingen in the East, but later she, like the previous applicants, transferred to the Free University because she was expelled by the SMAD as an American spy.⁵⁷⁷ These and other students explicitly indicated their anti-Soviet positions so that it is obvious that their anti-Soviet positions worked in favor of these applicants.

At the same time, the Military Administration of the United States did not forget about those students who demonstrated apathy towards the new political life, and could thus fall prey to the Soviet Union. This group, designated as “senior students and unemployed graduates,” constituted 15% of the total student body.⁵⁷⁸ Public opinion polls of this segment of students conducted by American experts in 1949 showed that these students continued to articulate the ideas of National Socialism. Such expressions as “a strong nation could not be built without a dictator,” “an Aryan has no right to marry a non-Aryan woman,” “books criticizing the government should not be published,” “Jews do not have the same rights as Aryans,” “Danzig,⁵⁷⁹ the Sudetenland,⁵⁸⁰ and Austria should belong to Germany,” and “National Socialism is a good idea but it was realized wrongly” showed that democracy still had not reached this

⁵⁷⁴ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS. Records of Education and Cultural Relations Branch, 1945-1949. Box 148-151.

⁵⁷⁵ He published a book: S. Duebel, *Dokumente zur Jugendpolitik der SED* (München: Juventa Verl., 1964).

⁵⁷⁶ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS. Records of Education and Cultural Relations Branch, 1945-1949. Box 148-151.

⁵⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁸ Kellermann, *Cultural Relations*, 75-93; A.J. Merritt, R.L. Merritt, *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany: The OMGUS Surveys, 1945-1949* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1970), 3.

⁵⁷⁹ Danzig is the German name for Gdansk, the principal Polish city on the sea. This German town was governed by the League of Nations and Poland after the end of the WWI. It was annexed by Germany in 1939 and returned to Poland in 1945.

⁵⁸⁰ Sudetenland was the German name used in English for the western regions of Czechoslovakia inhabited mostly by ethnic Germans. The latter was the main excuse for annexation in 1938. After WWII, the Sudeten became part of Czechoslovakia and most of the Germans migrated to West Germany.

segment of the student body.⁵⁸¹ This state of affairs shocked the American government which had purged students three times, but, nevertheless, the universities were filled with such opinions. The decision was therefore made to multiply the number of students coming to American universities with an emphasis upon selection of this category of students to give them a chance to study the foundations of democracy.

Training this passive segment of the student body, the American government attempted to safeguard them against the influence of communism, as well as to shift them away from their position of passivity and National Socialist stance, by encouraging them to participate in building a new democratic Germany. The “foundations of democracy” subjects definitely included applicable knowledge that could be used by German students in Germany on their return. What did German students actually study in the United States? The most important subject was the functioning of American student organizations. Students with leadership potential were assigned to visit American student meetings and activities in order to be able to implant American models of various student organizations in German universities. Consequently, it was these German students who became the founders of the German Student Union.⁵⁸² Those students designated as unemployed mainly studied law. They were groomed to undertake careers as officials in a German bureaucratic apparatus which would be based on democratic principles of governance. Designated as the “apolitical and passive,” these students studied the principles of civil society and political party building.⁵⁸³

The results of these training programs were controversial. On the one hand, after their return these students changed the student way of life by establishing student organizations and implanting democracy as they understood its principles. On the other, American experts noted that the student body (in comparison with other groups of exchangees such as teenagers and the ruling elite) was found to have made fewer changes in their attitudes.⁵⁸⁴ According to the documents, the government suggested

⁵⁸¹ Merritt & Merritt, *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany*, 6.

⁵⁸² “SWNCC 269/9. US Policy on German Youth Activities: Policy Statement. February 3, 1947,” in *Germany 1947-1949. The Story in Documents*, 578-583; R.J. Aldrich, “The Struggle for the Mind of European Youth: the CIA and European Movement Propaganda, 1948-60,” in *Cold-War Propaganda in the 1950s*, ed. G.D. Rawnsley (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 183-203.

⁵⁸³ Merritt & Merritt, *Public Opinion in Occupied Germany*, 3-65.

⁵⁸⁴ NARA. Record group 59. International Information Administration. Field Program for Germany 1945-1953. Box 1-7.

that the social group made up of German students had a dim memory of pre-Nazi Germany, and was consequently poorer “raw material” for the educational program to work with than were other groups.⁵⁸⁵ American experts concluded that university students showed less promise of profiting from the exchange experience than other groups because they seemed to have acquired something of an attitude of snobbery towards American life.⁵⁸⁶ Nevertheless, they returned to Germany, started careers, and some of them contributed to the democratic orientation of West Germany.

Finally, similar to the Soviet government which concluded the first state agreement about training German students in the USSR, the American government also decided to establish such a legal foundation for their exchange programs. The government concluded two important agreements with West Germany in 1952 and 1953: the first agreement, signed by the US High Commissioner in Germany, John McCloy, and the first German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, opened up the Fulbright program to German universities,⁵⁸⁷ and the second agreement, signed by Adenauer and Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, concerned all the educational programs.⁵⁸⁸ On average, the American government annually invited more students than the Soviet government: about 250 versus 200; however, the United States emphasized short-term education (from three to twelve months), whereas the Soviet Union focused on long-term education (from five to seven years).

3. Creating apolitical student organizations in the universities

A new German university would be considered to have been established if a new, pliable student government had been established there. Well-controlled student government, termed student councils, was a primary goal of student policy of both the United States and the Soviet Union. However, their approach to the establishment of new student organizations was radically different. While the Soviet authorities

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁶ NARA. Record group 59. Central Files 1950-54. Box 2450, 2451, 2456.

⁵⁸⁷ Full text of the agreement: *Agreement between US and FRG* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1952).

⁵⁸⁸ The White House was unable to sign the treaty or the agreement about cultural relations with Germany because of the American Senate’s intention not to ratify the agreement. See, NARA. Record group 59. Office of Educational, Cultural and Public Affairs. Subject Files 1945-1997. Educational and Cultural Agreements, Germany, 1948-1968. Box 123, 124.

stimulated political turmoil in the universities in order to promote their interests and to eliminate ardent opponents to the communist regime, the United States authorities rejected the politicization of German universities. By establishing an apolitical student government and numerous minor student organizations, the American Occupation authorities tried to erode the political ambitions of students and smooth over negative attitudes of students towards the new regime by directing them towards the arena of discussions between the administration of the universities and the student body, but not between the American authorities and the students.

American policy in this sphere can be divided into three facets: the first was the creation of apolitical student councils and a united student organization to serve as defenders of student interests in the university senate; the second was the introduction of the campus system governed by students; and the third was the establishment of student organizations for mutual aid.

Creating student councils and united student organizations

Similar to their Eastern counterpart, the American authorities were faced with two main problems in establishing student councils in the universities: the passivity of students in terms of their unwillingness to participate in American projects, and the strong influence and popularity of the old German student unions. In general, students did not seem very eager to form new student councils, stating that they had a desire to finish their studies as quickly as possible in order to be able to earn a living and settle down after six years of military service in the war.⁵⁸⁹ In addition, investigations by the American security authorities showed that certain former elite student unions, forbidden by the Occupation authorities, continued their existence under innocent names. A struggle against these tendencies lasted for several years during the American Occupation.

The Occupation authorities assumed that these negative tendencies would disappear if a new position – the Dean of Students – was introduced into German universities. The Dean of Students was considered to be the means for enabling student self-government to develop gradually without forcing it. The job of the dean, a junior member of the teaching staff, was to supervise the students and advise the

⁵⁸⁹ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS, Berlin. Education and Cultural Relations Branch, 1945-49. Box 128-134.

rector about student affairs. German universities had had no such equivalent previously. The new official was instructed to serve as the channel for communication between students and the rector just as the rector was already the designated intermediary between the faculty staff and the university officer of the Military Government.⁵⁹⁰ The dean selected some advisors from among the older students. These were charismatic personalities who would exercise the pedagogical and psychological empathy necessary to become advisors to students. All these students were to be selected on the merits of having distinguished themselves by their activities promoting the new university concept. The experts from the Military Administration placed great hope in this position. They wrote that “the introduction of the ‘advisor system’ would not only accomplish the mentioned goals. The students grown up in the advisor system will keep on cherishing the social idea in their sphere of activity even after cessation of their student days.”⁵⁹¹ However, the underlying goal behind the introduction of the Office of Dean was to control any possible politicization of the student body by directing those students who favored direct action and who rejected compromise towards the arena of rector-student discussions.

After introduction of this important position, students were allowed to form a Provisional Student Committee themselves, with the assignment of preparing the elections for student councils.⁵⁹² The student council elections encompassed only candidates proposed by deans of departments. In 1946, for example, Rector Bauer of the University of Heidelberg reported to the OMGUS: “the Deans selected three students representing each department as students of trust. In January 1946 they began discussions over student organization with the administration of the University. They reached an agreement to keep the [sic] party politics aloof from the University.”⁵⁹³ However, the American authorities

⁵⁹⁰ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation. High Commissioner for Germany. Office of OMGUS, Hessen. Education and Cultural Relations Division, 1947-48. Box 702.

⁵⁹¹ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS, Berlin. Education and Cultural Relations Branch, 1945-49. Box 128-134.

⁵⁹² NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation. High Commissioner for Germany. Office of OMGUS, Hessen. Education and Cultural Relations Division, 1947-48. Box 702.

⁵⁹³ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS. Württemberg-Baden. Records of Education and Cultural Relations Division, 1945-1949. Box 913-917A.

encountered students who hungered to establish party organizations and elections, and to engage in political struggle. The new rector of the University of Frankfurt, Walter Hallstein, who had been a prisoner of war (POW) in the US for three years and had been active in teaching at Fort Getty⁵⁹⁴ wrote: “one might say that the students are a deeply disillusioned generation, filled with soberness, skepticism, and a strong aversion to any enthusiastic surrender to a new ideology; prepared to discuss political questions critically, perhaps, as an aftermath of the past, with a tendency toward a realistic viewpoint in politics. It is therefore certainly not true that they have no political interests.”⁵⁹⁵ The pressure coming from these students was very strong: they visited the office of the American Administration requesting that they be allowed to create such organizations on the basis of the principles of American democracy. The Occupation authorities hesitated briefly. The authority of the German philosophers Karl Jaspers and Gustav Radbruch,⁵⁹⁶ who publicly rejected politicization of the universities and who closely cooperated with the Americans in the area of university reforms, cooled the American Military Administration towards this idea.⁵⁹⁷ However, bearing in mind the American experience of university life of that day, the OMGUS decided to encourage the establishment of religious organizations. Three officially approved student organizations were established in 1946: the *Freie Deutsche Studentengemeinde*, the *Protestantische Studentengemeinde*, and the *Katholische Studentengemeinde*. As was explained in the directives, the aim of these establishments was to encourage a democratic and progressive spirit in German university life in order to help develop a student’s personality on a free and democratic basis, and to promote self-education and self-control in the student community.⁵⁹⁸

⁵⁹⁴ NARA 260. Records of US Occupation. High Commissioner for Germany. Office of OMGUS, Hessen. Education and Cultural Relations Division, 1947-48. Box 702.

⁵⁹⁵ Hallstein, “The Universities,” 159-161.

⁵⁹⁶ Gustav Radbruch was a famous professor of law and Kantian philosophy and a member of the Social Democratic Party as well. He had held a seat in the Reichstag in the 1920s.

⁵⁹⁷ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS. Württemberg-Baden. Records of Education and Cultural Relations Division, 1945-1949. Box 913-917A.

⁵⁹⁸ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS, Berlin. Education and Cultural Relations Branch, 1945-49. Box 128-134.

The next step was the formation of a united student organization to represent student interests within the administration of each university called the *Central Student Committee, AStA*.⁵⁹⁹ This was a representative body of students which sat in the senate of a university.⁶⁰⁰ The United States decided that the president of AStA should have the right to attend senate meetings when student affairs were discussed, and to speak but not to vote. The members of AStA chose a president, who, with the help of other students, organized various student activities and services: scholarships, welfare matters, accommodation, employment, travel, international exchanges, and different forms of cultural activity. The founders of AStA truly believed that this activity would keep the students away from political struggle and from the influence of leftist ideologies. Actually, nobody in the American Military Administration could have foreseen that this offspring of the OMGUS would exercise strong opposition to American activities in German universities by the end of the 1960s and throughout the early 1970s.

However, signs of oppositional behavior by this organization became visible soon after its establishment in 1948. AStA became a center of the first student opposition against the German educational authorities. The American authorities were, on their end, satisfied with this, because the students were involved in a conflict with local authorities, which was very far from high-echelon politics. University of Munich students protested in 1948 against the order of a Bavarian Minister of Education concerning the control of funds received by AStA. The Ministry was insisting on controlling them, but AStA protested against this order. Students of the University of Munich successfully campaigned against this minister, however, finding help in the form of the local American consulate. The American consul invited the minister to the consulate, and after the meeting the order was annulled.⁶⁰¹

Defending the interests of students, the American authorities in Germany prepared the soil for future fierce attacks, which would go unpunished, by students and which were aimed at the German administration of the universities, the professors, and the Americans

⁵⁹⁹ AStA is the German abbreviation of Allgemeiner Studenten Ausschuß, the Central Student Committee.

⁶⁰⁰ NARA Record group 260. Records of US Occupation. High Commissioner for Germany. Office of OMGUS, Hessen. Education and Cultural Relations Division, 1947-48. Box 702.

⁶⁰¹ NARA. Record group 59. Confidential US Department of State Central Files. Germany. Internal and Foreign Affairs 1945-1949. Microfilm. Reel 7.

themselves. West German students obtained the right to express their disaffection, to attack officials criticizing them publicly, all while being defended by the American authorities in Germany. This right was implanted in German universities by the American Occupation Administration in order to shift students away from their stand of neutrality, political apathy, and sympathy for communism in the ideological conflict with the Soviet Union. By allowing students to be involved in a democratic and public struggle with the university authorities, American officers demonstrated to students the advantages of the liberal approach in comparison to the communist terror in the East. In the 1950s, the Military Administration was fully satisfied with its student policy, noting that the battle against student passivity was won and the influence of the old student unions was diminishing: "Continued cooperation with university student leaders has revealed a trend toward the acceptance of greater responsibility for students [sic] affairs and an interest in promoting student government." The establishment of student forum centers where university students could gather for discussion was proving to be a counterbalance to the attempted comeback of the nationalistic *Korporationen*, such as the Nazi student league (*Nationalsozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund*) or, even older, the dueling fraternities and *Burschenschaften*.⁶⁰² Student leaders actually wanted to cooperate with the Occupation authorities in establishing self-government and the campus system.

Introduction of the campus system

The introduction of the American model of the university campus system became one more step in the American policy towards the German student body. The American authorities believed that the establishment of the campus or the *Collegium Academicum*, where students could live together, would be "an enterprise that could transfer worth-while experience of American college life, enhance yearning among the student generation for similar social experience and intensify contact between students and faculty."⁶⁰³ American experts also assumed that German students would build the campus system themselves after obtaining the knowledge and experience in American universities and after obtaining financial support from the government as well.

⁶⁰² NARA. Record group 59. International Information Administration. Field Program for Germany 1945-1953. Box 1-7.

⁶⁰³ NARA. Record group 59. Decimal Files. Box 2436-2449.

In as much as the German university system had no campus program and little was known about the function of student participation in extra-curricular activities in terms of the American approach, the Department of State in 1950 initiated a special observation program in the United States for student leaders coming from German universities. This project was expected to contribute to the following objectives: 1) to help German youth to understand the effectiveness of student government activities; 2) to orient student leaders in terms of aspects of the community concept of university life; 3) to permit German youth leaders to discover the place of extra-curricular activities in a broad educational program; 4) to enable German university youth leaders to study the design and function of, and student participation in, management and administration; and 5) to come up with ideas concerning the development and administration of scholarship and student welfare programs.

These student leaders visited selected American universities whose programs in student government, extra-curricular activities, student-union community centers, and student welfare fund programs were outstanding; each German student spent his entire tour at one university studying aspects outlined in the objectives and then prepared a detailed report on his findings; upon return to Germany a conference with these students was held to exchange information and determine the best methods for conveying this information to West German universities.⁶⁰⁴

In addition, this observational tour consisted of special courses on such problems as leadership technique and group dynamics. German students participated in the activities of American student government councils in order to understand questions such as the organization of student activities, their constitutions, elections and financing, and methods of control. They studied how sports, dances, and other university-related activities were organized.⁶⁰⁵ After returning, these German students and their universities were provided with American donations to build campuses or student villages.

However, the results of this policy turned out to be modest. An American-modeled campus was established at the University of Heidelberg only in the early 1950s. Then, the Free University obtained a

⁶⁰⁴ University of Arkansas Libraries. Special Collections. Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs Historical Collection. Manuscript Collection 468. Box 240. Folder 4. HICOG-Special Projects, 1953.

⁶⁰⁵ NARA. Record group 59. Decimal Files. Box 2436-2449.

grant to build its student village in 1957.⁶⁰⁶ After this, no document mentions the continuation of this project.

Establishment of student organizations of mutual aid

In addition to these important projects, the United States encouraged German students to re-establish organizations aimed at helping less favored students that had existed before the period of the Nazi regime. Initially, American officers themselves established such organizations of mutual student aid without any initiative and support on the part of German students. The first organization, *Studentenwerk* was re-established by the Military Government in every university, in 1946. It helped organize the following activities: a housing agency, a sick fund which paid for doctors' bills up to 100 percent, a social welfare branch (scholarships and free meals), an agency which gave advice on courses of study, a student mess where 1,000 students could eat, and a spacious Student House, containing a kitchen, dining, and living quarters. *Studentenwerk* renovated the Student Houses, which served as excellent places for all student social meetings and recreational activities.⁶⁰⁷

After these projects, the American authorities seemed to forget about this part of their activity; however, the currency reform of 1948 caused many hardships among students and forced the authorities to revive projects for student mutual aid. Prices for food and clothing rose considerably. A group of Heidelberg University students came to *Amerika Haus* to inquire about ways and means of meeting these financial difficulties which many of the students were experiencing with the change of currency. When students approached other affiliations of the OMGUS, the Occupation authorities decided to establish a united student employment association that would help put students in touch with American families needing baby-sitters, window washers, language teachers, etc. The pay was one Deutsch Mark per hour. Ten percent of the money earned by the students would be returned to the student employment service to defray the expenses of telephone and clerical help. Two hundred and twenty students out of 1100 who filled out job

⁶⁰⁶ NARA. Record group 59. Confidential US Department of State Central Files. FRG. Internal Affairs 1955-1959. Microfilm. Reel 30.

⁶⁰⁷ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS, Berlin. Education and Cultural Relations Branch, 1945-49. Box 128-134.

applications were placed in odd jobs; most of them worked as unskilled labor.⁶⁰⁸

Summing up American policy in the area of the establishment of student organizations, we can say that the Military Government was able to lessen to some extent the influence of those political parties which existed in the Zone in terms of the atmosphere surrounding reforming the universities. Among the established student organizations, AStA alone must have demonstrated some political potential. Evidently, having observed the events that had occurred in the universities occupied by the Soviets, the American experts deliberately created apolitical organizations in order, first, not to let communists and other leftists influence students, which could come about through the activity of party-affiliated student organizations and, second, so as not to give German students a forum to criticize and undermine American reforms. The result was that the American government was able to exercise control of the students during the period of Occupation; however, the United States would lose this control after the end of the Occupation.

4. Student opposition and the American response

Students in the American Zone in contrast to those of the Soviet Zone did not demonstrate any tough resistance to the activities of the Occupation authorities in the universities. However, over time, they publicly began to articulate some negative judgments about the Occupation. Most students regarded the American values and ideology, introduced by the new disciplines such as political science and American history, with skepticism. Distrust on the part of the students towards American ideology sometimes resulted in a negative reaction to the introduction of a course and new lectures: "In the course of a lecture delivered by Professor Jaspers, the students started laughing and scraping their feet on the floor at the mention of democracy, in connection to the spiritual situation of Germany. As soon as this began, Professor Jaspers interrupted the lecture and declared that he would not tolerate such a demonstration."⁶⁰⁹ However, apathy and unwillingness to participate in public life was more often described as the reaction of students to American initiatives: "Among students it was found that many of them

⁶⁰⁸ NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS. Württemberg-Baden. Records of Education and Cultural Relations Division, 1945-1949. Box 913-917A.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid.

had a do-it-without-me attitude, others want to have back the good-old-days, and again others demonstrate [sic] interest in the direction of communist or fascist movements. All this constitutes a serious danger for the participation of Germany in the democratic family of nations.”⁶¹⁰

According to the documents and previous research, students arranged only two public protests in the streets up until the early 1960s. The first happened in June 1948: students at all the Bavarian universities protested their meager rations that did not exceed 1550 calories per day. James Tent mentions in his book that students, carrying posters reading “Even a Dog Needs 1,700 Calories per Day,” marched to the office of the American Administration to protest their exclusion from food programs. Consequently, the Occupation authorities raised the daily rations to 1,980 calories.⁶¹¹ The second protest occurred after the monetary reform: in 1949, which was one year after introducing new Deutsch Marks in the Western Zones along with a limited exchange of Reichmarks into the new DM banknotes that caused a temporary fall in the standard of living, 3000 students went into the streets of Berlin to voice their discontent with the economic policy of the Occupation authorities. The demonstration was peaceful and ended quickly; however, during the demonstration the covert work of leftist students was noted. They agitated for the others to engage in radical action against the United States. American soldiers were able to neutralize this behavior on the part of a leftist group of students. At that time, the experts did not pay attention to the power of leftist students in the city where adherents of rival ideologies confronted each other.⁶¹²

Later, by the end of the 1950s, the influence and role of leftist students would become more visible to the United States. The first reports about this kind of oppositional mood as well as about trends and changes in the attitudes of West Berlin students were written up by American diplomats in 1958. One of the reports remarked that the political attitudes of the students are quite different from what they were 9-10 years ago. They are much younger and less mature today. In contrast to the students of 10 years ago, they have grown up in an atmosphere of security, and the majority of them have not had experience of living

⁶¹⁰ NARA. Record group 59. Central Files 1950-54. Box 2450, 2451, 2456.

⁶¹¹ Tent, *Mission*, 279.

⁶¹² NARA. Record group 260. Records of US Occupation Headquarters. World War II. Office of OMGUS, Berlin. Education and Cultural Relations Branch, 1945-49. Box 128-134.

under a communist regime. There are very few students who are Communists [sic] sympathizers. However, it is very difficult to say how many of them are or would be susceptible to the influences of Communist propaganda and the students of the Humanistic Faculty are the most susceptible to Communist influences.”⁶¹³

This report was followed by urgent diplomatic telegrams from Berlin to Washington about the first radical protest of students against the American position on the German question: the students organized the *Student Congress against Atomic Armament* and passed a resolution in favor of a communist confederation thesis in the context of the 1958 Berlin crisis provoked by Nikita Khrushchev. This surprised American diplomats and Washington, who actually were not ready to respond to such pro-communist positions on the part of the students. Moreover, when the Central Intelligence Agency found that this radicalism stemmed from the East through a group of students who had joined together around the leftist journal, *Konkret*,⁶¹⁴ the American political establishment requested the NSC to elaborate new measures against the power of the leftists. The decision was to estimate the percentage of leftists in the universities, to define the reasons behind the anti-American position of the students, and to find leaders for an opposition to this.

An estimate implemented by the NSC showed that only 5% of students had outright pro-communist sympathies, 20% of the total student body – although basically non-communists – were inclined to play with neutralist, pacifist, and Marxist ideas, and a full 50% of students were described as politically apathetic; the remaining 25% were actively opposed to the communists.⁶¹⁵ And more importantly, the radical minority was not made up of student refugees from East Germany. The latter, on the contrary, appeared “to be immune to radicalism and to be better able to judge and avoid pro-communist activities and some of them tended to revive student conservative corporations.”⁶¹⁶

The main factor of the anti-American position of students proved to be a loss by students of the understanding of what it meant to have grown

⁶¹³ NARA. Record group 59. Confidential US Department of State Central Files. FRG. Internal Affairs 1955-1959. Microfilm. Reel 30.

⁶¹⁴ *Konkret* was a leftist German magazine “for politics and culture” (according to its subtitle) that had existed since 1957. Until 1964, it had clandestine ideological and financial relations with the East German government.

⁶¹⁵ NARA. Record group 59. Confidential US Department of State Central Files. FRG. Internal Affairs 1955-1959. Microfilm. Reel 30.

⁶¹⁶ *Ibid.*

up in a democratic country: “The spirit of defiance toward Communist oppression and desire for democratic freedom which characterized the students who established the Free University has been largely buried under layers of indifference, naiveté, and taken for granted attitude toward freedom, a somewhat nihilistic ‘non-conformism,’ a dilettantist toying with Marxism and pacifist and neutralist ideas, and, in the case of a very small minority, definitely anti-Western views and activities.”⁶¹⁷ Many students were reported to have developed a certain skepticism toward their elders’ steadfast determination to keep their freedom, their undiminished distrust of communists, and their faith in the Western Powers and in the United States in particular. In addition, American experts noted at the end of the 1950s that a segment of the university student body had become very vulnerable to extremist ideas because of the hard conditions of student life provoked by high rents for housing and the low studentship, with the understanding that the Soviets paid a much higher studentship to East German students.⁶¹⁸

Other factors that caused the first signs of radicalism were reported to be the following: a lack of political training in the universities that implied that political science, introduced by both American and European professors, did not succeed in implementing its primary aim of raising a new generation of students loyal to the ideas of liberalism; changes in the composition of the student body, which had in ten years been completely replaced; an increasing fragmentation of the student body that meant an increase of a segment of students who lacked companionship and led a lonely existence; and finally, the 1950s generation of students had too dim a memory of the Nazi regime, the Soviet invasion and Occupation, the 1948 blockade, and even the 1953 uprising in the Soviet Zone. American experts who observed the students concluded that the students had lost the *esprit de corps*, devotion to freedom, and defiance of communism, which could be very dangerous in the context of the Cold War.

Finally, American diplomats named the first leaders of the student opposition as causes: Hans Stern and Reinhardt Opitz. Both students were editors of the *Konkret* journal and members of the Socialist German Student Union (*Der Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund*). They were disseminating the idea of reunification of Germany through negotiations with the East and the Soviet Union. This idea was known to have been

⁶¹⁷ Ibid.

⁶¹⁸ Ibid.

rejected by the Washington and German political establishment in the 1950s, but it became the essence of German Chancellor Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* in the 1970s.

Consequently, foreign policy decision-makers elaborated a new series of reforms both to deal with such students and with the leftist opposition. These reforms were implemented at the end of the 1960s, and we will discuss them in Chapter VI.

5. Changes in student daily life under the influence of American reforms

According to the available records, both superpowers observed and evaluated the policy towards German students conducted in the rival ideological camp. Among the documents of both Russian and American archives there were more evaluations and reports about student life across the border than those about students who lived in the sphere of influence of either the United States or the Soviet Union. In other words, American archives stored reports filed by American diplomats about student life in the Soviet Zone and East Germany, while Russian archives stored reports filed by Soviet diplomats about student life in the American Zone and West Germany. Evidently, such reports emphasized the weakest points of either version of student life so that they could be further exploited by means of the educational policy of either the Soviet Union or the United States. Thus, the available documents determined the configuration of the following analysis: how the Americans evaluated the life of students in East Germany and how the Soviets evaluated the life of students in West Germany. Therefore, *Soviet representations of student life in West Germany will be depicted* in this final section about American policy towards German students.

The financial conditions of student life in West German universities were the main theme for discussion and observation. According to the German students interviewed, studies at West German universities had to be subordinated to students' earning their livelihoods, because those students whose parents earned over DM 350 per month did not qualify for scholarships; such students comprised the majority of the student body. Students were compelled to work in order to earn enough to cover tuition expenses that amounted to DM 160 each quarter.⁶¹⁹ In addition,

⁶¹⁹ According to the American point of view, tuition, including all the fees, was about DM 130 per semester. See, NARA. Record group 59. Confidential US Department of State Central Files. FRG. Internal Affairs 1955-1959. Microfilm. Reel 30.

they paid DM 35-50 a month rent for a room in a boarding house. Students were reported to be able to afford spending at most DM 50 per month for food. Some students had to work in their free time during the day and could only study at night. A respondent, a 22-year-old student, often considered giving up his studies, but after looking around he realized that he was getting along about as well as thousands of his colleagues and so he continued. Like hundreds of students he sat around almost every afternoon at a student employment center waiting for a call offering a few hours of work. Sometimes it was a job as a transportation worker, sometimes there was a call for someone “from a good family” to tutor a high school student, and sometimes even for a Santa Claus. The girls were hired as nursemaids. They went to take care of American babies and often had to let themselves be imposed on much further.⁶²⁰

Moreover, with great attention the Soviets observed student life at the Free University, especially the financial problems connected with this life. They claimed that the West Berlin budget for 1957 showed that out of 8,303 students at the Free University only 807 received an average scholarship of DM 110 per month.⁶²¹ Out of this sum a student had to pay for room, board, laundry, and personal expenses. The average price for a room was DM 40. A monthly bus ticket cost DM 7. Towards the end of the month, when various bills fell due, many students went without food for several days.⁶²² Actually, the scholarship of East German students (DM 280) was higher to some extent than that of West German students. East German students did not pay tuition and did not suffer from employment problems after graduation. However, they paid a high price – a restriction of speech and movement – in return for more or less comfortable conditions at university.

⁶²⁰ *Neues Deutschland*, July 23, 1957.

⁶²¹ According to the American point of view, slightly less than 50% of students received scholarships averaging DM 110.

⁶²² *Neues Deutschland*, July 23, 1957.

II. German university students in Soviet policy

1. Purge of students and modification of admissions rules in the universities

The German student body: the state of affairs in the Soviet Zone

In contrast to the German professoriate, whose attitudes, behavior, and mood were tracked and taken into consideration by the Soviet Occupation authorities, German students did not receive such careful attention from the Soviet officers. However, German university students experienced much more strongly and deeply what Soviet reforms felt like than did German professors, because students proved to be the ultimate target of all the reforms. Soviet officers did not seek to convince students (as they did in regard to the old German professoriate) of the need to learn new Marxism-based disciplines at the universities; on the contrary, the new regime literally made students attend classes and lectures on these new disciplines. Unlike German professors, students therefore demonstrated disobedience to Soviet reforms that led to mass expulsions from universities, to escapes to West Germany, to arrests, to exiles, and to executions of students. One of the former professors of the University of Berlin, and then a dean at the Free University, wrote about Soviet policy towards students: "On the whole, teachers in any of the accepted subjects were well treated; they received sufficient salary and the so-called 'Pajoks' – monthly packages of meat, sugar, butter, potatoes, some coffee, and Russian cigarettes – in those days items valued higher than money. Teachers were also granted admission to certain cultural clubs where journalists, politicians, artists, actors, and professors could receive meals without surrendering ration tickets. This attitude was impressive. For a while it looked as if we in certain professions might hope for recovery from our fourteen years of degradation. However, we were soon to experience pressure directed against another part of our University, the *student body*."⁶²³

We do not know the precise number of German students who came to study in the reopened universities in 1946 and 1947, since the Soviet purge of former Nazis and a radical transformation of admissions regulations permanently amended the Soviet statistics, and thus figures are very different in various documents. However, we can state that in the spring of 1947 there were about 17,000 students in six universities, which

⁶²³ W. Heubner, "Education in the Shadow of the Iron Curtain," *Science, New Series* 118, o. 3057 (July 31, 1953), 121-124.

exceeded the number of students in the same universities for the academic year of 1938-1939 (*Table 4*). Moreover, the number of German students in the universities of the Soviet Zone was considerably less than that of German students in the universities of the American Zone because of a stable outflow of students from the East to the West; for example, in 1948, there were 24,500 students in all eleven higher educational institutions in the Soviet Zone, while there were 31,700 students in seven universities alone in the American Zone.⁶²⁴

Table 4

*Number of German Students in the Universities of the Soviet Zone, 1938-1939, 1947.*⁶²⁵

University	1938-1939	March 1947
Berlin	6,260	5,684
Halle	942	2,801
Greifswald	742	1,483
Jena	1,218	2,964
Leipzig	2,154	2,487
Rostock	1,024	1,516
Total	12,321	16,935

Being 24 to 26 years old, the overwhelming majority of these students were former soldiers of the *Wehrmacht*, the German armed forces, and members of the Nazi Party, the NSDAP. Some students were POWs, and, having been in Soviet captivity, they had become members of the Communist Party or communist-led movements established by the Soviet government, namely, *The National Committee of Free Germany* and *The Union of German Officers*.⁶²⁶

As soon as Soviet officers stepped over the threshold of every German university, they noted two main traits in the attitudes of the

⁶²⁴ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 55. File 1: 120-121.

⁶²⁵ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 55. File 6. Page 2-14; Inventory 54. File 12: 1-9.

⁶²⁶ The organizations aimed at re-educating German soldiers who were held in Soviet captivity during the war. The Soviet Union successfully created a new vanguard that consisted of former Nazis who returned from the Soviet Union to Germany and helped the German Communists to build a new Germany.

students. First of all, fear when faced with the Soviet army and uncertainty were the main feelings felt by the students. Many students who had previously been members of the Hitler youth organizations such as the HJ felt themselves to be social outcasts. They complained to the Soviet authorities that “Hitler was elected by our parents and not by us. Earlier we could not be admitted to universities, if we were not members of the HJ. We are now being ejected from universities, because we were members of the HJ.”⁶²⁷ Second, despite all the fears which engulfed the students, a spirit of protest against the new political power was constantly demonstrated by German students. Soviet experts observed that students were less favorably disposed towards the Soviet regime than the older generation. They, in contrast to the old professors, openly showed their negative feelings towards Soviet policy from the very first months of the Occupation. In December 1945, students, for example, refused to welcome a Soviet university curator at the University of Jena. Being against the final decisions of the Potsdam Conference, the students publicly neglected a German *Dozent* who tried to deliver a lecture about this conference at the University of Jena. Evaluating the behavior of the University of Jena students, the SMAD noted that older generations of Germans were also against the Soviet Union and the decisions made at the Potsdam Conference; however, they preferred not to show it.⁶²⁸

Purges and new admissions rules

It was essential for the Soviet authorities as it was for the Americans to eliminate the influence of Nazi ideology within the student body. The Potsdam Agreement about denazification seemed to lead to similar purges in every zone of Occupation. However, in spite of mutual documents signed by the Soviet Union, the United States, and the other Allies, denazification of the student body was processed differently in each Zone.

The Soviet model of denazification had several characteristic features which emanated both from the nature of the Soviet political system, which combined an advancement of communist ideas with severe suppression of those who opposed them, and from the local situation which Soviet officers faced in German universities. On the one hand, the

⁶²⁷ The Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation (Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation). Record group 0457-b. Inventory 4. File 8: 45.

⁶²⁸ Timofeeva, *Nemetskaya Intellegentsia i Politika (The German Intelligentsia and the Politics)*, 91.

Soviet Union, like the United States, expelled active Nazis from the student body and modified admissions rules in order to protect universities from reenrollment of former Nazis. On the other, however, the Soviet authorities turned out to be more tolerant and even more compassionate towards students who had been members of the Nazi Party or its affiliated youth organizations. The purge of Nazis in the Soviet Zone was quickly transformed into the pursuit of political opponents among the students. While the purge of Nazis in the American Zone extended over several years, denazification in the Soviet Zone was accomplished rapidly. Moreover, while the Allies, and the United States in particular, were able to preserve the privileges of the elites and the middle social groups in terms of admission to universities and, at the same time, were able to encourage German educational ministries to enroll talented students from lower social groups, the Soviet Occupation authorities built a persistent system of selection of prospective students according to their family roots, namely, children of workers and peasants. For the first time in German history these categories of citizens had priority over children who originated in the upper and middle social groups in terms of admission to university. Finally, the Soviet purges of former Nazis in the student body were mixed with the introduction of new admissions rules. This juncture of purges with new admissions rules created difficulties for historians in terms of pointing out a line of demarcation between the policy of purges and the policy of introduction of new admissions rules.

The purge began in September 1945, when the Higher Education Division of the SMAD disseminated its order about new admissions rules. It was emphasized in the order that, in as much as the old German intelligentsia had been unable to struggle against the rise of Hitler and fascism, German universities should now educate new intelligentsia. The insolvency of the German intelligentsia was interpreted as the main premises for revoking “bourgeois” privileges for education. Yet, this first order did not contain any definite action aimed at eliminating these privileges. According to the document, all young people who had been students before May 1945 could continue their studies in universities; however, active members of the Nazi Party and its affiliated organizations could not enter the universities. In addition, this order did not define any criteria for what an “active Nazi” was. Among the records we have not found any other details about the requirements and criteria for the purge and admissions. The documents talk about the purge of active Nazis from the student body, and about the purge of students who

disseminated Nazi or anti-democratic doctrines at the universities as well.⁶²⁹ John Connelly, in his research based on some of the German documents, specified additional Soviet rules for admitting new students to universities from 1946 through 1948: 1) applicants from worker and peasant circles, so long as they had not belonged to the NSDAP; 2) graduates of preparatory courses; and 3) only those *persons who had been members of youth organizations such as the HJ or BDM*.⁶³⁰ This third criterion was highlighted on this list. It demonstrates the divergent approaches of the Soviet and American authorities to the admission of students: while the Soviet Military Administration enrolled all members of the HJ and BDM, the American authorities did not admit leaders and active members of these two youth organizations to universities.

The Soviet purge and new admissions criteria were both administered through personal contact between a student and the Occupation authorities. In contrast to the American Military Administration which purged students using formal and numerous criteria and mostly without personal interviews, the Soviets tried to interrogate every student. One of the Soviet officers writes about this Soviet approach to the purge and admission of students at the University of Jena in 1947: “Denazification and readmission was accompanied with an interview of every student by an admissions commission. The commission planned to expel 250 students from the University. The possible expulsion of such a big number created uncertainty among students and impeded the normal process of learning. I summoned 10 students subjected to expulsion and asked them who they were and why they expected to be purged. I found that the motives for their exception were completely insufficient. I ordered that these interviewed students be readmitted and that the fate of every student be handled with care.”⁶³¹

We cannot give precise statistics on the number of students expelled by reason of their connection to the Nazis because Soviet documents do not provide these. However, we do know that 4.1% of university students were former Nazis at the end of the purge. This percentage of readmitted Nazis seems to be insignificant compared to the percentage of readmitted Nazis in the universities in the American Zone, where the authorities officially recognized that former Nazis constituted from 10% to 26% of

⁶²⁹ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 8. File 6: 160-161.

⁶³⁰ Connelly, “East German Higher Educational Policies”, 268.

⁶³¹ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 54. File 6: 88-94.

the total university student body, even with the purge having been conducted much more strictly. How can we explain the fact that the number of former Nazis remaining at universities in the Soviet Zone was definitely small, while the purge there was less severe than the purge in the American Zone? There are three possible explanations: the first is that most of the students in universities of the Soviet Zone quickly became members of communist organizations such as the *Socialist United Party, SED*, and the *Union of the Free German Youth, FDJ*,⁶³² and thus their previous activity within the framework of the Nazi Party was not taken into consideration by the Soviet powers; the second is that most of the Nazis fled to Western Zones and applied there for university studies, and thus that the United States, and not the Soviet Union, was compelled to resolve the problems of their Nazi past; and the third is that the Soviet Military Administration must have neglected to calculate the number of former Nazis among the students, because social roots and not the Nazi past of students became the main attribute to be tracked, calculated, and applied in politics.

It was the *social roots of students* that became the essence of the Soviet model of the purge and the essence of the Soviet modifications of the admissions rules in German universities. Initially espousing in general terms the necessity of eliminating the privileges of certain social groups with regard to education, from 1947 onwards the Soviet authorities began putting these words into practice. In order to make the universities revise their approach to admissions policy, the German Communists with the help of the Soviet Military Administration arranged a conference in 1947, to which rectors and deans of the German universities were summoned. Anton Ackermann,⁶³³ the main ideologist of the SED, asserted that just

⁶³² FDJ is the German abbreviation of *Die Freie Deutsche Jugend*. It was the youth party organization affiliated to the SED.

⁶³³ Anton Ackermann (1905-1973) became a member of the Communist Party of Germany in 1926. He fled Germany in the 1930s and lived in the USSR. In 1946, he became a member of the SED and pursued a party career as a prominent propagandist of communist ideas among Germans. From 1949 until 1953, he was the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the DDR. Anton Ackermann had certain unique ideas about building socialism in Germany: in his book, *Der deutsche Weg zum Sozialismus*, he considered, for example, that the Soviet model should not be used in Germany. However, he was not able to convince other communists of this. The result was that in 1954 Ackermann was expelled from the Central Committee of the SED and fired as the Secretary because of "party-hostile activity." In 1956, he was rehabilitated and worked for the State Planning Bureau. In 1973, he suddenly committed suicide. Anton Ackerman was the only East German politician very highly evaluated by the American Occupation authorities: "He is a really

2% of the German student body in the 1920s through the 1930s consisted of children of workers and peasants. Thus, the main task of democratization would be a transformation of the student body through eradicating reactionary privilege in education and through admitting workers and peasants to universities.⁶³⁴ There is no doubt that the rectors and deans were summoned in order to be informed of the new admissions policy by the new German authorities but not to discuss it.

To enhance the admission of lower social groups, the Soviet Military Administration formulated new rules giving a description in detail of the new privileged categories of students. The first priority was to be given to students of worker-peasant roots, graduates of special preparatory courses, and those who had been persecuted during the period of the Nazi regime. Those who could prove their distinguished qualifications for study in the universities and those who were participating in building a new Germany were related to the second advantaged group. The remainder of prospective German students, which constituted the third group, was described in documents as “all other candidates.” Universities could select candidates of the second or third group only after the enrollment of aspirants from the preceding group. After issuing this order, the Soviet Military Administration set its Education Division the task of “organizing a new admissions policy to universities in 1948 and 1949 in order that the number of students from the lower classes would constitute no less than 50% of the total student body.”⁶³⁵

To accomplish this task, Soviet educationalists established special admissions commissions in every *Land*, town, and village. These commissions consisted of loyal members of the Communist Party who selected prospective students from among factory workers and peasants literally working in the fields. Most likely these German workers and peasants were not expecting that their future was to become students. In addition, those candidates representative of the politically loyal intelligentsia were interviewed and selected for admission. As a result of

influential figure and also well-known as a publicist and journalist; he is a party theorist; he speaks Russian; he is intelligent, objective, and a responsible person; he formulated the doctrine that ‘there would be no formalistic transfer of Soviet conditions to Germany.’” // NARA. Record group 466. Records of US High Commission for Germany. Berlin Element. Public Affairs Division, 1943-1953. Box 1, 2, 4, 5, 9.

⁶³⁴ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 54. File 8: 163-172.

⁶³⁵ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 55. File 6: 163-166.

such recruitment, the admissions commissions selected 2,389 students from the lower classes for study in the universities and reported to both Moscow and Berlin that this number constituted 49.3% of the total enrollment for the 1948/1949 academic year.⁶³⁶ However, according to other SMAD documents and official East German statistical data, the first students from the lower social groups actually constituted from 26% to 28% of the total student body in the 1948/1949 academic year.⁶³⁷

In conducting this policy, however, the Soviet Military Administration was faced with disobedience to these new admissions rules on the part of students originating from the upper and middle social groups. Those senior students who had been able to keep their places in universities did not want to share the universities with new students coming from the lower strata. They appealed to the Occupation authorities, protested in the streets, and walked out of classrooms. The University of Berlin's students demonstrated the strongest noncompliance with the newly introduced admissions rules. By participating in the university admissions commissions, students blocked access to the University of Berlin for the lower social groups. While all other universities admitted a significant percentage of workers and peasants, the University of Berlin, according to Soviet documents, admitted an "insufficient number of the working people: only 197 out of 903 newly enrolled students were children of workers and peasants."⁶³⁸ This explicit unwillingness of the students of the University of Berlin to share their classrooms with these new students resulted in the massive flight of the University of Berlin's senior students to the western sectors of Berlin. For example, only 30 students out of 246 at the Law Department stated their desire to pass final examinations at the Berlin High Court (*Das Kammergericht*⁶³⁹) located in the Soviet sector. The rest decided to leave East Berlin. This position of the students irritated the Soviets who noted that "there were a large number of descendants of bourgeois families among students of the Law Department at the University of Berlin that

⁶³⁶ Ibid., 166.

⁶³⁷ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 55. File 9: 81; *Hochschulführer der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag der Wissenschaften, 1968), 102.

⁶³⁸ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 55. File 6: 163-166.

⁶³⁹ *Das Kammergericht* was the High Court of Berlin located in the eastern part of the city. In addition to its direct functions, the Court arranged the final examinations for the students of the University of Berlin until 1949.

produced professionals for the western sectors of Berlin and the Western Zones. It is necessary to take some radical measures in order to convert the University of Berlin into the forge, where a new democratic intelligentsia would be produced from the working class.”⁶⁴⁰

In addition, Soviet officers who controlled the universities sometimes carried this new admissions policy to extreme lengths, thereby inflaming the situation: for example, in Saxony, Soviet officers decided to admit solely those students who had graduated from preparatory departments at the University of Leipzig in 1948. This caused a negative reaction in German academia; a direct appeal was made to the Soviet headquarters in Berlin to resolve the situation.⁶⁴¹ This unauthorized regulation was cancelled; however, no one in the Soviet Military Administration was able to withdraw a new tradition, that of formulating special secret lists of students who would be admitted before the date of the official entrance examinations. Although such activity was a secret, the students knew about it, and that caused a burst of indignation among those who were accustomed to the academic merit system of selection.⁶⁴²

However, the rise in disobedience to the admissions rules on the part of the students obliged the Soviet Military Administration to revise its approach to purges concurrently. The SMAD had already been struggling since 1948, not necessarily with Nazis, but with students who originated in families of the upper classes, and who began to declare their opposition to the new admissions rules.⁶⁴³ Soviet officers then began to manifest a certain tolerance in respect to those students who were former members of Nazi organizations and who now demonstrated loyalty to the Soviets, while those students who preferred not to share classrooms with the lower classes and publicly expressed their disagreement were gradually expelled from the universities. The Soviet Military Administration informed Moscow in 1948 that disagreements with students over the privileges given to descendants of worker-peasant families had assumed the form of open demonstrations that could explode as a political situation in the universities. The experts proposed a list of measures to

⁶⁴⁰ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 55. File 11: 123-124.

⁶⁴¹ Timofeeva, *Nemetskaya Intellegentsia i Politika (The German Intelligentsia and the Politics)*, 124.

⁶⁴² State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 55. File 6: 148-150.

⁶⁴³ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 54. File 1: 124.

deal with this situation. The list specified expulsion for those students who resisted the new policy, and the establishment of new departments where new admissions rules could be imposed without opposition.⁶⁴⁴

Actually, the first 30 students who protested against their new classmates were expelled in 1948 and 1949, along with an official statement that depicted them as enemies of democratization of the universities.⁶⁴⁵ However, the more radical measure was to establish entirely new departments which had never existed within the German university system before, and to fill them only with lower social groups and loyal members of the SED. Pedagogical departments and departments of social sciences came about in this way. Pedagogical departments were created in all the universities. Free education was established, and students obtained allowances from DM 100 to 140 per month. The enrollment quota varied from 300 students at the University of Berlin to 100 at all other universities, which exceeded quotas for admission in other departments twice or three times over.⁶⁴⁶ The pedagogical departments became the “laboratories” for the introduction of Marxist-based academic programs. It was the pedagogical department of the University of Jena where the first Institute of Dialectical Materialism was established. Yet, the Soviet authorities were faced with problems in this area. From 1948, and until the end of the Cold War, the pedagogical departments had a major student shortage. The first years in particular were the most difficult: many students from lower-strata backgrounds were unable to complete their studies. Documents tell a long story about the pedagogical department at the University of Jena where only 20 out of 140 enrolled students were able to graduate. One of the main reasons that “the student outflow proved to be [so low were] the bourgeois attitudes of professors and the low academic abilities of the working class.”⁶⁴⁷ To resolve this problem, the Soviets decided to establish special preparatory courses for worker-peasant students (i.e. students with a worker-peasant background) a discussion of which will be given below. In addition to the pedagogical departments, departments

⁶⁴⁴ Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation. Record group 082. Inventory 35. Box 174. File 91: 73-75; Russian State Archive of Social-Political History. Record group 17. Inventory 132. File 165: 68-69.

⁶⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁶ State Archive of Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 8. File 6: 149-150.

⁶⁴⁷ Nikitin, *Deyatel'nost' Sovetskoy Voennoy Administratsii (The Activity of the Soviet Military Administration)*, 124-125.

of social sciences were created at the Universities of Leipzig, Rostock, and Jena for the admission of lower social groups only. The duration of studies there lasted two years. The Soviet authorities declared that the departments of social sciences were to train the new professional elite for the government. Students from the social science departments obtained higher scholarships (DM 250-300 per month) than those of the pedagogical departments.⁶⁴⁸

The large-scale enrollment in these departments undoubtedly provided a more rapid diffusion of the “bourgeois” segment of students in every university as a whole. These departments produced ideologically loyal personnel for German schools, universities, and for the Party during the entire period of the Cold War. Due to the Soviet reforms, “the number of worker-peasant students increased considerably from between 10-14.5% in 1946, to between 26-28% of the total number of students in 1948. Lower social groups obtained access to the universities, free education, and scholarships.”⁶⁴⁹ Contrary to this, access to universities for the upper and middle social groups was in turn restricted. However, another effective method for transforming the admissions system and the social composition of the student body was the preparatory courses called *Arbeiter- und Bauernfakultäten* which trained those German citizens who could not pass the entrance examinations.

Preparatory courses in the Soviet admissions policy

As early as 1946, the experts of the Education Division at the Soviet Military Administration recognized the fact that German *Abiturienten* – higher school graduates – who were going to be entering the universities in the coming years, would not stand for Marxism, thus creating additional impetus for instability among the students. On discussing this problem, Soviet educationalists proposed the idea of setting up preparatory courses for future students in order to educate them ideologically and to help those who worked in factories to obtain additional knowledge for study in the universities.⁶⁵⁰ The first preparatory courses were established at the University of Halle, and in 1946 all other universities began offering them. Those who desired to study in the

⁶⁴⁸ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 8. File 8: 72-74 .

⁶⁴⁹ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 54. File no #. “Papers Relative to the Inspection of the Universities”: 52.

⁶⁵⁰ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 54. File 1: page no #.

preparatory courses submitted their documents to the universities or to the local affiliated offices of the Education Division. Initially, these studies lasted several months; later they lasted one year. The “learners” – the official name of students in the preparatory courses – studied German, German literature, math, physics, chemistry, and foreign languages – mainly Russian, English or French – as well as Soviet history.⁶⁵¹ These “learners” passed a final exam and its successful outcome guaranteed the right to be admitted to universities without entrance examinations. The latter still existed at the universities, and the examination commissions were composed of the rector, deans, professors, and senior students, who all influenced the final decision about admission of new students. Establishment of the preparatory courses contributed to increasing the level of knowledge of students from the lower strata.

However, establishment of the preparatory courses caused a sharp reaction on the part of the democratic parties that existed in the Soviet Zone and their active members, that is, students from the universities. The most active and the most unappeasable position on this question was taken by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP).⁶⁵² The LDP considered that the impending deterioration of the scholarly level of the German university system, caused by admission of a new, uneducated generation of young workers and peasants coming from the preparatory courses, would destroy the cultural unity and legacy of the German nation. They openly asserted “that a shortsighted class interest was brought to the foreground. The power of one class turned out to be more preferable than the interests of the nation. The class interest impedes the liberal, magnanimous and unprejudiced education of capable people.”⁶⁵³

Such statements irritated the Soviet officers, who themselves understood that graduates of the preparatory courses could not compete against students from the upper and middle strata in every respect. In

⁶⁵¹ Nikitin, *Deyatel'nost' Sovetskoy Voennoy Administratsii (The Activity of the Soviet Military Administration)*, 88.

⁶⁵² LDP is the German abbreviation of *Liberal-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands*. The Party was established after the end of the World War II in the Soviet Zone like the other liberal parties – the Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland, SDP*) and the Christian Democratic Union (*Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands, CDU*) – according to the order issued in 1945. The LDP was founded by the German politician Wilhelm Külz, who died in 1948. After the establishment of the socialist republic in East Germany with the one-party dictatorship of the SED, the LDP became a party without real power in East Germany.

⁶⁵³ Cit. on: Timofeeva, *Nemetskaya Intellegentsia i Politika (The German Intelligentsia and the Politics)*, 98-99.

order to increase the cultural and educational level of the “learners,” the Soviets incorporated these preparatory courses into a structure within the universities that had the status of new, separate departments with their own deans, chairs, and students. Soviet military officers assumed that this formal incorporation would bring the spirit of a German university to the courses and would enlighten the students. In 1949, all the preparatory courses were officially included in the structure of the universities and were renamed *Preparatory Departments*. The Soviets planned to enroll 3,000 new students there. The duration of training was increased from one year to two years, which actually raised the general level of knowledge of the “learners.” A new curriculum was developed: eight hours per week were allocated for German and German literature; six hours for Russian and Russian literature, and the same for mathematics; four hours for world history; two hours for geography, or in any case for the discipline the Soviets called “The Political and Social Problems of the Contemporary World,” and the same for physics and biology.⁶⁵⁴ Lectures lasted more than seven hours per day for six days per week.

On implementing this policy, the Soviet Military Administration again faced admissions problems. German workers and peasants who applied for the preparatory courses studied very reluctantly. The Soviets spent some time trying to understand the reasons for this unwillingness to study. It turned out that the new student life compelled these former workers and peasants to leave their families and work places, and move to other cities. In addition, their income was tacitly cut, and, generally speaking, most of them had no aspirations to enter university. The Soviets successfully responded to one of these problems. The scholarship was increased, and from 1949 on it was equated with the salaries of workers. Moreover, the officers of the Education Division conducted an aggressive advertising campaign in all areas of the Zone to increase the number of applications. In Saxony alone, thirty thousand leaflets were distributed among lower social groups, a special booklet was published, a short film about the preparatory departments was made, and students from these departments were exploited as the main propagandists able to talk with factory workers. All these things contributed to an increase in subsequent enrollments.

Consequently, in 1949, the universities received 7,195 applications from lower social groups. Most of the candidates were recommended by

⁶⁵⁴ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 55. File 11: 130.

communist organizations in factories and plants. Soviet experts selected 3,098 students from these applicants using interviews. The student composition in the preparatory departments was therefore as follows: as to gender grouping, 2,638 students were men and 460 were women; as to social-professional grouping, 2,158 were workers, 200 were peasants, and 740 came from the so-called “remaining social categories”; as to party membership, the majority (3,037) of them were members of the SED and FDJ.⁶⁵⁵ Thus, membership in one of the communist organizations, notably the SED or FDJ, along with the social roots of the candidates had become the inherent criteria for a student’s selection.

The Soviets organized a more or less comfortable environment and good conditions for students to be successful in their studies: “The overwhelming majority of students were provided with rooms in dormitories, which had a dining room, separate rooms to do homework, libraries, and rooms for “political-instructive work.” All the students obtained a scholarship of DM 150-200.”⁶⁵⁶ Students who graduated successfully from the courses were admitted to German universities without entrance examinations. However, neither the comfortable conditions for study nor the prolonged duration of education in the preparatory courses could ensure that these lower social groups would attain a high level of quality, competitively speaking, when compared with those German students entering the universities from other social strata. On average, 12% of the students from the preparatory departments were unable to continue their education as full-fledged students due to academic and economic difficulties, and as a result of resistance from admissions commissions. Again, the University of Berlin demonstrated the fiercest opposition, admitting only a minor number of students from its preparatory department. It was known that the SED of the University of Berlin had failed to attract Berliners originating from the lower social strata to study at the university and had failed to break the opposition to admission of workers to the university.⁶⁵⁷ The University of Berlin accommodated 4.2% of its preparatory department’s students, while the University of Leipzig admitted 23.8% (*Table 5*).

⁶⁵⁵Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation. Record group 082. Inventory 31. File 65: 19-20.

⁶⁵⁶Ibid.

⁶⁵⁷State Archive of Russian Federation. Record group 7317. Inventory 55. File 11: 130.

Table 5
*Graduates of Preparatory Courses in the Student Body of East German Universities, 1949, in %*⁶⁵⁸

University	1948/49
Leipzig	23.8
Jena	22.8
Halle	15.1
Rostock	10.7
Greifswald	8.3
Berlin	4.2

However, year by year the percentage of those who graduated from the preparatory departments and entered university grew. In 1966, the East German regime recognized that the departments had accomplished the task of social modification within the student body, and the preparatory departments ceased to exist as a result.⁶⁵⁹ During the 1960s, most East German university students had backgrounds in the lower social strata. This can be seen from *Table 6* which shows the social composition of students admitted to East German universities from 1946 through 1960.

Table 6
*Social Composition of Students in East German Universities, in %*⁶⁶⁰

Years	Workers and Peasants	Technicians	Intelligentsia	Others
1946	10	n/a	n/a	n/a
1949	28	n/a	n/a	n/a
1951	45.5	n/a	n/a	n/a
1954	53.2	23.8	12	11
1956	56	21	13.6	9.4
1958	58.2	19.2	13.8	8.8
1960	56.6	19	14.9	9.2

⁶⁵⁸ Connelly, "East German Higher Educational Policies," 265.

⁶⁵⁹ Connelly, *Captive University*, 273, 275.

⁶⁶⁰ *Hochschulführer*, 102.

Later, the number of students who originated from families of workers and peasants reached almost 100%. The documents from the 1960s emphasized this inherent feature of the admissions policy of East German universities: first priority was given to children of workers and peasants and second priority to those of technicians and the intelligentsia. The sixties saw a similar admissions procedure as established by the Soviet Occupation powers in the 1950s. The main criteria for selection were the political views of a student, the result of an interview, and the level of knowledge attained. Like the 1950s, the admissions commission consisted of representatives of loyal Party organizations. Yet, a negative consequence of this social transformation in universities became visible in the 1960s and 1970s: students dropped out of university due to poor progress. From 5% to 7% of students were unable to finish their university studies. According to Soviet documents, the main reasons for this poor progress were weak ideological education and lack of interest in their studies among these students.

Concluding this section, we must admit that in transforming the student body, the Soviet authorities succeeded in implementing one of their political goals in Germany, notably, the production of loyal social groups through university education. The purge and the establishment of the new selection system for students based on their family backgrounds and party affiliation contributed to the formation of a new social and professional elite in East Germany favorable to the ruling German Communists. The new admissions rules proved to be persistent and stable throughout the first decades of the Cold War.

2. Instilling German students with new ideological values

The main instrument of ideological influence exerted upon German students was the introduction of new disciplines in the area of Marxism and Soviet studies in every department of all universities, as has been reviewed in Chapter III. In addition to these modifications in the university curriculum, the Soviet Union, like the United States, organized mass academic programs for German students in order to demonstrate the advantages of its political system. The main reason for elaborating on specific academic programs such as exchanges, summer schools, and conferences was the disorder of the value system that had embraced most of the youth after the downfall of the Third Reich. The collapse of the old way of life, the economic devastation, the ideological Cold War centered in Europe, the information wars closely associated with it, along with

permanent pressure from the Occupation authorities, contributed to the moral and spiritual fluctuations of students who found themselves unable to evaluate whose ideas, whether Marxist, Nazi, or Liberal, were the better choice for a new pivotal point in their lives. However, as far as the rival Occupation authorities were concerned, such a state of affairs certainly was crucial, and it was fair to do whatever it would take to win over the students. Both superpowers therefore created various educational programs for students in order to engage them in a new system of values. The Soviet authorities emphasized means of propaganda for Soviet ideas such as: 1) so-called inter-zonal summer schools; 2) inter-zonal conferences; and 3) long-term training of German students in the Soviet Union.

Inter-zonal summer schools

While the United States disseminated new knowledge about the United States and democratic governance in its summer schools, Soviet experts established summer schools in order to convince students of only one thing, the supremacy of Marxist philosophy over philosophical movements such as idealism and existentialism, both of which were very popular among students at that time. In 1948, the Soviet Military Administration arranged the first summer school (called a “holiday school”) for university students. Lectures were devoted to both existentialism and Marxism as the main opposing philosophical movements. It was an intrepid step for Soviet experts, because the concepts of existentialism were deeply rooted in the student body due to lectures by the German philosopher Karl Jaspers, who delivered them both in the Soviet and the American Zones,⁶⁶¹ as well as due to lectures by the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, who visited the University of Berlin during the period of the Occupation. Yet, Russian Marxists, who truly believed in the Soviet ideology and the ideas of socialism, were not daunted by the popularity of other philosophical concepts and the possibility of ideological defeat. They bravely invited lecturers from the Western Zones, who delivered lectures about existentialism, as well as German Communists, who enlightened students with their opposing ideas.⁶⁶²

⁶⁶¹ K. Jaspers consequently left the University of Berlin for Heidelberg and became Rector.

⁶⁶² State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 54. File no #. “Papers Relative to the Inspection of the Universities”: 70.

In order to alter the views that students had about the nature of communism, the Marxists put up for discussion the most stirring question for German academia, to be discussed within the framework of both Marxism and existentialism, that of the question of freedom. Marxists were able to convince the majority of students that Marxism, not existentialism, could give freedom to a human being. Transferring this philosophical discussion to the real world, Marxists convinced students that the SED alone could implement democratic reforms in Germany. This thesis about democratization and the chance for real participation in the liberation of the universities from the Nazi legacy attracted students, and as whole they agreed with the German Communists that reforms based on Marxism were needed in the universities. Soviet experts wrote that “the establishment of a holiday school for students proved its value, because students became more familiar with Marxism. The school helped to establish close ties with students from the Western Zones, who were not members of political parties, and to invite them to participate in SED life. The school helped the students to re-evaluate the policy of the East German Communists and contributed to finding certain convergent ideas between the students and the SED.”⁶⁶³

Inter-zonal student conferences

Student conferences became the second way to win the allegiance of German students. From 1948 until the building of the Berlin Wall, the Soviet authorities arranged annual conferences known as “the all-German student congress” for students from all the Zones. A pattern demonstrative of the Soviet approach towards winning over the student body was the Congress of 1949 devoted to the 200th anniversary of Goethe’s birth. The Soviet authorities pursued goals such as this in order to show and promote the positive developments in the Soviet Zone and, more importantly, to create a united all-German student organization under the control of the communists. This was a highly suitable moment for mobilization of the students because public and political discussions about the future reunification of Germany had convinced young people to join any organization which would be able to promote a positive solution to the German question. This mood and these aspirations were successfully exploited by the Russians. Understandably, the former Allies of the Soviet Union – the United States, Great Britain, and France – could

⁶⁶³ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 54. File 12: 75.

not allow the Soviet authorities to mobilize students from the Western Zones.

The Soviet authorities invited student leaders from all the universities of the former Germany. One hundred and eighteen students came from twenty-five universities in the Western Zone of Occupation. Since the conference was about the personality and work of the German famous poet, students initially discussed this question, but soon scholarly debates turned to questions about materialistic and idealistic approaches in literary criticism, philology, and history. As soon as the discussion touched on questions about materialism and idealism, Soviet experts divided the students into small groups which had one or two capable students with communist views, and, in these groups, promoted the ideas of materialism among students of the Western Zone. The Soviets wrote how scholarly debates were exploited to attain political goals: "A scholarly discussion in the conference covered two approaches as to how we should understand the personality of Goethe. Students from the Eastern Zone were trying to study scholarly questions within the framework of the materialistic point of view, and students from the Western Zone articulated their idealistic views. The materialist connotations and interpretation of art as a reflection of the real world was opposed by an idealistic view that the work of Goethe should be evaluated within the framework of his subjective genius which was not determined by the real world. Step by step these discussions transformed into political debates. In order to involve the Western students in debates about the future of Germany, the students were divided into small groups and were seated around the table with communists, who convinced them that the Soviet authorities would like to cooperate with Western students in creating a united student organization. Moreover, our students proved that there was no terror in the Soviet Zone, which was what West German and American newspapers were shouting, and that students had freedom of speech and had no fear of being repressed. The students of the West were assured that the Soviet authorities would give them a chance to know the conditions of life here. The conference ended with the announcement of a competition of student papers devoted to Goethe's legacy. The Soviet Military administration allocated DM 15,000 to organize an inter-zonal jury, award winners, and expand activity in regard

to the establishment of this united student organization about Germany.”⁶⁶⁴

To destroy these plans of the Soviet authorities for building a new student organization and in order to damage the image of the Soviet Union, the American Military Administration elaborated its plan of sending several capable and loyal students to this conference in order to disseminate information about the arrests of students in the Soviet Zone. However, the Americans failed in this, because spies informed the Soviet authorities about it. The Soviet experts reported to Moscow: “Before the conference, we obtained information that a group of students, who were former Nazis, officers, and members of Schumacher’s party [members of the SDP – N. T.], were coming to the conference from the University of Heidelberg. They had been assigned by the American Occupation Administration to wreck the conference and to raise a question about the former chief of the student council at the University of Leipzig, W. Natonek, arrested by us as an American spy. This group was not allowed to pass through the border of the Zone by finding some problems with their passports and documents.”⁶⁶⁵ It can be seen here that the American Occupation authorities also tried to use the conference to attain their own political goals. Later, the Soviets gave up this idea of the establishment of an all-German united student organization under the control of the communists because of the complete division of Germany; however, the Soviets kept strong ties with Western leftists among the students, who later participated in the student movement of the 1960s.

Long-term training of German students in the Soviet Union

The Soviet Union signed the first agreements about training German students in the Soviet Union in 1951 and 1952, after Otto Grotewohl sent a letter asking Moscow to admit the first 200 German university students and graduates of the preparatory departments to Soviet higher educational establishments. The Soviet government at first responded to Grotewohl by delaying, because the terrible economic and political situation inside the Soviet Union due to matters such as the wartime destruction, the poverty, the emotional depression of the people, and their permanent fear and terror were not considered to be appropriate for demonstrating to

⁶⁶⁴Russian State Archive of Social and Political History. Record group 17. Inventory 132. File 108: 72-75.

⁶⁶⁵Russian State Archive of Social-Political History. Record group 17. Inventory 132. File 108: 72-75.

German students the achievements of socialism. However, the Occupation authorities finally convinced Moscow to start an exchange program, and the Soviet government complied with the Grotewohl's request, sending its letter to him through the Soviet Occupation authorities. Consequently, in the spring of 1952, the official agreement was concluded⁶⁶⁶ and, on average, about 200 German students entered Soviet universities and other higher educational institutions every year in order to study for five to seven years, so that they became full-fledged students. During the 1950s through the early 1960s, most German students were being trained for future utilization in the Foreign Service of the DDR. All exchange students first completed a two-year basic study course. After this two-year period, there was a five-year specialized study program with an eye to future utilization in diplomatic relations. They studied Russian, French, and English extensively, as well as the history of the West. These programs of education developed further in the 1960s and 1970s, and so we will discuss them in Chapter VI.

Hence, summer schools, inter-zonal conferences, and exchange programs to some extent contributed to the dissemination of Marxist ideas among students and to the establishment of a new elite in East Germany. However, a student political struggle in the universities, deliberately initiated by the SMAD, turned out to be the strongest tool for the dissemination of the new regime's ideology.

3. Creating Party student organizations in the universities

The Soviet Occupation authorities permitted the activity of all possible non-Nazi organizations and encouraged students to participate in the political struggle centered on elections to the university student councils. These student councils influenced academic life and student affairs: the councils participated in admissions commissions and senate meetings, organized self-government, and mediated between students and the Occupation authorities. Soviet policy in regard to elections to the student councils and to the establishment of other student organizations sharply differed from the American approach to students affairs. The American authorities declared that a university should be free of politics. Quite the contrary, the Soviet Union encouraged German students to participate in political struggle within and beyond the universities. Why? The answer is simple: in order to reveal loyal political forces in the universities, to

⁶⁶⁶ *Otnosheniya SSSR-GDR, 1949-1955. Dokumenty (The Relationship between the USSR and GDR, 1949-1955. Documents)*, 166, 170, 213-216.

eliminate opposition to the communists, and then to establish a Party monopoly in the universities and in the student councils in particular. Hence, the statement “creating student organizations in the universities” implies the Soviet policy aimed at promoting the SED’s influence in student councils and the establishment of communist-affiliated youth organizations such as the FDJ.

Initiating such projects as the establishment of communist-affiliated student organizations and the renewal of the activity of student councils, the Soviet authorities like the American ones were confronted with deep passivity and apathy on the part of students. The heterogeneity of political and ideological ideas articulated by the students was a marked characteristic of the German student body of the first postwar years. Quite a lot of students anticipated the revival of the old traditional German student unions which had existed before the Nazi regime such as *Die Burschen*, an elitist student union; other students hoped to plunge into pure science, while yet other students decided to participate in a real political struggle in order to gain power for student self-government within the university administration.⁶⁶⁷ Among these groups there were a few students who strongly believed in socialist or communist ideas or who did aspire to share power with the Soviet authorities in the universities. The Soviets understood very well that the opposition from the liberal parties was very strong in German universities in 1945 and 1946, so there were only a handful of members of the SED that rejected the idea of establishing communist-affiliated student organizations in the universities.⁶⁶⁸ As a result of this new SED policy, the situation of liberal party strength was about to change.

In spring 1946, a few communist groups started working in the universities, which gave the Occupation authorities a chance to promote organizations affiliated with the SED. These new organizations were established in all five universities except the University of Berlin, because the SED could not win the confidence of the students there.⁶⁶⁹ In the autumn of 1946, Soviet inspectors noted that out of the total number of students, 8,500 in total, the members of the SED made up 13.6%, while the members of the LDP and members of the *Christian Democratic*

⁶⁶⁷Nikitin, *Deyatel'nost' Sovetskoy Voennoy Administratsii (The Activity of the Soviet Military Administration)*,152-155

⁶⁶⁸ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 54. File 1: page no #.

⁶⁶⁹ Ibid.

Union, CDU,⁶⁷⁰ made up 14%. The rest of the students were not members of any political parties. By the end of 1948, the Soviet authorities and the German communists were able to achieve growth in the number of members of the SED in every university, except Berlin, where the number of members of the SED among the students peaked at 9%. The situation was better in the other five universities, where the number of students who joined the SED varied from 22% to 43% of the total student body.⁶⁷¹ Thus, during the first three years of the Occupation, the SMAD was able to increase the number of students who became members of the SED.

Initially, the Soviets did not make students join the SED. Most students applied for membership on their own for the following reasons: first, as we discussed above, the radical modification of the university admissions policy determined the party choice made by the children of workers and peasants; and, second, membership in the SED had advantages in terms of admission to the university or passing exams. A segment of the German intelligentsia and senior students became conscious that societal rules had been extremely transformed, which therefore demanded radical changes in behavior in order to survive. Most students who joined the SED to survive only weakly believed in the ideals of communism. The Soviet authorities understood this, and thus the fate of such students was unenviable: almost all of them were forced out of the universities. One of the young communist leaders at the University of Leipzig wrote: “Young people who had a desire to study in the university came to me to become members of the SED and get a recommendation for admission. One hundred people passed through my hands. I formed a student communist organization, and then I noticed that the students, being members of the SED by chance, wanted least of all to evaluate university reforms along the general line of communist policy. We asked such students to leave the university.”⁶⁷²

⁶⁷⁰CDU is the German abbreviation of *Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands*, the Christian Democratic Union. The Union was established after the end of the World War II in the Soviet Zone, just like other liberal parties, according to the order issued in 1945. The CDU, like other liberal parties, existed in East Germany without political influence and power.

⁶⁷¹ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 54. File 11: 13-33, 37-38.

⁶⁷² Cit. on: Timofeeva, *Nemetskaya Intellegentsia i Politika (The German Intelligentsia and the Politics)*, 91

After establishing this quite amorphous political base within the student body, the SED made up its mind to participate in student council elections arranged three times in the Soviet Zone, in February and December 1947, and in February 1948. After these elections, opposition liberal parties ceased to exist in the universities, further elections became a formality, and the political monopoly of the SED became a reality.

The first student council elections in February 1947

In the summer of 1946, the Soviets established student councils. Their statute defining the roles of new student councils in the new university life was elaborated by Soviet experts from the Education Division but not by the students themselves. According to the statute, students had to: 1) support the rector in fighting fascist ideology and in promoting democratic thought and action; 2) promote university studies; 3) help improve the material situation of students, and 4) nurture the cultural and social life of students.⁶⁷³ In addition, the SMAD elaborated a procedure for the February elections. Before the elections, students had to nominate their classmates to special election commissions and then to elect members of student councils according to their party preferences.

While establishing these election commissions in the universities in the summer of 1946, the SMAD faced its first obstacles. Nominations to the commissions were widely discussed, and debates demonstrated to what extent students were dissatisfied with Soviet educational policy. Students from the University of Jena, who were members of the Liberal Democratic Party, accused the Soviets of interfering in the academic sphere, which they felt should be free of state politics. Students of the Christian Democratic Union declared that they had deliberately joined the Union to struggle against the influence of communists in the universities. Finally, University of Jena students decided to play a nasty trick on the Soviet authorities. In order to demonstrate certain ideological similarities between Nazism and communism, students elected several former Nazi officers of the *Wehrmacht* and a former leader of a local *Hitlerjugend* to the commission which consisted of ten students. These attacks were so shocking to the Soviet officers that they made a firm decision to fight such challengers. In June 1946, the Soviet Military Administration issued an order concerning disciplinary action against students who propagated

⁶⁷³ Connelly, "East German Higher Educational Policies," 274-275; Nikitin, *Deyatel'nost' Sovetskoy Voenny Administratsii (The Activity of the Soviet Military Administration)*, 152-155.

“anti-democratic ideas.” The “anti-democratic ideas” formula implied all improper ideas articulated by students against the new power in Germany. Applying this order, Soviet officers organized an explanatory campaign among students in order to convince them to become more loyal and “not ask for trouble.” As soon as the situation became worse, and the students reluctantly cooperated, the Soviet authorities decided to remove leaders of the student opposition from the universities by expelling and arresting them.⁶⁷⁴

However, this order and action could not stop student attacks against the Soviets. The fiercest attacks were observed in the University of Berlin, where Soviet security agents arrested several students. These initial arrests, however, could not help the communists win, and the elections ended with the outright defeat of the SED. The majority of seats were won by students who represented liberal parties such as the Liberal Democratic Party and the Christian Democratic Union. The success of these parties was visible at the Universities of Jena, Rostock, Leipzig, and Berlin. Right after these elections, Soviet agents arrested six members of the student council at the University of Berlin who were leaders of the opposition, and then arranged by-elections, called in the documents “force majeure elections,” nominating twenty-eight students belonging to the SED. However, only three of these were elected by the students.⁶⁷⁵

The election defeat and the situation in the University of Berlin, which could not be hidden from the Allies and the German public, puzzled the Soviet Administration. According to the documents, the staff of the Education Division was at a loss for a moment. Yet a solution was finally found: uncompromising promotion of SED students within the student councils, the expulsion of opposition students, and, as we discussed above, an increase in the number of students rooted in the lower social groups, became the answer for the Soviets in the wake of their first political defeat.⁶⁷⁶

The second student council elections in December 1947

Tensions in the universities were growing: students refused to attend lectures on Marxist philosophy, to share classrooms with the new

⁶⁷⁴Nikitin, *Deyatel'nost' Sovetskoy Voennoy Administratsii (The Activity of the Soviet Military Administration)*,152-155

⁶⁷⁵ Archive of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation. Record group 082. Inventory 35. Box 174. File 91: 4-7.

⁶⁷⁶ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 54. File 1: page no #.

students, and, more importantly, to vote for those who came from the lower strata. The Soviet curators of the universities wrote at the end of 1947: “If in 1946 we could speak about the majority of students as apolitical and disappointed young Germans solely interested in how to finish their studies, acquire a profession, and leave the university, now the situation has changed. The struggle between the bourgeois and working segments of the student body has worsened. The bourgeois students, seeing a growth in the lower class component in the student body, are mobilizing forces to keep their power in the student councils and universities.”⁶⁷⁷ Soviet officers were evaluating student opposition in terms of the Marxist concept of a class struggle, and this justified a tough policy towards those who resisted.

The election outcomes again turned out negatively for the Soviet authorities. The communists achieved less growth in number of seats on student councils than the liberal parties such as the Liberal Democratic Party (*Table 7*). The Universities of Berlin and Jena demonstrated their lack of confidence in communist ideas. According to the Soviet documents, the SED had the weakest position in the philosophy departments and had the strongest position in the new pedagogic, social sciences, and preparatory departments established by the Soviets.⁶⁷⁸

⁶⁷⁷ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 54. File 12: 1-9.

⁶⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

Table 7
*The Party Affiliations of Students Elected to Student Councils, February and December 1947*⁶⁷⁹

University	Total	of total				
		SED	SDP ⁶⁸⁰	LDP	CDU	Unaffiliated
Berlin	30	3	4	1	3	19
Leipzig	30	8	-	11	9	2
Halle	23	12	-	4	3	4
Greifswald	17	7	-	2	4	4
Rostock	21	11	-	1	3	6
Jena	20	7	-	6	5	2
Total	141	48	4	25	27	37
%	100	34	2.8	17.7	19.1	26.3
The results of the first elections, February 1947 (in %)	100	32.2	3	11.6	15	38

Analyzing the results of these elections, the Soviet Military Administration emphasized a surprising phenomenon: the students, members of the SED, turned out not to vote for their candidates; on the contrary, they voted for candidates from the liberal parties. So, communists were unable to win the confidence of the general student body or even of those students who were members of the SED. The Education Division reported to Moscow: "The elections demonstrate that the SED has no power in the universities. There is no accurate way of finding out who really are, or who are not, members of the SED. It happens very often that members of the SED have a membership card from another party or that a student will declare his nonpartisan status.

⁶⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁸⁰ SDP is the German abbreviation for *die Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland*. The SDP was reestablished after the end of the World War II in the Soviet Zone, along with the liberal parties. This party merged with the German Communists, and the SED was established in 1946. However, a faction of the members led by Kurt Schumacher rejected the idea of merging; for several years the SDP existed independently in the Soviet Zone. Schumacher and his followers later left the Soviet Zone and established a new SDP in West Germany.

Many members of the SED came to the Party in order to worm themselves into the university. They are not true and eager members of the SED, and that's why they easily yield to the influence of the bourgeois parties. The students who are leaders of the SED do not communicate with students of worker family backgrounds. In as much as students from worker and peasant families have a lower educational level, they are easily exposed to negative influences. The liberal parties (LDP and CDU) and bourgeois professors exploit this vulnerability of the new students, playing on their petty bourgeois aspirations. In addition, the policy aimed at seeking and preparing student leaders who could be loyal to the SED is unsatisfactory. The universities have some capable students who can lead the student body, but these students have been bribed by the liberal parties. For example, a competent student named Schepf is the leader of the CDU at the University of Greifswald. He has read works by Lenin and Stalin and accepted them entirely; however, he spoke against the SED and democracy at meetings, because the LDP has made him do it by paying him DM 500 per semester for his work."⁶⁸¹

While the SED had problems finding students loyal enough to make new leaders of student organizations of them, the liberal parties were actually led by outstanding students whose activities and personalities allowed these liberal parties to win these first and last elections. One of them was the student leader of the LDP at the University of Leipzig, Wolfgang Natonek. During these elections, local newspapers together with the Leipzig office of the SMAD organized a political campaign against Natonek in order to undermine his authority and popularity among students during the elections. The Soviets attempted and failed to turn things around: the popularity of Natonek and his party continued to grow, and the LDP gained more seats in student councils than the SED. The Soviet officers then decided to arrest him and to eliminate the LDP at the university. This ended up having the opposite effect: it escalated the popularity of the party among the students who in turn now sought to join the LDP, thus helping the party keep its leading role in the universities.

The personality of Natonek gave the Soviets the idea of trying to increase the number of influential students in the SED, students who could then lead and convince other students of the appropriateness of communist ideas for Germany. The staff of the Education Division evaluated the personalities of all of the heads of the SED student organizations in the universities and concluded that "in contrast to the

⁶⁸¹ Ibid.

liberal parties, the SED had no students who had real leadership potential. One of them had a high educational level but low political literacy; another SED leader was a former soldier of the *Wehrmacht*, who had become a communist in an antifascist school in Russia, and his loyalty was questionable;⁶⁸² another leader had proper social roots, but he had been held in captivity by American troops, which also raised a question about his allegiance.”⁶⁸³ To find a leader like Natonek or find communist students like the students of the University of Berlin was a complex question for the Soviet authorities. However, the political situation and forthcoming elections prompted the authorities to resolve this problem. The only way was to create a Party school for perspective leaders in order to prepare them for future elections. Two hundred and sixty students were selected for three weeks of intensive education. The best intellects of the SED became teachers at this Party school. Anton Ackermann, Walter Ulbricht, and Paul Wandel delivered lectures about propaganda work. This work partially contributed to the improvement of the skills of students in debating with opponents from the LDP and CDU.⁶⁸⁴ Later, some of them were sent to Moscow for continued studies as was one future leader of East Germany, Erich Honecker.⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁸² The Soviet government opened a special school for German prisoners-of-war in Krasnogorsk, a town near Moscow, in 1942. Some German soldiers were groomed to become leaders of the Communist Party in Germany. The German Communists who had emigrated to the Soviet Union became lecturers in this school. Walter Ulbricht was assigned to be a director of this school. It was his duty to form new members of the Communist Party of Germany out of former soldiers of the *Wehrmacht*. In point of fact, many soldiers returned from the Soviet Zone and took up leading positions in the new state. See: Tsvetkova, *Cultural Imperialism*, 86-87.

⁶⁸³ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 54. File 12: 82-89.

⁶⁸⁴ Russian State Archive of Social-Political History. Record group 17. Inventory 132. File 165: 67-69; Inventory 137. File 891: 214.

⁶⁸⁵ Russian State Archive of Social-Political History. Record group 17. Inventory 137. File 90: 80-84. Erich Honecker (1912-1994) was a famous politician in East Germany. He was a member of the Communist Party, and one of the few members of the party who did not emigrate to the Soviet Union during the Nazi regime. Honecker was arrested by the Nazis, but he was not executed. He was successfully freed by Soviet troops. After the war, he was responsible for youth affairs in the Central Committee of the SED. In 1971, Honecker removed his patron Walter Ulbricht from the position of leader of the SED, and became the last leader of the DDR. After the democratic revolution in Germany, he emigrated to the Soviet Union, but he was compelled to leave the Russian Federation for Chile in 1992, where he died in 1994.

The final student council elections in February 1948: establishment of a communist dictatorship in the universities

The struggle between the students and the Soviet Military Administration intensified during the period of the new election in February 1948. The situation worsened on account of the forthcoming incorporation of the preparatory courses into the structure of the universities. Before this incorporation which occurred in 1949, “learners” from these preparatory courses were granted the rights and duties of full-fledged students, notably with the right to vote and to be elected to student councils, which could influence the results of elections. Now the “learners” in the preparatory courses, plus the loyal students in the pedagogy and social science departments, outnumbered the students in the rest of the departments of the universities, something which could also influence election results.

Reading the Soviet documents, we can see that the students began a new offensive against the communists in the 1948 elections: “Although the social composition of the student body has changed, bourgeois elements constitute a considerable majority of the student body. Political immaturity and the influence of conservative professors have prepared the ground for the anti-Soviet views of students. Provocative demonstrations relative to the so-called ‘arrested students’ in the Universities of Berlin and Halle have taken place. The participants, reactionary students, demanded the release of a *group of fascist elements* arrested in the University of Berlin. The instigators of this demand were also arrested.”⁶⁸⁶ So, beginning in 1948, the Soviets were already unafraid to arrest students; this so-called group of fascist elements consisted of students who resisted the politicization of the University of Berlin.

The results of these elections were considered a failure by the Soviet authorities, because a possible united coalition of the liberal parties and non-partisan students could now block any Soviet reform or proposal (*Table 8*).

⁶⁸⁶ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 54. File no #. “Papers relative to the Inspection of the Universities”: page no #.

Table 8
*The Party Affiliations of Students Elected to Student Councils, February 1948*⁶⁸⁷

University	Total	Affiliation				
		SED	SDP	LDP	CDU	Unaffiliated
Berlin	31	4	2	1	3	21
Leipzig	30	8	-	11	9	2
Halle	23	12	-	4	2	5
Greifswald	16	6	-	3	3	4
Rostock	21	11	-	2	1	7
Jena	19	6	-	6	5	2
Total	140	47	2	27	23	41
%	100	35	1	19	16	29
The results of the second elections, December 1947 (%)	100	34	2.8	17.7	19.1	26.3

However, the liberal parties and the nonpartisan movement which both demanded autonomy for academic life were unable to combine their efforts against the Soviet offensive. Most probably the previous dictatorship of the Nazis and the war, along with the permanent psychological pressure of being arrested and killed, resulted in exhaustion and apathy on the part of the students. Only a few were able to resist the Soviets, while the rest of the students did not react to the Soviet offensive.

After this third defeat, the Soviet Military Administration made a decision to eliminate the political influence of the liberal parties in the universities once and for all. These parties were allowed to exist but were compelled to unify under an umbrella organization called the United National Front, while the most resistant of the students were expelled from the universities.⁶⁸⁸ In addition, in order to dilute the influence of the

⁶⁸⁷ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 54. File 12: 1-9; Timofeeva, *Nemetskaya Intellegentsia i Politika (The German Intelligentsia and the Politics)*, 124.

⁶⁸⁸ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 54. File no #. "Papers relative to the Inspection of the Universities": page no #; State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 54. File 12: 1-9; State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 55. File 6: 143.

liberal parties, two new parties were established, the Democratic Peasant Party, the DBD,⁶⁸⁹ for peasants and the National Democratic Party, the NDP,⁶⁹⁰ for former Nazis. Moreover, a new youth organization was established in the universities. It was the famous Union of Free German Youth affiliated to the SED and governed by a young member of the SED, Erich Honecker. These measures predetermined the results of subsequent elections to student councils.

4. Student opposition and the Soviet response

In the opinion of the Soviet Military Administration, the environment in the student sphere was extremely unfavorable. Analyzing the reasons behind student opposition, the Soviet experts wrote: “There is an actual struggle between the reactionary [*that is the opposition students – N.T.*] and progressive [*that is the loyal students – N.T.*] students. Students have strong reactionary attitudes: they are against the privileges granted to children of workers; they are against the students of the pedagogy and social science departments. These reactionary students have grounded their attacks on the argument that the university should sustain a high level of academic knowledge. These students attack the SED, promoted by the German educational authorities and the Soviet Military Administration. Finally, the theories of the reactionary German philosopher and existentialist Karl Jaspers, elaborated by him in the book ‘The Spirit of the University,’ which demanded ‘autonomy’ of the universities from political life and the state, are very popular among a considerable portion of the students. In addition, a negative influence on political life in the universities is exerted by the theology, law, and medicine departments.”⁶⁹¹

⁶⁸⁹DBD is the German abbreviation of the *Demokratische Bauernpartei Deutschlands*, the Democratic Peasant Party. It was one of the parties in East Germany which shared some real political power with the SED. It was established in 1948.

⁶⁹⁰NDP is the German abbreviation for the *Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, the National Democratic Party of Germany. It was established in 1948 by a former member of the Communist party of Germany, Lothar Bolz (1903-1986). The establishment was sponsored by the communists in order to involve former Nazis and *Wehrmacht* soldiers in the building of a new political system in East Germany. Bolz assumed various leadership positions in the political structure of East Germany: he was the Minister of Foreign Affairs and a Member of Parliament, among others. After the reunification of Germany, the party became a part of the Free Democrats Party.

⁶⁹¹State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 54. File 14: 10-11; State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 54. File 12: 50-63.

In this report the Soviet officers enumerated those elements of Soviet policy which provoked resistance from students: the admission of lower social groups, the introduction of new courses, the uncompromised push of the SED within student councils, and the establishment of a new communist organization. Soviet policy caused open and strong resistance on the part of students that lasted until the early 1960s. After that, the resistance would be transferred underground, a silent opposition that lasted until the end of the 1980s.

Student resistance to both new admissions rules and the expansion of communist ideology in the universities

The resistance to the admission of the lower strata. Beginning in 1948-1949, when new admissions rules began operating in every university and the preparatory departments were established, fierce resistance from students became apparent.

Initially, the students and a segment of the professoriate tried to convince the Soviets that with the new admissions rules, the traditions of a high level of academic knowledge would not be able to be maintained, and suggested that the main criterion for selection should be natural aptitude and high academic preparedness of the candidates.⁶⁹² The Soviets were seen to ignore these remarks. When the opposing students and professors understood that their words were not being heard by the Soviet Military Administration, they decided to push for anti-admissions laws through the *Landtags*. Students in Mecklenburg and Saxony-Anhalt were able to raise the question about new admissions rules in meetings of the *Landtags*. The *Landtags* passed anti-admissions laws that nullified these Soviet regulations, and a *Landesminister* of Saxony-Anhalt permitted the University of Halle to cancel all the Soviet rules in light of the new anti-admissions law. However, a new rector of the University of Halle rejected this idea, and later, when the majority of seats in the *Landtags* belonged to the SED, the Soviet authorities were able to rescind these anti-admissions laws.⁶⁹³ Participating in the admissions commissions, those students who were members of the liberal parties tried to block decisions about the enrollment of workers, peasants, and so-called “other democratic elements.”⁶⁹⁴ Soviet curators of the

⁶⁹² State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 55. File 6: 163-166.

⁶⁹³ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid.

Universities of Leipzig, Jena, and Berlin reported that “the students and certain professors, members of the LDP, purposely belittled the academic achievements of workers, peasants, and members of the SED during entrance examinations. Children of workers were not admitted to the University of Jena time and time again.”⁶⁹⁵

In such cited reports the Soviet staff of the Education Division emphasized that the LDP and its members represented the main challenge to Soviet initiatives. The Liberal Democratic Party and its student leaders were, in point of fact, the most persistent body, resisting Soviet reforms to the very end. It was the LDP’s students who first opposed new admissions rules in every university stating that universities should admit students capable of studying. Other parties only followed the LDP. In June 1948, a strong wave of student protest rippled through the Universities of Rostock, Halle, and Leipzig. The Soviet authorities dissolved the student councils in these universities as a retaliatory measure.⁶⁹⁶

The University of Berlin acted differently. First of all, its students began leaving the University for the Western Sectors of the city or Western Zones, beginning in 1946. Leaving this university, they openly stated to a Soviet curator that the main reason for their flight was the new admissions rules.⁶⁹⁷ Second, without sound protests and demonstrations, the admissions commissions and the students of the University of Berlin themselves successfully blocked candidates from the lower social groups until the early 1950s, because most of the seats on both the commission and the student council belonged to nonaffiliated students who were against the SED.⁶⁹⁸

The resistance to communist ideology and the influence of the SED in the universities. One of the most popular methods of struggle against communist ideology was to bring discredit to the communists, anonymously but publicly, by comparing their ideology with that of the Nazis. The students scribbled their anonymous comparisons and epigrams about communism on doors and walls of toilets. The most famous epigram was: “O, Lord, grant us the Fifth Reich. The Fourth has turned out like the Third!” (*Herr, schenk uns das fünfte Reich! Das vierte ist*

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid., 198.

⁶⁹⁶ Ibid., 148-150.

⁶⁹⁷ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 55. File 2: 139.

⁶⁹⁸ Ibid., 47-48, 162.

dem dritten gleich!).⁶⁹⁹ Or they leafleted every university in the Soviet Zone. Like members of the *White Rose*, the student underground organization that acted against the Nazis during the 1930s and 1940s, students in the now liberated but occupied Germany were compelled to take up the pen again. In the following cited leaflet, translated into Russian by Soviet officers for a Moscow report, students called for resistance to Soviet terror at the University of Halle:

“Students! The Communist terror is becoming more oppressive. East Germany is suffering under the forced domination of a small group of hirelings, who serve a foreign state. Thousands of democrats are languishing again in concentration camps because they clearly expressed their political views.

Students! Do you want see more of your classmates being arrested right in the lecture halls? Do you want to see further how the academic excellence of the universities in the Eastern Zone is descending to the academic level of vocational schools? Do you want to listen to more communist Dozenten and their compulsory classes, waiting until you end up a student in a Marxist Party school? Do you want your interests to be represented by Red student councils, curators and governmental officials?

Students! Remember the movement of 1848. There are always students who resist oppression and injustice in Germany.

⁶⁹⁹ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7133. Inventory 1. File 273: 305-311.

Students! You will assume the responsibility for spiritual leadership in Germany in the future. So, you must prove that Germans have learned many things from those 12 years of dictatorship. You must demonstrate to the world that the young German intelligentsia have no desire to escape into an 'inside emigration.' We do not want to become victims of a ferocious Party clique again. Remember the old student traditions and duties. One of them is to be fighters for freedom and progress. Nobody can stand on the sidelines today and nobody has a right to say that he is not interested in politics, because this matter is not about political views and positions but about the survival of Western culture and human civilization as a whole. That's why you must help us in the struggle for freedom and humanity. Resist no matter where. There are many chances to put up resistance. This is your duty towards yourself, Germany, and mankind. Otherwise you will be accomplices and perpetrators in this monstrous crime, the crime of instituting dictatorship and slavery instead of human rights and human dignity."⁷⁰⁰

This emotional leaflet demonstrates the darkest sides of Soviet policy vis-à-vis those German students who did not want to obey the Russians.

⁷⁰⁰ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7133. Inventory 1. File 280: 171-172.

Leaflets with similar texts were disseminated at other universities and, according to the documents, the SMAD was unable to discover the authors of this text.

After dissemination of this leaflet, university students began an open offensive against Soviet policy. They publicly disregarded the Soviet authorities and communist ideology. At the funeral of Marthe Bruin, a student and a member of the SED, one of the University of Halle students openly declared: "These funerals were held with pomp just as the Nazis had done. Try to find flowers and fabrics in Berlin, and you can't normally do it. Yet for this, everything was to be found and in huge amounts. And a great number of people were pressured into participating in these funerals. The Nazis also did this. Why is this woman so valuable? We didn't know her and had never heard about her. She was reportedly killed by fascists. In fact, she was killed by Russian soldiers. The Nazis also used to behave like this."⁷⁰¹

Other students publicly acted against the SED in the universities. In 1946, students of the University of Berlin, under the leadership of the famous student and main sponsor of the Free University, Otto Hess,⁷⁰² declared that red flags should not be hung in the university building and, after that, students tore them down. They sent a letter to Rector Johannes Stroux stating that the University of Berlin "served scholarship and education and it was not a Party institution."⁷⁰³ The Soviet authorities, of course, could not tolerate such behavior, and, consequently, these students were arrested or expelled.⁷⁰⁴

The patience of the Soviet authorities and German Communists was finally exhausted after they received information that a segment of the students from aristocratic backgrounds had decided to establish a new united party to join in the struggle against the promotion of the SED in student councils and universities. In August 1948, students of the University of Leipzig arranged a secret meeting in Dresden to formulate their united position relative to Soviet policy in German universities and

⁷⁰¹ Ibid.

⁷⁰² Otto Hess was elected as the first chairman of the student council at the University of Berlin. In 1948, he was expelled from the University of Berlin for "anti-Soviet propaganda." He, together with two other students, became the primary founders of the Free University. // The State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 54. File 1: page no #.

⁷⁰³ Cit. on: Connelly, "East German Higher Education Policies," 273.

⁷⁰⁴ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 54. File 1: page no #.

to elaborate a platform for a new party. During this meeting, students emotionally talked about all the political parties that existed in the Zone. They summed up the SED as the party that “disparages our friends who had been killed in action, belittles our virtues and wants to make us content with a Soviet paradise.”⁷⁰⁵ The party of Schumacher, the SDP, also came under criticism by these students because of the loyalty it to some extent had to the SED. Then the LDP was discussed. The students said that “there are some people in this party with good will and honorable intentions. However, they have no courage (!) to say anything against the communist leaders.”⁷⁰⁶ At the end of this meeting students elaborated a plan to establish a party with a conservative inclination, similar to the Tories in Great Britain, because conservatism was considered to be the most suitable for the interests of educated students. However, this plan was not fated to be realized. The Soviet authorities recognized that the establishment of such a new opposition party would take the lead over all the parties and would enhance resistance to reforms. The Soviet Military Administration made a decision to liquidate all the liberal parties in the universities and their leaders, as along with any students with leadership potential who could lead students.

The Soviet offensive against the students

The Soviet Occupation authorities believed that the extremism and openness which they attributed to the feelings and behavior of these young people would disappear if the Soviet staff of the Education Division spoke out and convinced the students to become communists or to be loyal to the new regime. The staff worked hard with the students, arranging lectures and private talks, expounding the history of the Soviet political system to the students, and Soviet experts did find that some students began to change their minds and began to truly believe in the ideals of Marxism and Soviet society.⁷⁰⁷ However, over the course of time, dissatisfaction and resistance on the part of the students only grew on account of the general political and economic situation in Germany, and the behavior of the Occupying powers who were unable to resolve the question of the reunification of the Zones. The Soviet military

⁷⁰⁵ Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation. Record group no #. “Department of the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union.” Inventory 9. Box 104. File 124: 1-2.

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁷ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 54. File 8: 88-95; Russian State Archive of Social-Political History. Record group 17. Inventory 137. File 637: page no #.

authorities and security agencies were not prepared for this stubborn behavior on the part of the students, and they were also dissatisfied with the fact that the Education Division had no tough answers to the students' improper behavior.

Ever since 1948 and 1949, Soviet experts had begun elaborating a long-term policy to subjugate the student body. The soft part of this policy included such ideas as finding and isolating student opposition, and limiting the general communication between students in the different Zones. However, the tough part of this policy included such measures against the opposition as expulsion from the universities and arrests.

Defining the opposition. First of all, all the students were divided into four categories in order to define the most dangerous segment of students. The first group of students who supported the communists made up from 10% to 15 % of the total student body in the universities. The second group of students was depicted in documents as nonpartisan students who loved Germany and thus desired to participate in building a new Germany. This group constituted of 50% of the student body. Students in the third group "have grown up deeply rooted in the old German past; they show independence in their behavior, they have a nostalgia for their lost privileges, and they want them returned."⁷⁰⁸ These students, in the opinion of Soviet experts, made up 25% of the total student body and were not dangerous, but they would require a great deal of work to win them over. The fourth group included from 5% to 10% of the total student body. According to Soviet strategists, they "were the deliberate and malicious opposition. They have wriggled into universities despite hurdles being put in their way at the point of admission. These students are stirring up trouble everywhere."⁷⁰⁹

After this analysis of the student body by groups, the staff of the Soviet Military Administration made a decision that the first three groups could remain in the universities, because they were expected to show continuing allegiance. However, they did feel that their travel to the West and communication with the former Allies should be somewhat restricted in order to prevent influence from an alternative ideology. The fourth group must be *found, isolated, and banished* from the universities.⁷¹⁰ To find this group was not difficult for Soviets agents, because the members

⁷⁰⁸ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7133. Inventory 1. File 273.

Page: 305-311.

⁷⁰⁹ Ibid.

⁷¹⁰ Ibid.

of the LDP fell into this category. Those students who were arrested belonged mainly to this party. Moreover, a more tricky policy was used to isolate opposition students from influencing other segments of the student body. The Soviets exploited traditional methods of splitting the students up. Their proposal was that “the students themselves must rise against the leaders of the opposition and make that opposition feel that the ground is slipping from under its feet.”⁷¹¹ Finally, to banish opposition from universities would mean shutting the university’s doors against it, thereby furthering student emigration to the West.

The purge aimed at eliminating the opposition lasted until the early 1960s. In light of this grouping of the students, the Soviet authorities stepped up their policy of banning student travel to the Western Zone in order to “protect” the first three categories from its influence and, furthermore, increased their policy of arrests, exiles, and executions in order to eliminate the fourth group of students.

Banning student travel to West Germany. This became visible when the regime officially proclaimed the building of socialism in East Germany in 1952, which immediately impacted student life. Moreover, the June demonstrations in Berlin in 1953 and later in Hungary in 1956, where young people made up the nucleus of the rebels, contributed to a toughening of their political policy aimed at German students. Travel by students to the West and communications with it were considered to be the main evil that was provoking oppositional attitudes and behavior by East German students. When the first restrictions were launched, they were covert and invisible to most people who visited East Berlin. One of the West German students who visited Soviet Berlin in 1954 left the following notice about it: “There is no actual physical barrier between the eastern and western sectors of Berlin. One can simply board a subway train, the U-Bahn, somewhere in the western sector, ride a few minutes and then get off in East Berlin. If one is lucky, no questions are asked and no official check is made upon visitors; this is entirely up to the whim or suspicion of the individual police.”⁷¹²

Yet, in 1956, American diplomats in West Berlin reported to Washington that “East German students were told that university authorities could no longer support student applications for permission to visit West Germany. The reason given was that in the past too many

⁷¹¹ State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 55. File 4: 1-4.

⁷¹² NARA. Record group 59. Central Files 1963. Box 3559.

students traveling in the Federal Republic were recruited by West German agents either for positions in West German industry or for espionage work against the GDR.”⁷¹³ A new East German Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs, addressing students of the University of Halle said that “under present conditions every trip to West Germany is a political matter, and every student should determine honestly whether his trip serves or injures our Republic and a possible rapprochement between both German states. We are certain that there are students who have close relatives in West Germany whom they want to visit. However, we object to visits to non-existing uncles.”⁷¹⁴ According to a new rule of travel to capitalist countries, students could travel to those countries with which the GDR had diplomatic relations;⁷¹⁵ East and West Germany, however, did not have any diplomatic relations until 1972. In the end, the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961 ultimately barred the way to the West for students and other people in East Germany.

Arresting of students. Until the end of the Cold War, the Soviet Union and East Germany did not recognize the facts of repression, meaning the arrests, exiling, and executions carried out against German students. In the West, as far back as 1953, German students who were able to escape this Soviet terror and who fled to West Germany published a book in which they listed the names of 453 students sentenced to death by the Soviet authorities in Germany.⁷¹⁶ This book was a unique source of speculation for a long time; some researchers believed in the information stated in this book, while other researchers claimed that this book was a project of American propaganda. However, after the opening of archives in Russia and East Germany, some of the facts about the repression discussed in the book have been confirmed; others have not, because a solid portion of the students mentioned in the book, along with other students arrested by the Soviet authorities, were released at the end of 1956 and in the early 1960s as a result of the famous political thaw initiated by the Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev. Nevertheless, we have to admit that German students suffered the most from Soviet pressure and terror.

As we mentioned above, leaders of the liberal parties, and in particular the leaders of the LDP at the universities in Leipzig and Berlin

⁷¹³ NARA. Record group 59. Bureau of Public Affairs. International Exchange Service 1950-58. US Mission, Berlin to the Department of State, June 19, 1956. Box 1, 3.

⁷¹⁴ Ibid.

⁷¹⁵ Ibid.

⁷¹⁶ Müller, Müller, *Stürmt die Festung Wissenschaft*.

who opposed Soviet reforms, were arrested and executed in the 1940s and in the early 1950s. The popularity of the LDP, its victories in student council elections, and its constant challenges to the SED became the main premise for these arrests. The staff of the Education Division in Leipzig reported to Moscow: "In November 1947, our security bodies arrested 14 students implicated in spy activities. They are members of the Liberal Democratic Party."⁷¹⁷ Wolfgang Natonek, a student at the University of Leipzig, the head of the student council and the deputy head of the LDP in Leipzig, is among these students arrested. Natonek, who is famous for his anti-Soviet views and reactionary positions, leads the LDP's student group in the University of Leipzig, which has about 500 members. Taking into consideration our general policy towards the LDP at present – *not to miss any chance and suitable moment to weaken and to forbid the activity of the LDP in the university* [italics added] – the Soviet governor of Leipzig, Nikoly Trufanov, dissolved the LDP student group and its leaders were arrested."⁷¹⁸ So, the reason for Natonek's arrest was to liquidate the LDP, this strong competitor of the SED in the ideological struggle for the minds of students. Wolfgang Natonek was a student in the philosophy department, and after his arrest on November 11, 1947, he and his friends were tried by the Soviet military tribunal and sentenced to 25 years forced labor in Soviet camps. This student was held in an East German prison until the end of 1956, when he was discharged; he was soon able to flee to West Germany, where he lived until his death in 1994. Wolfgang Natonek was rehabilitated by the Russian government in 1995.

Another center of strong student opposition was the University of Berlin. In March 1947, Soviet security bodies arrested several members of the student council for protests against the admissions rules, red flags, and tough policy of the SED in this university. Georg Wrazidlo, Gerda Rösch, and Manfred Klein suffered the most in this crackdown. Georg Wrazidlo was the leader of the student council and the other students were its active members. They were subsequently sentenced to 25 years forced labor for their protests. Other members of the student council visited the chief of the Education Division of the Soviet Military Ad-

⁷¹⁷ The accusation of spy activities against the Soviet Union was the favorite method used by Soviet security agencies. German citizens, for example, talking with representatives of the American Occupation authorities could be evaluated as constituting spy activities on behalf of the United States.

⁷¹⁸ Archive of Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation. Record group 082. Inventory 35. Box. 174. File 92: 122.

ministration, Professor Pjotr Zolotukhin, asking for an explanation. They were told that the students had been arrested due to their improper behavior as German citizens but not as members of the university. Zolotukhin advised them to behave in a way that would preclude further arrests.⁷¹⁹ Later, these students were released during the 1950s. George Wrazidlo was discharged in 1956 and fled to the West, where he died in 1959. Gerda Rösch was released in 1957 and worked as a teacher in West Germany. Manfred Klein was released in 1956, lived in Bonn until his death in 1981, and worked as teacher of political education. He wrote a book in 1968 about the resistance to the Soviet Occupation authorities entitled *Jugend zwischen den Diktaturen 1945-1956*.

For some reason or other, the Soviet authorities did not sentence the leaders of the opposition to death. There is no definite answer in the records as to why these students were spared. Possibly, their lives were saved by their popularity both in the East and West as well as the fear of the Soviet authorities faced with united discontent and protests, as a result of information spreading about such executions. Thus, these students mentioned were luckier than the less famous students, who silently resisted and silently died in Soviet prisons. Students such as Axel Schröder, a student of the University of Leipzig and a member of the FDJ, who was executed by firing squad in 1952 for so-called “spy activities” but actually for his communication with the American authorities, and Arno Esch, a student of the University of Rostock, and a member of the LDP, who was executed by firing squad for “establishing the underground counterrevolutionary organization at the university” but actually for the establishment of an opposition student organization, and other students, who were not leaders of the resistance, were less lucky. All of them died in Stalin’s camps in the Soviet Union.⁷²⁰

From the mid-1950s on, resistance grew less strong. Many students tried to flee the Soviet Zone, but many of them became nominal members of the SED, while many students “went into internal emigration” in order to survive. According to the observation of the researcher John Connelly, by the mid-1950s “all open opposition among students had been smothered, yet the Party was becoming obsessed with its inability to ‘know’ students and to recognize enemies in the student body. Students

⁷¹⁹ Connelly, “East German Higher Educational Policies,” 282-83.

⁷²⁰ “The Stalin Terror,” *Memorial Society* <http://www.memo.ru/memory/donskoe/> Accessed August 9, 2009; The State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 54. File no #. “Papers Relative to the Inspection of the Universities”: page no #.

no longer revealed their thoughts in the classrooms or in youth organizations.”⁷²¹

However, the documents say that students began establishing secret academic clubs where they discussed political questions. After the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, the voice of such German student clubs sounded very loudly, and two of them – *George Lucas-Kreis* at the philosophy department and *Jakobiner-Klub* at the history department of Humboldt University in Berlin – publicly articulated the demands of German students. Students demanded freer travel, freer access to all literature, free choice of university, freedom to organize student organizations beyond the official FDJ, participation in control of their institutions, and freedom from compulsory lectures on dialectical materialism and Russian studies. The East German political elite and Walter Ulbricht personally decided to open a public discussion with this segment of the student population, believing that their position was a result of Western propaganda but not a result of communist policy within the universities. Ulbricht published a long “letter to students” in *Neues Deutschland*. His letter was very emotional and menacing: he reminded the students that it was the communists who enabled the intelligentsia to study in the universities. Then, he blackmailed students by indicating that a socialist state could use people prepared to help in socialist construction, and, if that was not clear, the workers themselves would be happy to explain this rule to the students. The letter had no effect on the student body: students boycotted lectures and continued their other anti-regime activities. Their actions were so forceful that they made the SED change its policy: academic hours allocated to Marxist disciplines were decreased in 1957. After numerous discussions, the regime suddenly declared that students specializing in fundamental science might be allowed to learn a fewer number of Marxist disciplines and to learn a second foreign language in addition to Russian. At the same time, the students who had led the opposition were expelled or arrested. The student body of Humboldt University is reported to have suffered the most.⁷²² Moreover, to purge opposition students, Ulbricht proposed the idea of sending loyal students of the FDJ, representatives of trade unions and workers from factories to these opposition clubs in order to demonstrate the fist of the socialist state. After having visited universities in Berlin, Halle, and Dresden, this loyal representative body published a statement that there should be no

⁷²¹ Connelly, *Captive University*, 216.

⁷²² “Ostberliner Studenten Rebellieren,” *Die Zeit*, 20 (May 16, 1957), 4.

reduction in Marxist-Leninist instruction, no student organizations other than the FDJ should be allowed, and no suggestions for changes from either professors or students should be recognized if contrary to the Party line. Ulbricht, "obeying the voice of the public," declared that no further demands of the opposition students would be met by the SED.⁷²³ After this date, sources are silent about the development of the opposition movement within the student body; however, we are inclined to believe that opposition did exist, but in terms of a silent and underground movement.

5. Changes in student daily life under the influence of Soviet reforms

This chapter about Soviet policy towards German students would be incomplete without a description of student life in the Soviet Zone and later in East Germany, as it was presented by American diplomats. American authorities, like the Soviets, observed the changes in student life that were occurring in the East.

According to the American documents, information about the life of East German students was obtained from unknown East German students interviewed by American diplomats accredited in Berlin. The main themes of interest to the American diplomats related to the selection of students for university studies, indoctrination methods, behavior and attitudes of students, and living conditions at Humboldt University in East Berlin.

The basic observation concerned the admissions rules: children of middle-class families were discriminated against, and educational advantages were given to the children of workers and peasants. According to the American documents, while sons of peasants and workers received a scholarship of DM 180 per month, students with a background from families of upper and middle social groups received only DM 80, which made it very difficult for them to remain at university.

In order to enter university in East Germany, a student, as he told the American diplomats, had to become a worker, then a member of the FDJ in order to obtain a positive recommendation from a place of employment. One of the students from the University of Halle told the

⁷²³ "Background Report. So Geht Das Nicht Weiter – Dissidence in East German Universities. January 29, 1957. Box-folder-report: 23-10-210. Germany," in *Open Society Archives*
<<http://files.osa.ceu.hu/holdings/300/8/3/text/23-10-210.shtml>> Accessed: 09.07.2009.

Americans how he had gone to work at Wismuth A.G., the East German uranium enterprise, in order to gain status as a workingman, and hence to enhance his chances of entering the university. Then he became a member of the FDJ, because it was practically an obligatory requirement for admittance to every university. Without it, he had no chance of being accepted. Leaders of the FDJ wrote a special report about his doings, behavior, and ideological allegiance, and this report was considered by the admissions commission in the university.

American diplomats also discussed the heavy indoctrination of students. Students who “lived in dormitories without families were more prone to adopt the orientation, which was woven through all their studies, than those who had the stabilizing family influence.”⁷²⁴ Moreover, they observed that even opposition students might eventually accept Marxism due to the long-term learning of communist disciplines.⁷²⁵ Diplomats admitted that the effect of communist ideas imposed upon the students was strong enough to prolong the existence of the political regime in East Germany.

The behavior and attitudes of students were the main topics of the American reports. According to them, most students were against the regime. Some students regarded communism as a game that they had to play in order to complete their education. Simply trying to obtain a professional degree, they were careful about expressing political opinions and were very slow to take anyone into their confidence.

The final and main theme running through the documents was a comparison of the living conditions of students at Humboldt University and at the Free University. In 1965, American diplomats wrote that Humboldt University students received a high monthly scholarship of DM 280 that was adequate for students needs and, more importantly, that this scholarship exceeded that of students at the Free University.⁷²⁶

⁷²⁴ NARA. Record group 59. Bureau of Public Affairs. International Exchange Service 1950-58. Box 1, 3.

⁷²⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷²⁶ The Soviet Military Administration and German Communists provided students with high governmental scholarships and food during the Occupation period in order to win their support. In 1947, students obtained double the ration for bread, sugar, potatoes, and meat, which was much more than the rations allocated to other categories of the German population. See, State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 8. File 12: 112. In addition, according to the documents, some students received flats and high scholarships. See, State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 54. File 14: 10-11. In 1949, the Soviet Military Administration provided only students of the University of Berlin with additional higher scholarships, higher than those

Moreover, rent for students was DM 35 for a privately rented single room, while those who lived in dormitories paid DM 11 monthly. It made American diplomats recognize that East German students had more comfortable living conditions. However, the interior of Humboldt University, its study facilities, and the utilities in the student dormitories were shabby in contrast to the modern buildings of the Free University.⁷²⁷

American diplomats reporting to Washington definitely mentioned both the strong and weak points of East German student life in order to elaborate a plan for a future offensive against the communist influence being imposed upon German youth. In as much as such plans were elaborated at the end 1960s and implemented during the 1970s, we will continue this story about the students in Chapter VI.

Conclusion

In making a comparison between American and Soviet policy towards German students from 1945 through the early 1960s, we can argue that:

American and Soviet styles of purge had certain similarities and differences. Both created special criteria for denazification of the student body, and both declared the necessity of purging Nazis in order to establish a democratic university education. The United States, having elaborated more detailed and stricter criteria for their purge than the Soviet Union, was faced with the problem of the high percentage of Nazis admitted to the universities: despite a tough purge, the percentage of former Nazis ranged from 10% to 26% of the total student body in the universities of the American Zone. The Soviet Union, having elaborated less detailed and less strict criteria for their purge, were not faced with such a problem: former Nazis made up 4.1% of the total student body in the universities of the Soviet Zone. One possible explanation for this gap is that the universities of the Western Zone admitted all refugees and former Nazis arriving from the Soviet Zone, which increased the numbers of both students and former Nazis. The Soviet statistics often omitted the

for the rest of the university students, with those students who lived in the western sectors of Berlin and studied at the University of Berlin being provided with extra allowances calculated in Western deutschmarks. See, State Archive of the Russian Federation. Record group P-7317. Inventory 55. File 11. Page 59. In the 1950s through the 1960s, the student body in East Germany received the highest scholarships in comparison to the student bodies in other East European countries. See, Connelly, *Captive University*, 273.

⁷²⁷ NARA. Record group 59. Central Files 1964-1966. Educational and Cultural Exchange. Box 385.

information about the past affiliation of students with the Nazi Party if they became members of the Communist Party in East Germany, which decreased the officially declared figures with regard to numbers of former Nazis among students.

The subsequent problem for the superpowers concerned admissions rules. The Soviets more radically modified the traditional German approach to the admission of students than the American authorities did. While the Soviet authorities admitted students stemming mainly from the lower social strata, the American authorities admitted students with scholarly potential, student refugees from the East, as well as those students with a *Wehrmacht* past. However, both governments selected politically loyal students in order to groom a new elite to maintain the new political regimes in the two divided parts of Germany. Revising admissions, both Occupation authorities established preparatory courses for prospective students who did not have sufficient knowledge to enter university: the Soviet Union exploited these courses not only to make disadvantaged students more competitive with highly educated students from upper social groups but also to expel students coming in from the upper social groups. As a result, in East Germany the social composition of the student body was cardinally changed up until the early 1960s. The American authorities tried to create an egalitarian system of university education by establishing courses in order to increase the chances for underserved people to enter the universities, but this policy was weak and was not a primary goal of American policy in Germany.

In the field of establishing student organizations, both the Soviet Union and the United States demonstrated radically different approaches. The Soviet Union encouraged political and Party struggle in order to define and eliminate the opposition, and hence to promote the ideological domination of the communists among students. The United States, on the contrary, rejected the idea of establishing party organizations in the universities and instead of this created apolitical and religious organizations. As a result, the Soviet Union, by deepening the political disorder in the universities, expanded its ideology, and eliminated any open and visible opposition by the student body, while the United States, eroding the political ambitions of students, postponed the wave of opposition for several years.

In as much as both intended to create a new loyal student, they often applied similar methods. They established summer schools to demonstrate the advantages of their rival societal systems to students. These summer schools and other mass educational activities contributed

to the dissemination of the rival ideologies. Moreover, both involved the parts of Germany they controlled in the signing of mandatory cultural agreements to train university students. Educating German students, the United States more intensively applied short-term observation tours throughout America to encourage students to build democratic institutions in universities such as the campus system and other communities of student self-government. Some participants actually implanted these American ideas in Germany and contributed to the building of cooperation between the United States and West Germany. The Soviet Union, on the contrary, promoted long-term education to foster a loyal communist elite. These students became the Party leadership in East Germany.

Finally, both authorities had to deal with student opposition. German students articulated their discontent relative to both the Soviet and the American reforms. However, communism incited more oppositional activities on the part of students in the 1940s and 1950s because of the association of communist ideology with the oppressive promotion of new admissions rules, and because of the introduction of communist organizations and of Marxism as a new basis for study in the universities. When encountering this open and strong student opposition, the Soviet Military Administration treated students very severely. Arrests, purges, and executions became the norm in Soviet policy until the early 1960s.