

“At War with Israel”

East Germany's Key Role in Soviet Policy in the Middle East

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The Middle East was one of the crucial battlefields of the global Cold War between the Soviet Union and the West. It was also a region in which Communist East Germany played a remarkable yet underexamined role in the Soviet bloc's antagonism toward Israel. From 1953, when the German Democratic Republic (GDR) signed its first trade agreement with Egypt, until 1989, when the Communist regime in the GDR collapsed, East Germany opposed the state of Israel and supported Israel's enemies in the Arab world. From the mid-1960s until 1989, but especially from 1967 to the mid-1980s, both the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies, including the GDR, were engaged in an undeclared state of war with Israel. Although the Soviet Union and its allies declared support for a negotiated settlement of the Middle East conflict, their diplomacy and propaganda aimed to delegitimize Israel's right to exist. The USSR and its East European allies became the primary military and economic supporters of Israel's Arab enemies. The GDR was especially enthusiastic about the policy. The undeclared war in which East Germany participated encompassed propaganda assaults on Israel at the United Nations (UN) as well as a broad range of diplomatic, economic, military, and intelligence activities that formed the basis for alliances with Egypt up to 1975, Saddam Hussein's Iraq, Hafez al-Assad's Syria, and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and its various terrorist splinter groups.

The intensification of East Germany's hostility toward Israel, reaching a state of undeclared war, marked the second time in the twentieth century that a German government adopted policies that resulted in significant amounts of death, injury, and suffering to Jews. The latter episode was not remotely comparable to the Nazi Holocaust in Europe, but it was both morally significant and politically consequential for events in the Middle East. The

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Soviet Union played a role in stoking tension and conflict in the Middle East and in several decades of terrorism waged by the PLO and other Palestinian terrorist groups, thwarting attempts at a compromise peace. If the Soviet bloc had been fully successful in its policy, the likely result would have been the destruction of the state of Israel in the 1970s or 1980s and with it the expulsion of almost two million Jews from the region. Historians of the anti-cosmopolitan purges in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe of the early 1950s have examined the rapid shift by the Soviet Union and the East European states from early support for the creation of Israel in 1948 to antagonism toward Israel and a growing military and economic alliance with Arab countries seeking to destroy Israel.¹ Despite the GDR's effort to claim an anti-fascist mantle, the Communist regime took part in this bloc-wide purge and anti-Semitic campaign. Members of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschland, or SED, the ruling party of Communist East Germany) who favored support for the Jewish state were driven out of positions of influence. The most influential and outspoken supporters of Israel endured secret trials based on trumped-up accusations of having participated in conspiracies organized by Israel and the United States to overthrow the Communist regimes. Those who remained in power in the GDR and elsewhere in the Soviet bloc adopted hostility toward Israel as a necessary and logical aspect of the broader Communist assault on Western (especially U.S.) "imperialism" and its interests in the Middle East.

The anti-cosmopolitan purges from 1949 to 1953 thus signaled that the Soviet Union and its East European allies were abandoning their wartime support of Europe's Jews and embracing hostility toward Zionism and Israel. From then on, the Soviet bloc armed and supported the Arab states against Israel. In this article I offer results of research in progress on the policy consequences of the anti-Zionist and anti-Israel turn of the early 1950s for Soviet and East German foreign, military, intelligence, propaganda, and economic policies from the 1960s to the early 1980s.² Both the public and the archival evidence indicates that whether under the leadership of Walter Ulbricht or his successor, Erich Honecker, the SED Politbüro—the key decision-making body in the East German dictatorship—joined in the assault on Israel with great enthusiasm and passion. What began under Ulbricht intensified when, in May 1971, Honecker succeeded him as SED General Secretary.³

Until 1989 the East German government never dissented from Soviet

1. On the purges in East Germany, see Jeffrey Herf, *Divided Memory: The Nazi Past in the Two Germanys* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

2. See Angelika Timm's early and still important *Hammer, Zirkel, Davidstern: Das gestörte Verhältnis der DDR zu Zionismus und Israel* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1997).

3. For biographical details on Walter Ulbricht and Erich Honecker, see "Ulbricht, Walter," and

anti-Zionist orthodoxy.⁴ On the contrary, the post-Nazi regime adopted anti-Zionism as a key element of its foreign policy both because of Marxist-Leninist ideological conviction and because of the resulting definition of national self-interest. To be sure, as the historian of East German foreign policy Hermann Wentker and previous historians have pointed out, East Germany's foreign policy operated within "narrow limits" set by the Soviet Union.⁵ Yet the leaders of the GDR displayed an enthusiasm and passion that exceeded what is suggested by terms such as "satellite" or "tool" of Soviet policy. The enthusiasm, initiative, and passion with which the GDR threw itself and its modest but real political, ideological, and military resources into the battle against Israel is remarkable. To be sure, the driving force of Soviet bloc anti-Zionism was the USSR. Yet the GDR was not a reluctant participant. As the internal documents of the regime confirm, the public denunciations of Zionism that came from East Berlin were matched by identical sentiments voiced in confidential memoranda and when speaking to their Communist allies, to Arab states, and to the Palestinian terror organizations. East Germany was a loyal, firm, and unwavering ally of those in the Middle East whose policies, if successful, would have led to the defeat of Israel's armed forces and thus to the destruction of the Jewish state.

Several hundred West German terrorists and their thousands of supporters and apologists captured the attention of the West German and world media and also drew the attention of scholars far more than East Germany did.⁶ Although the Red Army Faction (RAF) was responsible for more than 30 murders and assorted bank robberies and explosions in West Germany, neither the RAF nor other West German terrorist organizations had the capacity to influence the course of events in the Middle East. The East German regime, as part of the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact, had far greater ability to make a difference in the Middle East. The GDR had armed forces, a modest arms industry, a controlled press, embassies and consulates around the world, for-

"Honecker, Erich," Bernd-Rainer Barth et. al., *Wer war Wer in der DDR: Ein biographisches Handbuch* (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1996), pp. 750, 321–322.

4. On Arab collaboration with the Nazis, see Jeffrey Herf, *Nazi Propaganda for the Arab World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

5. Herman Wentker, *Außenpolitik im engen Grenze: Die DDR im internationalen System 1949–1989* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag 2007); Alexander Troche, *Ulbricht und die Dritte Welt: Ost-Berlins 'Kampf gegen die Bonner Alleinvertretungsmaß'* (Erlangen, Germany: Palm und Enke, 1996); Klaus Storkmann, *Geheime Solidarität: Militärbeziehungen und Militärhilfen der DDR in die "Dritte Welt"* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2012); and Benno-Eide Siebs, *Die Außenpolitik der DDR 1976–1989: Srategien und Grenzen* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1999).

6. The scholarship is as voluminous as the attention paid to the events at the time. See, for example, Stefan Aust, *Der Baader-Meinhof Komplex*, 13th Ed. (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1999); Butz Peters, *Tödlicher Irrtum: Die Geschichte der RAF* (Frankfurt: Fischer, 2007); Wolfgang Kraushaar, ed., *Die RAF und der Linke Terrorismus* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2006); and Jeffrey Herf, "The Age of Murder: Ideology and Terror in Germany," *Telos* (Fall 2008), pp. 8–37.

midable secret police and intelligence agencies, institutes for military training, and government-controlled universities that offered ideological messages to young students coming from Third World countries. The GDR had the sins of war and the instruments of propaganda and diplomacy, and it used these in support of Israel's Arab adversaries.

The East German shift to active hostility toward Israel resulted from a conjuncture of Communist ideology, Soviet power politics, and competition with West Germany. The GDR's first trade agreement was signed with Egypt in 1953, and other agreements followed with Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen in 1955 and 1956. These agreements were accompanied by denunciations of "Israeli aggression" and of Israel's West German supporters.⁷ In 1957, GDR Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl wrote to Gamal Abdel Nasser that the East German struggle against the forces of "fascism and militarism" in West Germany required close relations with Egypt. He thus placed the legacy of German anti-fascism in the service of establishing close relations with Israel's primary adversary at the time. In 1959, Grotewohl visited Nasser in Cairo.⁸ In 1958, Gerhard Weiss, who became the coordinator of East German weapons shipments to Third World countries in the 1970s, told a press conference in Baghdad that although the GDR had "no relations of any kind with Israel," West Germany's "so-called reparations payments" were "making an essential contribution to Israel's material and moral strength," which had been repeatedly felt "in the imperialist policy of hostility against the Arabs."⁹

From 24 February to 2 March 1965, SED General Secretary Ulbricht visited Cairo. There he spoke about a "common struggle" against shared enemies. He denounced Israel as "an imperialist outpost in Arab space," attacked West German military cooperation with Israel, and said that East Germans and Egyptians met on the common terrain of anti-imperialism and socialism. The two governments signed an agreement for expanded university and cultural exchanges.¹⁰ East Germany at this point also joined the Soviet-bloc program of arms shipments to Egypt.

7. Herf, *Divided Memory*, p. 191.

8. Otto Grotewohl to Gamal Abdel Nasser, 24 June 1957, in Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO), Zentrales Parteiarchiv (ZPA, now in Bundesarchiv Berlin), Otto Grotewohl NL 90/497, pp. 67–75, cited in Herf, *Divided Memory*, p. 192. Also see Inge Deutschkron, *Israel und die Deutschen*, rev. ed. (Cologne: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1991); and Peter Ditmar, "DDR und Israel: Ambivalenz einer Nicht-Beziehung," *Deutschland-Archiv*, Vol. 33, No. 7 (July 1977), pp. 736–754 (part 1), and Vol. 33, No. 8 (August 1977), pp. 848–861 (part 2).

9. Gerhard Weiss (Bagdad, 27 October 1958), in *Dokumente zur Aussenpolitik der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1949–1986* (DADDR), Vol. 6, p. 317, cited in Herf, *Divided Memory*, p. 192.

10. On Ulbricht in Cairo in 1965, see Herf, *Divided Memory*, pp. 192–195. Also see Walter Ulbricht

On 7 March 1965 the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG—West Germany) announced its decision to offer formal diplomatic recognition to Israel, and on 14 March the Israelis accepted the offer to negotiate. Over the next two days, a majority of the thirteen states of the Arab League voted to break diplomatic relations with Bonn, and six—Egypt, Iraq, Yemen, Algeria, Sudan, and Kuwait—indicated a readiness to offer formal diplomatic recognition to East Germany. Hostility to Israel played a key role in achieving East Germany’s goal of achieving diplomatic recognition from states beyond the Soviet bloc and thus to defeat West German efforts to maintain the GDR’s diplomatic isolation.¹¹ Upon returning to East Berlin from Cairo, Ulbricht spoke about a political battle against “the imperialist military foundation of Israel” and its supporters in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and West Germany. In his view, the issue of Israel was utterly separate from “the suffering and injustice inflicted by the criminal Hitler regime on the Jewish citizens of Germany and other European states.”¹² East Germany found common cause with Egypt and other Arab states opposed to imperialism, not with Israel, which had established ties to the West. The serene and untroubled confidence with which Ulbricht defended a policy of East German antagonism toward Israel remained a striking feature of East German Communism.

The Context of East German Policy

The political, ideological, and moral arguments that supported the GDR’s decisive tilt against Israel and toward the Arabs had been developing since the late 1940s. In 1965, Ulbricht’s succinct public statements revealed this thinking in the SED’s higher organs to a broader audience. Ulbricht’s visit to Cairo made clear that antagonism toward Zionism and Israel was *both* a matter of deep ideological conviction *and* the political lever that had pried open the previously unattainable goal of international diplomatic recognition.¹³ This mutually reinforcing quality of Communist ideology, power politics, and national self-interest contributed to the passion and enthusiasm of East Ger-

and Gamal Abdel Nasser, “Gemeinsame Erklärung,” Cairo, 1 March 1965, in DADDR, Vol. 13, p. 855. On the beginnings of arms deliveries, see Storkmann, *Geheime Solidarität*.

11. On West Germany’s Hallstein Doctrine, see William Glenn Gray, *Germany’s Cold War: The Global Campaign to Isolate East Germany, 1949–1969* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), pp. 81–86, 174–182.

12. Walter Ulbricht, “Rundfunk- und Fernsehinterview . . . mit Gerhart Eisler,” East Berlin, 7 March 1965, in DADDR, Vol. 13, pp. 872–873, cited in Herf, *Divided Memory*, p. 194.

13. Alexander Troche, *Ulbricht und die Dritte Welt: Ost-Berlins ‘Kampf gegen die Bonner Alleinvertretungsanmaß’* (Erlangen, Germany: Palm und Enke, 1996).

many's undeclared war with Israel, as well as to an obliviousness toward the peculiarity of a self-described anti-fascist German government denouncing the Jewish state and making common cause with its avowed enemies.

Recently declassified reports of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) on Communist countries' aid to Third World countries enable us to place East German efforts into the context of Soviet and East European military and economic assistance to less-developed countries (LDCs) from the 1960s to 1989. From 1955 to 1979, Communist states concluded military agreements worth \$52.77 billion with non-Communist LDCs. Of this total, some \$47.34 billion, or about 90 percent, came from the Soviet Union, \$4.285 billion (9 percent) came from the states of Eastern Europe, and \$1.145 billion (2 percent) came from China. During that same period, \$39.67 billion of arms were delivered. Of that figure, \$35.34 billion or 89 percent was delivered by the Soviet Union, \$3.405 billion or 9 percent by the states of Eastern Europe, and \$940 million or about 2 percent by China.¹⁴

The CIA reports also include extensive information about weapons deliveries to specific countries and regions. The list of countries with which the Soviet Union concluded arms agreements makes apparent the emphasis Moscow placed on the Middle East in its assessment of the global balance of forces. From 1956 to 1979, the USSR signed agreements with countries in North Africa worth \$10.96 billion. The figure for sub-Saharan Africa was \$4.64 billion; for East Asia, \$8.9 billion; for Latin America, \$970 million; for South Asia, \$5.4 billion; and for the Middle East, \$24.45 billion. From 1956 to 1979 the USSR delivered arms worth \$7.17 billion to North Africa; \$3.53 billion to sub-Saharan Africa; \$885 million to East Asia; \$675 million to Latin America; \$4.41 billion to South Asia; and \$18.68 billion to the Middle East.¹⁵ Thus, from 1955 to 1974, approximately 52 percent of Soviet military agreements and military deliveries to LDCs went to the countries of the Middle East. In 1974, the Soviet Union gave \$1.1 billion in military aid to all

14. "Table A-1: Communist Countries: Military Aid to Non-Communist LDC's, Million US \$," in U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), National Foreign Assessment Center (NFAC), "Communist Aid Activities in Non-Communist Less Developed Countries 1979 and 1954-79: A Research Paper," ER 80-10318U, October 1980, in U.S. National Archives (NARA), College Park, CIA Records Search Tool (CREST) Collection. From 1954 to 1979, the Soviet Union sent \$18 billion in economic aid to 76 countries; trained 68,000 "LDC nationals" from 100 developing countries at Soviet academic institutions, another 33,000 in technical skills, and about 46,000 in military skills. The files declassified in CREST include extensive quantitative information about and interesting analysis of Communist economic aid; technicians and military personnel sent to various Third World countries; and numbers of students and military personnel studying and receiving training in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. The declassified CIA files contain the results of vast information-gathering efforts and are an invaluable source for historical research.

15. "Table A-2: Communist Countries: Soviet Military Relations with LDC's," in CIA, "Communist Aid Activities in Non-Communist Less Developed Countries 1979 and 1954-79," p. 14.

of the Third World. Of that, \$937 million, or 85 percent, went to the countries of the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, including \$250 million to Iran, \$345 million to Iraq, and \$416 million to Syria.¹⁶ Of the \$3.83 billion in military agreements signed by the Soviet-bloc countries with Egypt from 1955 to 1974, \$3.52 billion came from the Soviet Union, \$359 million from Czechoslovakia, \$28 million from Hungary, \$5 million from Poland, and \$6 million from East Germany.¹⁷ The CIA estimated that from 1956 to 1974, the Soviet-bloc countries signed agreements with Syria worth \$2.27 billion, of which \$1.86 billion came from the Soviet Union. In May and October of 1973, just before and during the Yom Kippur War, East Germany delivered weapons worth \$12 million. Yet its contribution was far less than Czechoslovakia's (\$111 million).¹⁸ For 1974, the CIA reported that the vast bulk of weapons from the Soviet bloc to the Middle East came from the USSR (\$937 million) followed in order by Czechoslovakia (\$56 million), Bulgaria (\$49 million), Romania (\$22 million), Hungary (\$15 million), and East Germany, which shipped only \$4 million worth of weapons.

In a 1979 report, the CIA offered evidence of the mutually reinforcing impact of the USSR's strategic focus on the Middle East with the significant commercial, hard currency benefits to be gained by arms sales to the Arab states in the aftermath of the large increases in global oil prices that followed the 1973 war. The report divides the \$47.34 billion of Soviet military agreements with non-Communist LDCs into four periods: \$690 million in 1955–1959; \$3.83 billion in 1960–1966 (the years preceding the Six-Day Mideast War of 1967); \$8.67 billion in 1967–1973 (for resupplies of the Arab states); and \$34.16 billion in 1974–1979. The document indicates that the fivefold increase in arms agreements in the 1974–1979 period stemmed from hugely expanded shipments to Arab countries: "Four major Arab clients [Iraq, Syria, Algeria, and Morocco] accounted for more than 70 percent of the total sales [around the world] in 1974–79."¹⁹ The report concludes that rapid growth in Soviet arms sales had been stimulated by

16. "Table 4: Communist Military Aid Extended to Less Developed Countries, 1974," in CIA "Intelligence Handbook: Communist Aid to Less Developed Countries of the Free World, 1974," March 1975, in NARA, CREST, p. 12. Also see CIA, National Foreign Assessment Center, "Communist Aid Activities in Non-Communist Less Developed Countries 1978," ER 79-10412U, September 1979, in NARA, CREST; and CIA, Directorate of Intelligence, "Soviet and East European Aid to the Third World, 1981," GI 82-10175, August 1982, in NARA, CREST.

17. "Table 5: Communist Military Agreements with Less Developed Countries by Recipient 1955–74," in CIA, "Intelligence Handbook: Communist Aid to Less Developed Countries of the Free World, 1974," p. 4.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 20–21.

19. CIA, NFAC, "Table 1: USSR: Military Agreements with Non-Communist LDC's," in "Communist Aid Activities in Non-Communist Less Developed Countries, 1979 and 1954–79," p. 5.

the 1967 and 1973 Middle East wars which triggered unprecedented Soviet supply operations to the Arab belligerents; the opening of Moscow's modern weapons arsenal to LDCs as a reaction to Israel's deep penetration raids of Egypt in 1970; and the emphasis on raising commercial and financial returns from arms sales following the rise in oil prices in 1973/74. . . . [In] the lucrative Middle East arms market [the Soviet Union] could no longer be identified as a seller of last resort purveying outmoded, reconditioned equipment. The \$750 million arms deal with Egypt in 1970 provided advanced SA-2 and SA-3 surface-to-air missiles (previously deployed only in the USSR and Eastern Europe) and 7,500 soldiers to maintain them.²⁰

This was the first time the Soviet Union had provided "combat units to operate modern equipment in Third World countries."²¹

In October 1983 the CIA drew on reports from U.S. embassies and the East German and world press to issue "East Germany: Soviet Partner in the LDCs," which assessed the importance of East German activities in the context of the overall efforts of Communist countries, especially the USSR.²² East Germany's military supply program had begun in 1964. From then until 1983, GDR arms sales accounted for less than 3 percent of Warsaw Pact sales to the Third World. During those two decades the GDR had "signed military sales agreements worth \$860 million with about 30 LDCs calling primarily for the supply of vehicles, artillery, small arms and ammunition. Sales exceeded \$300 million in 1982 alone, largely reflecting radical Arab states." Since 1955, East Germany had signed economic agreements "totaling nearly \$3 billion with some 50 LDCs."²³ Although the amount of arms sent abroad by East Germany was less than that of other East European regimes, the CIA concluded that "of the USSR's Warsaw Pact allies, East Germany plays the most active role in support of Soviet objectives in the Third World."²⁴ In addition to supplying crucial weapons to pro-Soviet Marxist regimes in South Yemen, Mozambique, Ethiopia, Angola, and Nicaragua, "East Germany has provided assistance to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Syria and Iraq in support of Soviet Middle East policies." From 1964 to 1977, only

20. CIA, "Communist Aid Activities in Non-Communist Less Developed Countries, 1979 and 1954-79," pp. 4-5.

21. *Ibid.* This evidence, as well as the evidence from the East German files regarding increased arms shipments, casts doubt on Guy Laron's contention that Soviet aid to Third World countries, and to the Middle East in particular, was declining in this period. See Guy Laron, "Stepping Back from the Third World: Soviet Policy toward the United Arab Republic, 1965-1967," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Fall 2010), pp. 99-118. See also Galia Golan, "The Soviet Union and the Outbreak of the June 1967 War," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, (Winter 2006), Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 3-19.

22. CIA, "East Germany: Soviet Partner in the LDCs: An Intelligence Assessment" October 1983, in NARA, CREST.

23. *Ibid.*, p. iv.

24. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

29.2 percent of East Germany's \$150 million worth of weapons sales went to the Middle East (70 percent went to sub-Saharan Africa), but from 1978 to 1982 some 78.2 percent of the GDR's \$710 million in arms sales went to the Middle East. From 1964 to 1982, East Germany signed arms agreements with Middle Eastern countries worth \$600 million and delivered \$350 million worth of arms. These figures amounted to 70 percent of GDR agreements with and 60 percent of GDR arms deliveries to the LDCs. In 1982, of the 1,000 to 1,500 East German intelligence and military advisers working in the LDCs, 300–550 were in the Middle East.²⁵ From 1955 to 1982, East Germany extended \$800 million in economic aid to the Middle East, a figure that constituted 26 percent of the \$2.976 billion dollars in aid it had extended to LDCs. The largest recipients were Egypt before Anwar el-Sadat definitively broke with the Soviet bloc in 1975 (\$264 million), Iran (\$100 million), Iraq (\$84 million), and Syria (\$250 million).²⁶ The East Germans were also active in training journalists, and the GDR's official news service, ADA, supplied material to foreign media. The CIA estimated that from 1978 to 1982, 18,000 students, many from Africa and the Middle East received academic training in East Germany.²⁷

The CIA analysts wrote that East Germany was "an active partner in the USSR's drive to increase Communist presence and influence in the Third World." Though its programs were small compared to the Soviet efforts, they had "grown in size and scope to the point where East Germany now provides a number of complementary services that serve Moscow's foreign policy interests." Such services included "developing local security and intelligence services, establishing party and media links, and providing technical training courses," as well as consolidating pro-Soviet regimes in "Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, South Yemen, and Syria."²⁸ The CIA analysts concluded that "East Germany's investment has paid off well in gains in international recognition and prestige." Whereas in 1970 the GDR was recognized by only seven non-Communist countries, by 1982 it had "formal relations with over 130 and assistance agreements with 50." East Germany had "gained influence and respect, particularly in Africa and the Middle East where it has established close relations with a number of countries as well as with many of the leading

25. *Ibid.*, p. 5. The topic of East Germans who served in Arab countries and on Arab students who studied in East Germany deserves much greater research in the future.

26. CIA, "Table 3: East Germany: Economic Aid to Non-Communist LDCs, 1955–82," October 1983, in NARA, CREST, p. 9. For an earlier CIA report on East Germany, see CIA, Directorate of Intelligence, Office of Research and Reports, "Intelligence Brief: Recent Upsurge in East German Economic Assistance to Les Developed Countries," CIA/R 65-17, March 1965, pp. 1–3, in NARA, CREST.

27. CIA, "East Germany," p. 3.

28. *Ibid.*, p. iii.

African revolutionary movements and the PLO” and had “signed treaties of friendship and cooperation with Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, South Yemen, and Afghanistan and a joint declaration of friendship and cooperation with Syria.”²⁹ The archives of the East German Ministry for National Defense and Ministry for State Security (the Stasi) as well as the archives of the SED and GDR council of ministers offer a wealth of additional information about East German weapons deliveries that confirms and enriches the picture offered by the CIA.³⁰

Because Soviet and East German engagement in an undeclared war against Israel was connected to the major wars in the Middle East of 1967, 1973, and 1982, the East German interpretation of and response to the Six Day War offers a sensible place to begin. Although the Six Day War of June 1967 was an event of enormous importance in the Middle East and in the global Cold War, it was not a turning point for East Germany’s policy toward the Middle East. East German trade relations with Egypt began in the 1950s, and the GDR’s support for the Arab states surged after 1965. As East Germany’s minister for national defense, Heinz Hoffmann, wrote to Walter Ulbricht on 5 August 1970, “since 1965” East Germany had sent “weapons and equipment” to Egypt, Syria, Yemen, and Iraq.³¹

Although the East German turn against Israel long predated the Six-Day Mideast War, the response to the war by the Soviet bloc, including East Germany, is noteworthy because it brought these well-established views and relationships to the attention of a much larger international audience. On 7 June 1967, two days after the war began, the SED Politbüro along with officials from the GDR Foreign and Defense Ministries met in East Berlin to consider the events in the Middle East.³² The Politbüro was composed of veteran Communists, led by Ulbricht.³³ The assembled officials decided to assure Egyptian and Syrian leaders that “in connection with Israeli aggression, material support will be offered by the GDR to both states.” The Politbüro or-

29. Ibid., p. 6.

30. Storkmann’s *Geheime Solidarität* is a pioneering and important work that, for the first time, draws on these files to present details of the personalities, institutions, decisions, and results of East German arms deliveries to Third World countries.

31. Heinz Hoffmann to Walter Ulbricht, “Westdeutsche Pressemeldung über NVA Soldaten im Nahen Osten,” 5 August 1970, in Bundesarchiv-Militärarchiv, Freiburg (BAMA) DVW1 114478, pp. 70–71. See “Hoffmann, Heinz,” in Barth et al., *Wer war Wer in der DDR*, pp. 317–318.

32. “Anlage Nr. 1 zum Protokoll Nr. 7/67 vom 7.8.1967; “Betr.: Maßnahmen im Zusammenhang mit der Situation im Nahen und Mittleren Osten,” in SAPMO, ZPA, DY 30/J IV 2/2/1117, p. 7. The SED Politbüro members included Ulbricht, Friedrich Ebert, Gerhard Grüneberg, Fritz Hager, Honecker, Herman Matern, Gunter Mittag, Albert Norden, and Willi Stoph.

33. On the East German Communists, see Catherine Epstein, *The Last Revolutionaries: German Communists and Their Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); and Herf, *Divided Memory*.

dered Foreign Minister Otto Winzer to contact the General Secretary of the Arab League to convey the SED's condemnation of Israeli aggression and express solidarity with the Arab states. The Politbüro also ordered the media to highlight the legal position of the Arab states, to condemn “Israel's aggressive role and its conspiracies with the USA, Great Britain, and West Germany,” and to explain “the anti-imperialist stance of the GDR.”³⁴ The National Council of the National Front, led by Albert Norden, was to publish “statements by Jewish citizens of the GDR that express indignation about the Israeli aggression and the Israel-Washington-Bonn conspiracy.”³⁵

The SED Politbüro then ordered Prime Minister Stoph to see that East German “weapons and equipment now in the UAR [United Arab Republic; i.e., Egypt]” could be “used according to their [the Egyptian and Syrian governments'] own judgment,” and to “give priority to fulfilling the requests of the UAR and the Syrian Arab Republic for deliveries of goods in the non-civilian [i.e., military] area.”³⁶ Stoph was to send medical supplies to Egypt and Syria, make preparations for accepting their wounded soldiers and children “whose parents were victims of Israeli aggression,” and send unspecified specialists from the GDR to support the Arab states. Finally the “German-Arab Society” in collaboration with the Foreign Ministry was ordered “to organize measures of solidarity with the Arab peoples.”³⁷ In the resulting “Solidarity Action Middle East” from June to September 1967, medical supplies, tents, fire-fighting equipment, and textiles worth 5.25 million East German Marks (DDM) were sent on seventeen flights to Egypt, eight to Syria, three to Iraq, two to Jordan, and one to Algeria.³⁸

Klaus Storkmann's extensive research on East German arms deliveries to the Third World indicates that the East Germans sent 30 MiG-17F fighter jets to Egypt in August 1967 and twenty more in 1968. In June 1967 alone, East German arms deliveries to Egypt included 35 Soviet T-34/85 tanks; 48 82-millimeter (mm) grenade launchers; twelve 57-mm Soviet anti-tank cannons; six 120-mm grenade launchers; thirteen 107-mm Soviet recoilless rifles; 130 sniper rifles; 1,800 K9 carbines; and 80 7.9-mm light machine guns. The deliveries also included several varieties of AK-47 Kalashnikov

34. “Anlage Nr. 1 zum Protokoll Nr. 7/67 vom 7.8.1967,” pp. 7–8.

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 8–9.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

37. *Ibid.*

38. Ehrlich to Büro des Ministerrates Arbeitsgruppe Dr. Weiß z. Hd. Genossen Rademann, [East] Berlin, 16 November 1967, in Bundesarchiv Berlin (BAB), DC 20/13002 Ministerrates, pp. 96–101; and “Deutsch-Arabische Gesellschaft, Abschlußbericht, Betr.: Solidaritätssendungen nach den arabischen Ländern,” [East] Berlin, 3 November 1967, in BAB, DC 20/13002 Ministerrates, pp. 96–101.

machine guns along with the appropriate ammunition: 5,000 Kalashnikov 7.62-mm machine guns with 600,000 7.62-mm bullets; 6,000 MPI 41 Kalashnikov machine guns; and 3,500 Kalashnikov 43/44 machine guns with 11 million 7.62-mm bullets and 5 million 7.9-mm bullets; that is, 14,500 Kalashnikovs and 16.6 million bullets.³⁹ All these deliveries remained secret.

On 15 June 1967, Ulbricht gave a major address in Leipzig that became a classic statement of Communist anti-Zionism. The speech was published on the front page of *Neues Deutschland*. Whereas Islamists have incorporated the conspiracy theories of European anti-Semites who place an international Jewish conspiracy at the center of their hatreds, Ulbricht placed “U.S. imperialism” and its “global strategy” at the center of his concerns. He declared that along with the war in Vietnam the “imperialists” were conducting “another, no less criminal military aggression in the Middle East.”⁴⁰ He asserted that the Six-Day Mideast War had arisen not because of Arab threats to destroy Israel or because of movements of Arab armies closer to Israel’s borders or because of Nasser’s demands that UN peacekeeping forces be withdrawn from the Sinai and his decision to blockade the Gulf of Aqaba. Instead the war had arisen because “imperialist colonial rulers” were seeking to prevent the Arab countries from attaining economic independence and were aiming to secure “imperialist exploitation” of the riches of the region, that is, access to its oil. The Israeli government, Ulbricht claimed, had made itself into a “tool of a new, despicable imperialist aggression” and had “brought shame and disgrace on itself by playing the role of an imperialist aggressor against the Arab states.”⁴¹

Ulbricht attacked West German restitution payments to Israel. Israel, he argued, had been “pumped full” of military goods by the United States and West Germany, including “several hundred million dollars” worth of goods sent by West Germany as “restitution” for “the Jewish citizens of Poland, Czechoslovakia, and many other countries murdered by the Nazi regime.”⁴²

39. “Tabelle 14: Aufstellung der vom MvNV am 14. Juni 1967 gemeldeten Hilfslieferungen an die VAR (Auszüge),” in Storkmann, *Geheime Solidarität*, p. 600. Contrary to Guy Laron’s argument (see note 21 *supra*), Soviet and East European arms shipments to Egypt as well as Syria increased before and especially after the war of 1967.

40. Walter Ulbricht, “Aus der Rede des Vorsitzenden des Staatsrates der DDR, Walter Ulbricht, auf einer Wahlversammlung in Leipzig zu Frage der Lage im Nahen Osten und zur westdeutschen Expansionspolitik im Rahmen der USA-Globalstrategie,” 15 June 1967, in Wolfgang Bator and Angelika Bator, eds., *Der DDR und die arabische Staaten: Dokumenten, 1956–1982* (East Berlin: Staatsverlag der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1984), pp. 115–119.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 115.

42. In 1967 the United States had not yet become a major weapons supplier to Israel. Israel’s air force fought the Six-Day Mideast War primarily with French Mirage jets. The East Germans did not describe Israel as a tool of French imperialism, however. On the weapons of the combatants in the 1967 war, see Michael Oren, *Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 2003).

The Six-Day Mideast War, he added, was not a matter of "the survival of the Jews." Rather it was a matter of "class conflict between monopolistic oil interests and their imperialist governments on the one hand, and the Arab peoples, on the other." The imperialists wanted to prevent Egypt, Syria, Algeria, and other Arab states from following a "non-capitalist" path. It was both shameful and "tragic" that Israel was engaging in "imperialist aggression" because many people in Israel "have our sympathy" after what they had endured under Nazism. Rather than uphold human rights, "the government and militarists of the state of Israel [then still led by the Labor Party] are apparently blinded by chauvinism, racial madness, and class prejudice" so that they "believe they can violate the demands of international law and human rights."⁴³

Ulbricht dismissed the notion that "the survival of the Jews" in Israel was at stake. He blamed the war primarily on the United States. The "U.S. imperialists" had helped to "prepare the aggression" and had even "fixed the date of the aggression." If the United States had "told its war-loving tool [*kriegslüsternen Werkzeug*] Israel that a war could not take place, the Israeli militarists and their government would have had to abandon their aggression." The war would have been impossible "against the will of U.S. imperialism." According to Ulbricht, the Soviet Union had "done everything" it could to prevent a war in the Middle East "that could set world on fire."⁴⁴ He insisted that there had been "no military threat to Israel" at all.⁴⁵

Ulbricht went on to stress that, in the interest of world peace, "the Middle East aggressor" must be held in check. He warned that "the world cannot accept that a quarter century after the Second World War, the aggressor Israel and its men behind the scenes [*Hintermänner*] have created a 'Sinai protectorate' or a 'General government of Jordan' for renewed colonial oppression of the Arab peoples."⁴⁶ By using phrases such as "men behind the scenes," Ulbricht drew on the well of Nazi propaganda that had referred to Jewish conspiracies operating out of public view. When he referred to a "Sinai protectorate" and the "General Government of Jordan," he used language that he knew his listeners would associate with Nazi Germany's policies in Eastern Europe in World War II. The association of Israel with Nazi Germany became an enduring element of Communist, Arab, Palestinian, and West-European leftist anti-Zionism.

In June 1967, East Germany's political, diplomatic, and military support for the Arab states intensified. East German military and economic experts

43. *Ibid.*, p. 116.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 117.

45. *Ibid.*, p. 117–118.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 118.

traveled to Cairo and Damascus to express their solidarity with the Arab states and to back up words with agreements to deliver weapons.⁴⁷ Stoph sent messages of solidarity to his Arab counterparts, and East German diplomats in Cairo and Damascus participated in negotiations about expanded aid. East German Deputy Prime Minister Gerhard Weiss, who in 1969 became the coordinator of East German arms shipments to Third World states, traveled to Cairo and Damascus in July 1967 to reaffirm East German solidarity with Egypt and Syria, to assess what the GDR could do to help them, and to broach the subject of establishing formal diplomatic relations. On 1 July 1967, Weiss met with high-ranking officials in the Syrian government and the Ba'ath Party in Damascus. He concluded that "there can be no doubt that the majority of the leading forces [in Syria] continue to view the liquidation of Israel as their goal."⁴⁸ These "extreme views of the left-wing Baath leadership" were fueled by the "adventurous course of the Chinese leadership." Under the influence of Soviet and East European officials and the Syrian Communist Party, the Syrian authorities appeared to develop a "more realistic assessment of the balance of forces" with Israel. In the current situation therefore, "the most difficult task may consist in making clear to the Syrian leadership that it must come to terms with the existence of Israel."⁴⁹ In this memorandum, which was sent only to Ulbricht, Weiss seemingly rejected the goal of destroying the state of Israel. However, he welcomed Syria's "clear anti-imperialist position" and its support for an "alliance with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries." He found that in Syria in July 1967 "there was a widespread mood in favor of the establishment of diplomatic relations" with the GDR. The "clear and consequential stance of the GDR on the side of the Arab peoples" had led in Syria to a "considerable rise" in East Germany's reputation, especially in contrast to the "pro-Israeli and anti-Arab [*Araberfeindlich*] role of West German imperialism"—that is, the FRG.⁵⁰ Weiss's concerns about Syrian extremism are curious in view of the central role he later played as the key coordinator of East German arms deliveries to many Third World countries and movements, including Syria. Although East German diplomats and visiting officials were well aware of the depth of Syrian, Iraqi, and Palestinian intentions to destroy Israel, they never publicly or privately (as far as one can tell

47. Details of this intensified activity will be presented in a book I am now writing. The files of Walter Ulbricht and Gerhard Weiss stored in BAB, NY 4182/1339, Bestand Walter Ulbricht, and a variety of files from the Council of Ministers in BAB, DC 20/13002, are of particular importance.

48. Gerhard Weiss, "Zwischenberichte über meine Tätigkeit als Sonderbeauftragte des Vorsitzenden des Staatrates der DDR in der Syrischen Arabischen Republik," Damascus, 1 July 1967, in BAB, DC 20/ 12188, p. 35. The German reads, "Es kann aber kein Zweifel bestehen, daß die Mehrzahl der führenden Kräfte weiterhin die Liquidierung des Staats Israel al ihr Ziel betrachten."

49. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

from the records of private high-level meetings) urged the Arab governments to accept a compromise peace and Israel's existence.

On 9 July 1967, Weiss traveled to Cairo to meet with Nasser. He was accompanied by Paul Markowski, the head of the SED's International Relations Department, Wolfgang Kiesewetter, the deputy foreign minister; and Ernst Scholz, the GDR's envoy in Cairo.⁵¹ Weiss gave Nasser Arabic and English translations of Ulbricht's Leipzig speech and asked him how "the GDR could better support the UAR so that it could quickly overcome the consequences of Israeli aggression" (i.e., Egypt's massive defeat in the Six-Day Mideast War).⁵² Weiss raised the issue of establishing diplomatic relations. Alluding to recent events, Weiss reminded Nasser that the West Germans had "taken a clear stance against the UAR, against progress, and against the progressive Arab states," whereas the GDR had "taken a stance clearly in favor of the UAR and against imperialism." Weiss stressed that "precisely in the current situation," the establishment of diplomatic relations "would strengthen progressive forces in the Arab states, in the GDR, and in Europe." In a report to the SED Politbüro, Weiss expressed disappointment that Nasser did not intend "to mobilize the [Egyptian] people for decisive resistance against a possible extension of aggression."⁵³ Weiss said it was essential for the Warsaw Pact countries to convince the UAR leadership of the "absolute necessity of mobilizing and activating the masses of the people."⁵⁴ He did not specify what this mobilization of mass opinion in Egypt would be intended for or how it would promote the compromise and realism he appeared to desire in Damascus.

Following the Six-Day Mideast War, the Soviet Union decided on a program of rearmament and intensified training of the armed forces of the Arab states and the PLO. East Germany was a prominent contributor to this effort. In several remarkably frank assessments issued in September 1967 about "Israeli Aggression against the Arab States," senior officials in the GDR Ministry for National Defense echoed Soviet assessments that Israel's victory was attributable to three factors: the achievement of tactical surprise, insufficient preparation by the Arab armed forces, and a higher level of mobilization and combat readiness by the Israel troops compared to the Arabs.⁵⁵ Defeat was

51. Ernst Scholz, "Vermerk über das Gespräch des Sonderbeauftragten des Vorsitzenden des Staatsrates der DDR, Walter Ulbricht, und Stellvertreter des Vorsitzenden des Ministerrates, Dr. Gerhard Weiss, mit dem Präsidenten der VAR, Gamal Abdel Nasser, am 9. Juli 1967, von 12.00 bis 13.25 Uhr in dessen Residenz," 9 July 1967, in *Ministerrat der DDR in BAB DC 20/12188*, p. 19.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

53. *Ibid.*, pp. 25–32.

54. Gerhard Weiss, "Erster Bericht über meine Tätigkeit als Sonderbeauftragte des Vorsitzenden des Staatsrates in der VAR vom 6.11.7. 1967," Cairo, 11 July 1967, in *BAB, DC 20/12188*, pp. 43, 49, 55.

55. Ministerium für Nationale Verteidigung, Verwaltung Aufklärung, "Die israelische Aggression

caused not by inferior Soviet and Warsaw Pact weapons but by a lack of training and political consciousness in the Arab armed forces. Hence, the East German National People's Army (NVA) could help to remedy such shortcomings with military training of Arab armed forces, thereby helping to undermine "American global strategy" in the Middle East.⁵⁶ The East German officials agreed with an Israeli officer who said: "The Arabs had the better weapons but our people shoot better."⁵⁷ Although this detailed report echoed the regime's propaganda claims about U.S. and FRG military supplies to Israel, it offered no facts to support them. Instead it candidly acknowledged that "the French aviation industry was the primary supplier of the Israeli Air Force." The report also conceded that "none" of the Western countries including the United States and Britain, "openly sided with Israel" and that the United States had called for stopping deliveries of military supplies to the warring states.⁵⁸ The contrast between the confidential memorandum and Ulbricht's Leipzig speech is stark. The mixture of Marxism-Leninism and Clausewitzian political analysis in the assessment provided the basis for strengthening Soviet and East European ties with the Arab states, especially Syria, Iraq, Libya, and the PLO and its various splinter groups, all of which sought the destruction of the state of Israel.⁵⁹

Following the Six-Day Mideast War, the Arab states waged what they called a war of attrition—that is, terrorist raids—against Israel. At the UN, Israeli Ambassador Yosef Tekoah presented a detailed account of the numerous terrorist attacks on Israeli civilians during this period.⁶⁰ In 1967 and

gegen die arabischen Staaten 05. Bis 13.061967," VVS-Nr.: A7328, 13 June 1967, in BAMA Freiburg, DWW1-25741, p. 59.

56. "Lesematerial zum Thema 'Die israelische Aggression gegen die arabischen Staaten. Schlußfolgerungen für die Landesverteidigung der Deutsche Demokratischen Republik,'" VS-Nr.: A 12673, in BAMA Freiburg, DWW1-25750.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

59. On the institutional background, decision-making processes, key actors, and many details of East German military assistance to many Third World countries, including Nasser's Egypt, see Storkmann, *Geheime Solidarität*, esp. pp. 106–116 about the decision regarding Africa in 1967.

60. The campaign of terrorism—intentional attacks on non-combatant civilians—against Israel during these years did not arouse international attention as much as the terrorist attacks in Western Europe against civilian aviation and the massacre of Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics in 1972. Ambassador Tekoah frequently spoke at the UN about the terrorist attacks from 1967 to 1970. For example, on 23 June 1969, he wrote to the UN Secretary General, "Thus far this year there have been 600 acts of aggression committed from Jordanian territory. In the last two months there were 40 attacks by artillery, 107 by mortars, 17 by tanks, 17 by Katyusha rockets and 7 by anti-tank and recoilless guns. In addition there were 48 cases of mining and 24 attempts to cross the cease-fire line." See Yosef Tekoah "Letter dated 23 June 1969 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations Addressed to the Secretary General," UN Security Council, 23 June 1969, in UN Archive, S/9274, pp. 1–2. On the terrorist attacks by Palestinian terrorists in West Germany and other European countries in 1970, see Wolfgang Kraushaar, "Wann endlich beginnt bei Euch der Kampf gegen die heilige Kuh Israel?": München 1970: Über die antisemitischen Wurzeln des deutschen Terrorismus

1968, the GDR expanded its cost-free weapons assistance to the Arab states.⁶¹ The files of Defense Minister Hoffmann’s office reveal that “cost free assistance deliveries [*Kostenlose Hilfslieferungen*]” included 30 MiG-17 F and 20 MiG-17 fighter jets, 48 jet engines, 60 anti-tank rocket-propelled grenade launchers, 17,500 Kalashnikov machine guns (MPi-41, MPi-43/44), 430 light machine guns with munitions, recoilless rifles, 150,000 land mines, 3,500 hand grenades, and helmets, uniforms, and back packs.⁶² Additional deliveries to the Saika guerilla organization in Syria included six T-34 tanks, 560 machine guns, 3,000 machine pistols, 2,000 carbines, 10,000 hand grenades, and 260 binoculars.⁶³ On 13 May 1969 the SED Politbüro agreed to send—at no cost—5,000 Kalashnikov machine guns (43/44) and 12 million 7.9-mm cartridges to Iraq’s “people’s militia.”⁶⁴

On 30 September 1969, in a major decision, Stoph established an inter-agency group to oversee shipments of “military-technical armaments to national states.” The group ordered “the distribution and implementation of exports and cost-free deliveries of military-technical equipment as well as solidarity actions of a military type in national states.”⁶⁵ Stoph appointed Weiss to lead what was called the Special Foreign Trade (*Spezieller Außenhandel*) Office. Weiss coordinated activities by the East German National Defense, Interior, and State Security Ministries with two offices in the Foreign Trade Ministry: the Division of Special Foreign Trade (*Bereich Spezieller Außenhandel*) and the Foreign Trade Division: Technical Engineering Foreign Trade. For the next fifteen years, the group oversaw “solidarity shipments” (*Solidaritätssendungen*) of weapons; that is, those sent without cost as well as other arms that were sold.⁶⁶

[“When will you finally begin the battle against the holy cow, Israel?”: Munich 1970: On the anti-Semitic roots of German terrorism] (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2013).

61. “Kostenlose Hilfslieferungen, GVS-Nr.: A 76 938,” in BAMA, DVWI 115671, MfNV Sekr. D. Ministers, Unterlagen zur Vorbereitung d. Militärdelegation in den arabischen Staaten, pp. 6–7.

62. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

63. “Kostenlose Hilfslieferungen, GVS-Nr.: A 76 950,” in BAMA, DVWI 115671, MfNV Sekr. D. Ministers, Unterlagen zur Vorbereitung d. Militärdelegation in den arabischen Staaten, pp. 30–31.

64. Generaloberst (Colonel General) Heinz Kefler to Generalleutnant Borning, East Berlin, 9 July 1970, in BAMA, MfNV, DVWI 115537, p. 105.

65. Willi Stoph, “Vorsitzender des Ministerrates Anordnung über die Verbreitung und Durchführung von Exporten und Hilfssendungen military-technischer Ausrüstungen sowie von Hilfeleistungen auf militärischem Gebiet in Nationalstaaten vom 30. September 1969,” and Willi Stoph to Erich Honecker, Ministerrates der DDR, 1 October 1969, in BAB, DC 20/16653.

66. For a discussion of the office of the Spezieller Außenhandel, see Storkmann, *Geheime Solidarität*, pp. 121–124; and Ministerrates der DDR, “Spezieller Außenhandel und Solidaritätssendungen,” 1965–1977, in BAB, DC 20/ 12188. See also Heinz Kefler to Paul Markowski, [East] Berlin, 27 July 1970, in BAMA, MfNV, DVWI 115537, pp. 107–108. See “Weiss, Gerhard,” in Barth et al., *Wer war Wer in der DDR*, pp. 779–780. Alexander Schalck-Golodkowski, an official in East Germany’s Ministry for Foreign Trade, was the head of its office Commercial Coordination (*Kommerzielle Koordinierung*, hence “KoKo”) from 1966 to 1986. KoKo and Schalck-Golodkowski played an impor-

Given that East German arms shipments were coordinated with the Soviet Union, the establishment of the interagency group led by Weiss should be understood as part of the general expansion of Soviet and East-bloc arms shipments to the radical Arab states and the PLO in the 1970s, an expansion evident in the East German files and one documented as well in CIA reports. To be sure, the presence of Israeli nuclear weapons and the dangers of escalation to nuclear war with the United States did introduce limits and notes of caution for Soviet and East European activities in the Middle East. Yet the evidence in the East German files, as well as that gathered by Western intelligence, does not support the view that the Soviet Union was “stepping back” from support for radical Third World states and guerilla movements. On the contrary, the flow of Soviet and East European arms and economic aid to the Middle East and also to North and sub-Saharan Africa increased during these years. Placing limits on the scale of escalation was compatible with a considerable expansion of military aid to the Arab states in the hope of defeating Israel and reducing or eliminating American influence in the Middle East. In these years, the Soviet Union and its allies believed that “the correlation of forces” was shifting in their favor and against the United States and its allies and that victory in the Middle East would be crucial to winning the global conflict.

By 1969, Ulbricht’s passionate support for the Palestinians extended to proposing that “volunteers” from the Warsaw Pact, presumably including East Germans, join in the “war of attrition” against Israel. On 17 October 1969 he told Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev that it was “necessary to conduct a comprehensive international political action and a war of attrition against the Israeli troops in the occupied territories.”⁶⁷ He proposed sending “volunteers from the socialist countries” to serve as “flyers, tank commanders (drivers), and special forces” to fight the Israelis.⁶⁸ Although Soviet “advisers” were working with the Egyptian armed forces, East German involvement appeared limited to training forces in the GDR. The surviving files do not contain evidence that NVA personnel engaged in combat with the Israelis.

The East German proposal to have Warsaw Pact soldiers fight against

tant role in East German arms sales by receiving foreign currency. On Schalck-Golodkowski’s non-military activities, see Jonathan R. Zatlin, *The Currency of Socialism: Money and Political Culture in East Germany* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

67. Walter Ulbricht to Leonid Brezhnev, “An den Generalsekretär des ZK der KPdSU Genossen Leonid Iljitsche Breshnev,” 17 October 1969, in SAPMO, ZPA, Büro Walter Ulbricht, DY 30/3666, pp. 114–120.

68. *Ibid.*, pp. 118–120. See also W. Ulbricht to Soviet Ambassador Petr Abrasimov, 3 February 1970, in SAPMO, ZPA, Büro Walter Ulbricht, DY 30/3666, p. 159; and “Dokument 39: Schreiben von Walter Ulbricht an Leonid Brezhnev vom 27. Oktober 1969,” in Timm, *Hammer, Zirkel, Davidstern*, pp. 535–536.

Israel may have been spurred by the GDR's diplomatic successes in the spring and summer of 1969, when the anti-Zionist card paid big political dividends. On 30 April 1969, Iraq announced its decision to establish diplomatic relations with the GDR.⁶⁹ The breakthrough was due in part to the persistent efforts of Otto Winzer, who served as East Germany's foreign minister until his death in 1975.⁷⁰ The joint declaration issued by Winzer and Iraqi Foreign Minister Abdul Karim al-Sheikhly on 10 May 1969 at the conclusion of a week of negotiations in Baghdad made a clear connection between Iraq's decision to establish diplomatic relations and East Germany's position regarding Israel. The two foreign ministers stressed the "commonalities of struggle of both now befriended regimes and peoples against the forces of imperialism, neo-Nazism, colonialism, and Zionism and stress the need for closer cooperation of both states and peoples as well as all anti-imperialist forces in order to check the maneuvers of imperialism and Zionism." They described Israel as "racist, imperialist, reactionary and aggressive" and the "spearhead of imperialism in the Arab world." Israel "threatened peace and international security. The peoples of the GDR and Iraq will struggle fiercely in a common front against this situation." Winzer and al-Sheikhly also denounced the military and political support for Israel by the United States and West Germany. The East Germans underscored "the sympathy of the regime and the people of the GDR for the just struggle of the Palestinian Arab peoples against Israeli aggression" and recognized the rights of the Palestinians to "self-determination and resistance against Israeli occupation."⁷¹

The description of Israel as a racist state, an imperialist spearhead, and even as a state similar to Nazi Germany was thus embedded in the beginnings of diplomatic relations between the two states in 1969, six years before the UN General Assembly passed the "Zionism is racism" resolution of November 1975. Typical of the rhetorical fog in which Soviet-bloc and East German policy operated, in recognizing the Palestinian "right of resistance against Israeli occupation" the joint declaration offered sufficient ambiguity to legitimate Palestinian terrorism against Israel forces in the West Bank and Gaza as well as against Israel proper. Faced with Arab governments intent on destroying the state of Israel, Winzer and other East German diplomats nevertheless underscored their "solidarity" with these "anti-imperialist" positions. Though

69. See Timm, *Hammer, Zirkel, Davidstern*, chs. 7–9. See the documents in Bator and Bator, eds., *Der DDR und die arabischen Staaten*.

70. For Winzer's attack on Leo Zuckerman's association of the Jews with democracy, see Herf, *Divided Memory*, pp. 130–132. See "Winzer, Otto," in Barth, et al., *Wer war Wer in der DDR*, pp. 799–800.

71. "Aus dem Gemeinsamen Kommuniqué über den Besuch des Ministers für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten der DDR, Otto Winzer, in der Republik Irak vom 6. bis 11. Mai 1969," Baghdad, 10 May 1969, in Bator and Bator, eds., *Der DDR und die arabischen Staaten*, p. 147.

the East Germans never publically called for the destruction of Israel, neither did they publicly criticize calls by their Arab allies to do so. On the one hand, the East Germans paid occasional lip service to UN Security Council Resolution 242 of 22 November 1967, which calls for Israel to leave territories occupied in June 1967, thus possibly implying recognition of Israel's right to exist. Yet in public statements, East German leaders never clearly stated that Israel had the right to exist. The overwhelming focus of their public descriptions of Israel was on its supposedly imperialist, aggressive, and racist nature. East German policy was thus a calculated game of cat and mouse. The East Germans denounced Israel; supplied weapons, money, and training to Arab states and organizations that were at war with Israel; but refrained from calling openly for Israel's destruction. Further, the government files do not offer evidence that East German diplomats and soldiers counseled moderation and compromise when their Arab counterparts in confidential meetings vowed to destroy Israel and not merely to drive it out of the territories occupied in 1967. Quite the contrary, they repeated the mantras of international solidarity against the evils of imperialism and Zionism.

The anti-Zionist/anti-Israeli card completely shattered West German efforts to prevent other states from bestowing diplomatic recognition on East Germany. Sudan (3 June 1969), Assad's Syria (5 June 1969), and Nasser's Egypt and South Yemen (10 July 1969) followed the Iraqi decision in quick succession and began diplomatic relations with the GDR.⁷² In the coming twenty years, no Arab state was a more implacable foe of Israel than Assad's Syria. Winzer stated that the establishment of relations between East Germany and Syria would be "an effective blow against the alliance of the forces of imperialism and Zionism in the Middle East, and especially against the alliance of aggressive West German imperialism with aggressive Israel."⁷³ In contrast to West Germany's "anti-Arab policies," the GDR had been a "reliable friend of the Arab states," evident in its denunciation of "Israeli aggression" in 1967 and subsequent solidarity with the Arab states. Israel's "aggression" not only endangered peace and security in the Middle East but "in the most serious manner also endangers world peace." The notion that Israel endangered not just regional but world peace remained a constant theme of Communist anti-Zionism. Winzer accurately stated that "in the twenty years of its existence, the GDR had always supported the just cause of the Arab peoples. This [pro-Arab] stance formed the stable foundation for close friendship with the

72. Ibid., pp. 153–169.

73. "Rede des Ministers für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten der DDR, Otto Winzer, bei der Unterzeichnung der Vereinbarungen zwischen der DDR und der Syrischen Arabischen Republik in Damaskus," Damascus, 5 June 1967, in Bator and Bator, eds., *Der DDR und die arabische Staaten*, p. 155.

SAR [Syrian Arab Republic].” Moreover, he claimed that the GDR was the home of the “centuries old humanistic tradition of German-Arab friendship.”⁷⁴ Winzer did not elaborate on which humanistic tradition he had in mind—but the most recent forms of “German-Arab friendship” included Wilhemian Germany’s efforts to foster a Muslim jihad against Britain and France during World War I and Nazi Germany’s cooperation with Haj Amin al-Husseini and Rashid al-Kilani during World War II and the Holocaust. In any case, Winzer clearly articulated, on the one hand, the connection between East German hostility to Israel and support for the Arab states and Palestinians who were at war with it and, on the other hand, the reasons for Arab willingness to antagonize West Germany and establish diplomatic relations with the GDR.

An increase in East German weapons deliveries was both a precondition and a consequence of the recognition breakthrough of June and July 1969. The increase was also part of the resupply and rearmament of the Arab states coordinated by the Soviet Union. In late April of 1969, when preparing to travel abroad, Winzer asked General Heinz Kessler, the deputy defense minister and head of the East German air force, whether the GDR could sell Syria 60 MiG-17 and 30 MiG-15 fighter jets.⁷⁵ Kessler replied that items for sale included 24 MiG-17 F, 16 MiG-15 UTI, and 11 MiG-17 fighter jets and that in the course of 1969 another 7 MiG-15 fighter jets would become available. In 1970, an additional 30 MiG-17 and 10 MiG-15 aircraft were offered.⁷⁶ International “anti-imperialist” solidarity had the added benefit of becoming a source of much needed foreign exchange from the oil-rich Middle East.⁷⁷ The East Germans had been delivering MiG-21 jets before Egypt offered formal diplomatic recognition. In 1971, East German weapons deliveries to Egypt included 29,000 machine pistols, 85,000 pairs of protective clothing, and twelve kits of repair parts for MiG-21s. The East Germans agreed that the Egyptians could pay on credit.⁷⁸

Hoffmann, who served as East German minister for defense from 1960 to 1985, was a central figure during the emergence and growth of the GDR’s

74. Ibid.

75. Heinz Kessler to Gerhard Weiss (copy to Otto Winzer), 23 April 1969, in BAMA, Schriftverkehr mit Staatliche Organen MR, MdI, MfS, MFAA 1969. VAR. SAR. Iraq, in BAMA, MfNV, DVW1 115537, pp. 26–28.

76. Kessler to Weiss, “Aufstellung über mögliche Abgaben von Flugzeugen MiG-15 UTI und MiG-17 F,” 23 April 1969, in BAMA, MfNV, DVW1 115537, p. 29. See also “Kefßler, Heinz,” in Barth et al., *Wer war Wer in der DDR*, p. 365.

77. On weapons and foreign exchange, see also Storkmann, *Geheime Solidarität*, pp. 89–106.

78. “Arabische Republik Ägypten (ARÄ): Beziehungen der speziellen Außenwirtschaft zu den militärischen Organen der ARÄ,” in BAMA DVW1 115671, MfNV Sekr. D. Ministers, Unterlagen zur Vorbereitung d. Militärdelegation in den arabischen Staaten, pp. 37–38.

alliance with the Arab states and with “national liberation movements” in the Third World, including the PLO. From 1973 until his death in 1983, he was a member of the SED Politbüro.⁷⁹ In October 1971, he led an East German military delegation on a trip to Iraq, Egypt, and, most importantly, Assad’s Syria. There he met with Assad as well as with the chief of the Syrian General Staff, Mustafa Tlass. Tlass informed Hoffmann of his “unlimited admiration of fascist Blitzkrieg strategy and of the actual accomplishments of the bourgeois German military.” Such views, Hoffmann wrote, expressed a tendency that “is clearly evident also among other leading officers of the Arab armed forces.”⁸⁰ Hoffmann’s report of the trip does not indicate that he urged Tlass to reconsider his admiration for the military accomplishments of Nazi Germany’s armed forces.

In an interview with Syrian journalists, Hoffmann said that the Syrians would “be victorious in your battle against the common enemy. We are fighting against a common enemy! The American imperialist support our enemies in Europe and give Israel money and weapons to protect their imperialist interests.”⁸¹ The East Germans and the Syrians were “conducting a common battle [*Kampf*] against the imperialist and Zionist forces.” He expressed confidence that “the Arab peoples” would “be victorious over their enemy so that he will have to pull his troops back from occupied Arab territories.”⁸² The mixture of antagonism against the “enemy” Israel combined with ambiguity about the meaning of victory was typical of Soviet-bloc statements of the period. Did victory mean the complete destruction of Israel and its replacement with the non-Zionist state envisioned by the PLO? Did that mean the expulsion of the vast majority of the Jewish population as the PLO Charter of 1968 implies? Or was it merely a call to reduce Israel’s size to what the Israelis believed were the indefensible borders of 1967? What was the meaning of “occupied Arab territories”? Were they the West Bank and Gaza or all of Israel? The East Germans followed the Soviet lead in refusing to offer clarity

79. Hoffmann joined the German Communist Party in 1930, fought in the Spanish Civil War, survived the Nazi years in the Soviet Union, returned to East Berlin in 1946, and worked with Ulbricht and Politbüro member Wilhelm Pieck. He studied at the General Staff Academy in the Soviet Union in 1955–1957, became the GDR’s deputy minister for national defense in 1957 and army chief of staff in 1958, before becoming minister for national defense. See “Hoffmann, Heinz,” *Wer war Wer in der DDR*, pp. 317–318.

80. “Bericht über den Aufenthalt einer offiziellen Militärdelegation der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik in der Republik Iraq, der Syrischen Republik und der Arabischen Republik Ägypten in der Zeit vom 13.–31. Oktober 1971,” report prepared by East German military delegation to Iraq, Syria, and Egypt, n.d., in BAMA, DVW 1/115673/, p. 17.

81. “Heinz Hoffman interview with Jaych-Ach-Chaab,” Damascus, October 1971, MfNV, Schriftverkehr des Ministers, Militärdelegation der DDR nach Syrien, Ägypten, Irak, in BAMA DVW1/115673, p. 4.

82. *Ibid.*, pp. 5–6.

on these issues even as they called for a Geneva conference to bring about a negotiated end to the conflict. Their Arab interlocutors might reasonably have concluded that the Soviet and East German leaders’ refusal to clarify these points meant that the Communists also defined victory to mean the destruction of the state of Israel. Neither the Soviets nor their East German ally simply stated that Israel had a right to exist and that calls for its destruction were unacceptable. On the contrary, they both attacked Anwar Sadat and others who urged the Arab world to make peace with Israel and lent “solidarity” to uncompromising and radical forces in the region.

The relationship between the GDR and Syria, and between Hoffman and Tlass, deepened in the next decade. At the end of a visit to Damascus in May 1983, Hoffmann raised a toast to the Syrians and to Tlass.⁸³ Following the familiar denunciations of Israel, imperialism, and Zionism, Hoffmann extolled the Syrian and GDR friendship as well as “the community borne of struggle [*Kampfgemeinschaft*] of soldiers of the Syrian armed forces and of the National Peoples’ Army of the GDR, to the health of all members of the Syrian armed forces and to its Minister of Defense, comrade General Mustafa Tlass!”⁸⁴ Given the Ba’th regime’s view that Israel needed to be destroyed by force of arms, Tlass and Assad could plausibly conclude from such effusive toasts and from the huge amounts of military and economic assistance coming from the Soviet bloc that Israel’s destruction would be, at worst, a matter of indifference to the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies and that at best it would be a strategic victory in the global conflict with the United States and NATO—a victory of even greater significance than the Communist victory in Vietnam.

Honecker, the SED General Secretary and leader of East Germany from 1971 to October 1989, continued and intensified the policies of his predecessor, Ulbricht. He adopted a high profile of “solidarity” with Communist and radical leftist armed movements in the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa, including a very public embrace of Yasser Arafat and the PLO from the early 1970s to the end of the regime. The PLO’s 1968 Charter unequivocally calls for the destruction of the state of Israel as a result of an “armed struggle”; it is thus a declaration of war against the Jewish state. Moreover, because the 1968 Charter declares that only Jews who came to “Palestine” before 1947 will be allowed to stay in the Palestinian state that will replace Israel, it is also a document that envisages the expulsion of the approximately 1.8 million Jews who were born in or migrated to Israel since 1947. Effectively, the 1968 Charter is

83. Heinz Hoffmann, “Empfang in der Botschaft der DDR,” MfNV Sekr. des Ministers, Militärdelegation der DDR nach Syrien, Ägypten, Irak, in BAMA DVW1/115673.

84. *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 10.

a program to complete the ethnic cleansing of Jews from the Middle East that had begun with the Arab-Israeli war of 1948. The Charter refers to all of Israel, not just the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, as suffering under “Zionist occupation,” and it rejects any negotiated settlement that leaves Israel intact. The 1968 Charter justifies terrorism waged against that vast majority of Jews who, it insists, have no right to be in Palestine in the first place.⁸⁵ To express “solidarity” with the PLO in these years was to offer support for this policy. It was precisely in the years in which the PLO terror against Israel was most intense that Arafat’s photograph appeared frequently on the front page of *Neues Deutschland*—often literally embracing a smiling Honecker. These were also the years when Soviet and East German forms of assistance and support for the PLO expanded. Even as the GDR insisted that support for the Arab states and the PLO had nothing to do with anti-Semitism, East German leaders uttered not a single word of criticism of the PLO’s terrorist attacks on Israeli civilians and on Israel’s Jewish supporters in Western Europe. The lack of self-reflection about the fact that the self-described anti-fascist German regime was actively supporting those who were at war with Israel remains one of the most bizarre features of the history of East German Communism.

Arafat visited East Berlin for the first time from 30 October to 2 November 1971 at the invitation of the GDR’s Afro-Asian Solidarity Committee (AASK).⁸⁶ On several more visits in 1973, he met SED Politbüro members Herman Axen and Gerhard Grüneberg. Grüneberg became the Politbüro’s key contact person with the PLO.⁸⁷ In August 1973, the East Germans celebrated Arafat as a major attraction of the World Youth Festival in East Berlin. He then held the first of many meetings with Honecker. The East German leaders were so enthusiastic about Arafat and the PLO that in August 1973 East Germany became the first of the Soviet-bloc states to open a PLO

85. “The Palestinian National Charter: Resolutions of the Palestine National Council 1–17 July 1968,” in Yale Law School, Avalon Project Documents in Law and Diplomacy, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/plocov.asp. For a close reading of the PLO Charter that examines its calls for the destruction of Israel, see Yehoshafat Harkabi, *The Palestinian Covenant and Its Meaning* (London: Valentine, Mitchell, 1979). It is a testament to the success of Soviet, Arab, and PLO propaganda of these decades that, first, these racist implications of the PLO Charter never became an issue of widespread international public discussion. Instead, it was Zionism that was equated with racism. Similarly, the Palestinian refugee issue received far more attention than did the expulsion of almost a million Jews from the Arab states following the war of 1948. On the latter issue, see Georges Bensoussan, *Juifs en Pays Arabes: Le grand déracinement, 1850–1975* (Paris: Tallandier, 2012); Martin Gilbert, *In Ishmael’s House: A History of Jews in Muslim Lands* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); and Shulewitz Hillel, ed., *The Forgotten Millions: The Modern Jewish Exodus from Arab Lands* (New York: Continuum, 1999).

86. Timm, *Hammer, Zirkel, Davidstern*, pp. 269–275. On relations between East Germany and the PLO, see Lutz Maeke, “Politik zwischen Antifaschismus, Antizionismus und Antisemitismus: Die DDR im Nahen Osten—Die Beziehungen des SED Staates mit Israel und der Palästinensischen Befreiungsorganisation (PLP),” Master’s Thesis, Technische Universität Dresden.

87. “Grüneberg, Gerhard,” in Barth, et al., *Wer war Wer in der DDR*, p. 252.

consulate in its capital, a year before the Soviet Union did. The consular agreement extolled a common “struggle against imperialism and Zionism.”⁸⁸ Winzer denied that the agreement included military assistance and training. However, the agreement signed by Arafat and Grüneberg on 2 August 1973 included provisions for delivery of “solidarity goods in the civilian and non-civilian areas.” In the agreement between the SED and the PLO in 1975 for 1976/1977, the East Germans gave the PLO “solidarity goods” with a value of 5 million DDM and “non-civilian”—that is, military—equipment worth an unspecified amount.⁸⁹

East Germany’s refusal to publicly denounce Palestinian terrorism was vividly in evidence following the massacre of the Israeli wrestling team at the Munich Olympics by terrorists of the Black September organization on 5 September 1972. Though Arafat publicly denied that the PLO was involved, on 17 September 1972 he wrote to Honecker about what he called “the action in Munich.” He said that the PLO “was not responsible for the organization Black September,” but he did not directly say that he and the PLO had nothing to do with the attack. The absence of a firmer denial must have suggested to Honecker and his comrades that Arafat and the PLO leadership were, as Western intelligence agencies assumed, somehow involved. In any case, Arafat did not criticize the attack in Munich. He was sending the note because “we [the Executive Committee of the PLO] approve, treasure, are proud of and take hope and strength from the sincere friendship for our cause and your sympathy that you have shown us as well as your recognition of our right in struggle.” He called for “understanding of the action in Munich from the viewpoint of the general problem and its historical events with all of their political, national and human dimensions. If one wants to really distinguish between the deep causes and the peripheral and secondary events, it is futile and useless to view the action apart from the stream of events and from their whole historical framework.”⁹⁰ Thus, Arafat justified the Munich attack.

On 27 November 1972, Honecker sent a public letter of greetings to the “Arab People’s Conference in Support of the Palestinian Revolution” taking place in Beirut.⁹¹ In the name of the SED’s Central Committee and “of the

88. *Ibid.*, p. 276.

89. Gerhard Grüneberg and Yasser Arafat, “Vereinbarung zwischen der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands und der Palästinensischen Befreiungsorganisationen (PLO) für die Jahre 1976/1977,” 1 December 1975, in SAPMO, ZPA, DY 30/9529, “Büro des Politbüro des ZK der SED 1972–1989,” pp. 1–3.

90. “Notizen und Schreiben außenpolitischen Charakters zwischen der DDR und der Palästinensischen Befreiungsbewegung zur Unterstützung der PLO durch die DDR, 1972, 1974, 1978–1979,” Yasser Arafat to Erich Honecker, 17 September 1972, in Politisches Archiv des Auswärtiges Amt, Abt. Naher- und Mittlerer Osten, MfAA, C 7.667 (ZR 2040/01), pp. 48–49.

91. Abteilung Internationale Verbindungen, “Entwurf eines Grußschreibens: An die arabische

whole people” of the GDR, he sent “warm greetings” to the conference, which was an expression of “strengthening of the unity and determination of broad strata of the Arab peoples in struggle against imperialism, Zionism and reaction.” He did not mention the Munich massacre. Instead he referred to what he called “the string of recent Israeli acts of aggression against the Republic of Lebanon and the Syrian Arab Republic.” They had demonstrated “yet again that Israel, with the support of the USA and other imperialist states is not ready to agree to a peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict.”⁹² The “history of the worldwide confrontation with imperialism” had shown that the unity of the “anti-imperialist front” led by the Soviet Union and the “socialist community of states” lay behind “every success in the struggle for self-determination and social progress.” East Germany, “in the future as in the past,” stood “firmly on the side of the Arabic-Palestinian people, its resistance movement” and supported its right to self-determination.⁹³ Honecker never deviated from this pattern of maintaining silence about Palestinian terror aimed at Israelis while denouncing Israeli retaliation.

The smiling faces of Arafat and Honecker became a ubiquitous feature of the GDR-PLO alliance. The Stasi files reveal further elements of its operational dimensions. From 1957 to the end of the regime in 1989, Erich Mielke was the director of the Ministry of State Security. He was a member of the SED’s Central Committee from 1950 to 1989 and of the Politbüro from 1976 to 1989. In May 1979, he commissioned a study of “Information about Activities of Representative of the Palestine Liberation Movement in Association with International Terrorists to Include the GDR in the Preparation of Acts of Violence in the Countries of Western Europe.”⁹⁴ The Stasi had learned that “groups within the Palestinian liberation movement in association with anarcho-terrorist groups have intensified their efforts to use the territory of the GDR as a logistical base and starting point for the implementation of acts of violence in Western Europe.” East Germany’s “generous stance of solidarity toward the national liberation movement of the Arab peoples is seen by these groups as offering favorable conditions for the planning and implementation

Volkskonferenz zur Unterstützung der palästinensischen Revolution,” Berlin, 24 November 1972, in SAPMO, ZPA, DY 30 9529, pp. 1–2. See also “Kongreß zur Unterstützung des palästinensischen Volkes eröffnet: Delegation der DDR überbrachte Grüße des ZK der SED,” *Neues Deutschland*, 28 November 1972, p. 1.

92. “Entwurf eines Grußschreibens,” pp. 1–2.

93. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

94. “Information über Aktivitäten von Vertretern der Palästinensischen Befreiungsbewegung in Verbindung mit internationalen Terroristen zur Einbeziehung der DDR bei der Vorbereitung von Gewaltakten in Ländern Westeuropas,” 8 May 1979, in Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik (BStU), Archiv der Zentralstelle (AZ), MfS, Z 3021, pp. 1–16.

of operations.” The GDR’s “communications possibilities” provided a further boost. In the wake of “the separate peace” which is to say the Camp David Accords signed in April 1979 by Israel and Egypt, “the Palestinian Liberation Movement activated the planning and preparation of acts of violence seen as acts of war against Western countries. Such activities that are based on the territory of the GDR create political dangers and damage our national state security interests.”⁹⁵ Since the beginning of March 1979, the Stasi was aware that practitioner of terrorism Ilich Ramirez-Sanchez, better known as “Carlos,” had been a guest of the first secretary of the embassy of the Peoples’ Democratic Republic of Yemen in East Berlin. Other persons that concerned the Stasi residing in East Berlin were PLO officials Abu Hisham, an aide to Salem Kalef (alias Abu Ayad), the head of the PLO’s intelligence service; Nabil Kouleilat, the director of the PLO’s office in East Berlin; and members of the West German June 2nd Movement.⁹⁶ Moreover, the Stasi knew that Arab, Palestinian, West German, and West European terrorist organizations had been using East Germany and the Soviet-bloc states as a base from which to attempt to launch terrorist attacks in Western Europe and that these groups had plans to continue to do so in the future. The report viewed such actions—which Western intelligence agencies could trace back to East Germany and the Soviet bloc—as harmful to East Germany’s national interests.⁹⁷ Mielke decided to intensify cooperation between the Stasi and the PLO’s intelligence services to prevent the attacks in West Germany and Western Europe while also aiding the PLO in its campaign against Israel. In June and August 1979, he held discussions with Ayad.⁹⁸ In February 1980, they agreed that a permanent representative of the PLO security services would be stationed in East Berlin and that a Stasi officer would be a contact officer with the PLO in Beirut.⁹⁹ From then until the collapse of the regime in 1989, Ayad or his second in command, Amin al-Hindi, met several times a year with Mielke or Gerhard Neiber, the director of Division XXII, the office for fighting terrorism (*Terrorismusbekämpfung*). The agreement called for “opera-

95. *Ibid.*, pp. 1–2.

96. *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 7.

97. “Information über Aktivitäten von Vertretern der Palästinensischen Befreiungsbewegung in Verbindung mit internationalen Terroristen zur Einbeziehung der DDR bei der Vorbereitung von Gewaltakten in Ländern Westeuropas,” [East] Berlin, 8 May 1979, in BStU, AZ, MfS, Z 3021, Hauptverwaltung, pp. 1–16.

98. Stellvertreter des Ministers, Genossen Generalmajor Neiber, “Vorlage zum Einsatz eine Vertreters der Vereinigen PLO-Sicherheit in der DDR,” 1 April 1980, in BStU, AZ, Ministerium für Staatssicherheit (MfS) Hauptverwaltung (HA) XXII, Nr. 17508, pp. 64–69.

99. “Vorlage zum Einsatz eine ständigen Mitarbeiters der Vereinigten PLO-Sicherheit in der DDR,” [East] Berlin, 29 February 1980, in BStU, AZ, MfS HA XXII, Nr. 17508, pp. 70–85.

tional cooperation” between the Ministry for State Security (*Ministerium für Staatssicherheit*, or MfS) and the PLO intelligence service in East Germany.¹⁰⁰

On 15 July 1980 Ayad had a discussion with officials in Division XXII about “terrorist forces and their activities.”¹⁰¹ Before offering twenty page-long assessments of various terrorist organizations, Ayad candidly explained the meaning of some important terms. The PLO, he said, distinguished between “right wing terrorism,” “left wing adventurers,” and “terrorist forces that are active in the interest of the Palestinian resistance movement.” While it rejected both “right wing terrorists” and “left wing adventurers,” the “PLO supported the other terrorist forces and at times worked together with them.”¹⁰² Ayad avoided euphemisms. He understood terrorism to be the intentional targeting of civilians and that it was distinct from acts of war carried out against military forces. In relevant UN committees, the PLO, the GDR, and the Soviet bloc as a whole dismissed Western attacks on “international terrorism” as imperialist propaganda. However, when speaking frankly to one another, these officials understood the nature of terrorism and were equally frank about supporting it.

The Stasi officials, probably Neiber and perhaps Mielke as well, replied that they “could support a certain toleration of left-oriented terrorist forces so long as it preserves strict secrecy, obedience to [East German] law, and precludes any kind of political or any other kind of damage for the GDR and its allies.” Ayad assured his counterparts that the PLO agreed with the MfS on this matter. He suggested that agreement about these issues was a basis on which “the exchange of information could continue to be improved.” Ayad then offered “details about terrorist groups and forces to which the PLO had contacts and connections.”¹⁰³ The groups in question included the Carlos group, Abu Nidal, Saddam Hussein, former members of the Wadi Haddad group, the Armenian Liberation Front, and the Japanese Red Army. Regarding “terrorist groups in the FRG,” he said that the PLO had no contact with the 2nd of June Movement or the Red Army Faction but that it had developed contacts with the Revolutionary Cells, the group that participated in

100. Neiber, “Vorlage zum Einsatz,” pp. 64–74. Amin El-Hindi replaced Abu Ayad as chief of the Palestinian security services. He was suspected of involvement in the attack on the Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics. El-Hindi was a member of the General Union of Palestinian Students in Frankfurt in the late 1960s. See Isabel Kershner, “Amin al-Hindi, Former Palestinian Intelligence Chief, Dies at 70,” *The New York Times*, 18 August 2010; and Abdallah Frangi, *Der Gesandte: Mein Leben für Palästina: Hinter den Kulissen der Nahost-Politik* (Munich: Wilhelm Heyne Verlag, 2010).

101. “Bericht über das Gespräch mit dem Leiter der ‘Vereinigten PLO-Sicherheit’—ABU AYAD—am 15.7.1980 zu terroristischen Kräften und ihren Aktivitäten,” 18 June 1980, in BStU, ZfA, MfS, HA XXII, Nr. 17508, Teil 2, pp. 304–323.

102. *Ibid.*, p. 304.

103. *Ibid.*, p. 305.

the hijacking of an Air France flight to Entebbe, Uganda, in 1976. In 1981, Ayad told the MfS officials that the PLO was working with and “intended to expand the connections to the so-called ‘Revolutionary Cells’ in the FRG and eventually to use it to carry out particular armed actions.”¹⁰⁴

Mielke and Neiber raised no concerns either about those connections or about Palestinian terror attacks on Israel. They were, however, eager to prevent Arab and Palestinian terrorists from using East German territory as a base from which to launch attacks in West Germany and Western Europe. On 3 January 1983, they noted, “our experiences in recent years indicated that difficulties are to be expected due to lack of discipline, violation of agreements by individual functionaries of the PLO.”¹⁰⁵ They sought information from the PLO about Arab and Palestinian terrorists in Europe who might use the GDR as a base to launch attacks on West Germany and Western Europe, attacks that might be traced back to the GDR and thus undermine support in West Germany and Western Europe for the lucrative financial aid coming to East Germany from West Germany under the terms of *détente*. The Stasi thus was well-aware that “international terrorists,” that is, radical Arabs and Palestinians as well as their West German and West European collaborators, had traveled to East Berlin from the Middle East and from other Warsaw Pact countries with false passports and had then proceeded to West Berlin and from there to West Germany and Western Europe to carry out terrorist attacks. East Germany’s problem lay in reconciling its self-presentation as an advocate of peace, *détente*, and better relations with the West with toleration and perhaps active support of terrorist groups waging attacks in West Germany and Western Europe. As became apparent after German unification when Red Army Faction terrorists turned out to have been living quietly in East Germany, the Stasi offered training as well as refuge from West German authorities to West German terrorists who could no longer engage in terrorist attacks in West Germany.¹⁰⁶ The Stasi, which was sending arms and offering

104. *Ibid.*, p. 319.

105. Abteilung XXII, “Konzeption für die Gespräch mit dem Leiter der ‘Vereinigten PLO-Sicherheit’ Abu Ayad auf Linie XXII,” 3 January 1983, in BStU, ZA, HA XXII, Nr. 17508, Teil 1, pp. 178–81.

106. For excellent recent scholarship on the connections between the Stasi and West German terrorists in the 1970s and 1980s, see Martin Jander, “Differenzen im antimperialistischen Kampf: Zu den Verbindungen des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit mit der RAF und dem bundesdeutschen Linksterrorismus,” in Kraushaar, ed., *Die RAF und der linke Terrorismus*, pp. 696–713; and Tobias Wunschik, “Die ‘Bewegung 2. Juni’ und ihre Protektion durch den Staatssicherheitsdienst der DDR,” *Deutschland Archiv*, Vol. 40, No. 12 (December 2007), pp. 1,014–1,025; and “Baader-Meinhof international?” *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, No. 40–41 (2007), pp. 23–29. On the connections of West German terrorists to Palestinian and other Arab terrorist organizations, see Kraushaar, *München 1970*; and Thomas Skelton Robinson, “Im Netz verheddert: Die Beziehungen des bundesdeutschen Linksterrorismus zur *Volksfront für die Befreiung Palästinas (1969–1980)*,” in Kraushaar, ed., *Die RAF und der linke Terrorismus*, pp. 905–931. On the Stasi in West Germany in general, see Hubertus Knabe, *Die unterwanderte Republik: Stasi im Westen*, 2nd ed. (Munich: Ullstein Verlag, 2001).

military training to the PLO (as well as the terrorist groups on its left wing, such as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine) in support of terrorist attacks against Israel and perhaps elsewhere in the world, was at the same time working with the PLO to prevent terrorist attacks in West Germany and Western Europe that could be traced to the GDR, the Soviet Union, and the other Communist regimes in Eastern Europe. Shifting terrorist attacks away from Europe and back to Israel was part of the meaning of “counterterrorism” (*Terrorismusbekämpfung*) in the Stasi’s Division XXII.

The files of the Stasi’s division of weapons and chemical services (*Abteilung Bewaffnung und Chemische Dienst*; BCD) indicate that the MfS played a major role in delivering weapons to the PLO. On 4 August 1980, shortly after their conversations about the meaning of terrorism, the MfS delivered the following weapons to the PLO: 2,000 MPi’s, a modernized version of the Kalashnikov machine gun; 5,000 hand grenades; and 750 explosives of 200 grams each, 372 explosives of 400 grams each, and detonators and wire—all with a value of 1,296,000 DDM.¹⁰⁷ On 11 April 1980, the MfS sent the following to the PLO: 5,000 hand grenades, as well as explosives, detonators, wire, and ammunition valued at 114,102.38 DDM.¹⁰⁸ In February 1981, the Stasi’s BCD sent 3,500 Kalashnikovs and 350 palettes of ammunition. In 1981, when the PLO was building up its arsenal in Lebanon, the Stasi weapons deliveries were worth 2,269,190 DDM.¹⁰⁹ On 6 April 1982, the MfS sent the PLO 564,400 bullets and 1,400 Kalashnikovs. On 23 April 1982, it sent ten rocket-propelled grenade launchers and five heavy machine guns worth 18,905 and 35,225 DDM respectively.¹¹⁰ Israel invaded Lebanon in June 1982 in order to destroy the sizable PLO arsenal and army that had emerged there. On 1 July 1982, the GDR sent the PLO 900 Kalashnikovs (MPi KMS-72) worth 583,000 DDM; 720 hand grenades worth 11,260.80 DDM; 297,480 bullets worth 121,907.30 DDM; 15 anti-tank rifles (RPG-7) worth 67,410.75 DDM; and two light machine guns (RPK Kal. 7.62).¹¹¹ On 7 July 1982, it sent 96 HL grenades, designed for attacking tanks, worth

107. “Lieferungen 1980 gesamt,” in BStU, AZ, MfS, BCD (Abteilung Bewaffnung und Chemische Dienst) Nr. 2802, pp. 73–75.

108. *Ibid.*, p. 76.

109. “Lieferungen 1981- gesamt,” in BStU, AZ, MfS, BCD Nr. 2802, p. 80. That same year the GDR also sent weapons to Iran (\$1,718,817), Yemen (400,000), Mozambique (451,970) and Yemen (443,324).

110. “Aufstellung über Abgabe 1982 DDR Erzeugnisse: Beleg-Nr. 18306 v. 23.4. 1982,” 21 October 1982, in BStU, AZ, MfS, BCD Nr. 2802, p. 97.

111. “Aufstellung über Abgabe 1982 DDR Erzeugnisse: Beleg-Nr. 00211 v. 1.7.1982,” 21 October 1982, in BStU, AZ, MfS, BCD Nr. 2802, pp. 96, 98.

46,694.40 DDM.¹¹² The cost of weapons deliveries for this one week in July 1982 was over 720,000 DDM. During the 1980–1982 period, the Stasi sent 8,300 Kalashnikovs and 10,896 hand grenades to the PLO, presumably as “solidarity goods” and thus cost-free.

Beginning in the mid-1960s, the East German Ministry for National Defense played a major role in delivering heavier weapons to Egypt and Syria, including tanks, planes, and larger artillery.¹¹³ As the CIA assessments indicated, after Egyptian President Sadat broke with the Soviet bloc in 1975, Assad’s Syria moved even more to the center of Soviet-bloc military and economic assistance. The records of East Germany’s weapons deliveries to Syria in the course of the Yom Kippur War of October 1973 offer striking evidence of the depth of the GDR’s relationship with Assad’s Syria. The aid included MiG fighter planes and the participation of 1,150 East German military personnel in preparing the weapons and ammunition to be sent to Aleppo airport in Syria.¹¹⁴ The file on East German military support for Syria in fall 1973 contains daily reports to Honecker from General Fritz Strelitz, then deputy chief (and later chief) of the NVA’s Main Staff.¹¹⁵ Honecker approved sending a squadron of twelve MiG-21 jet fighters from the East German air force along with the necessary ammunition and experts. East German pilots flew the planes to Budapest, and from there they were delivered to Syria in Soviet transport planes. Honecker was kept closely informed about the voyages of two East German freighters, the *Freyburg* and *Klosterfelde*, which departed from Rostock harbor in mid-October and arrived at the Syrian port of Tartus on 1 and 2 November 1973. Their cargo of approximately 2,200 tons of military equipment included 62 Soviet T-54 tanks with the necessary experts and ammunition; 300 anti-tank rifles (RPG-7) with 24,000 shells; 75,000 grenades that were designed to function with the Syrian army’s artillery systems; and 30,000 land mines capable of destroying tanks.¹¹⁶ Heinz Hoffmann ordered that all German-language markings on the tanks be erased and replaced

112. “Aufstellung über Abgabe 1982 DDR Erzeugnisse: Beleg-Nr. 00212 v. 7.7.82,” 21 October 1982, in BStU, AZ, MfS, BCD Nr. 2802, p. 98.

113. Heinz Hoffmann, Sekretariat des Ministers UA Militärpolitik, in BAMA, DVW 1/114478 VS-Akte. Hoffmann, the head of the Defense Ministry, refers to weapons deliveries to Egypt, Syria, and Yemen that began in 1965. See also Storkmann’s excellent account in *Geheime Solidarität*, pp. 183–243.

114. “Bericht über die Unterstützungsmaßnahmen für die SYRISCHE ARABISCHE REPUBLIK: Stand: 16.10.1973, 04,30 Uhr,” in BA-MA, VA-01/32899, Militärarchiv der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik: Nationale Volksarmee Ministerium für Nationale Verteidigung Stellv. des Chefs des Hauptstabes für operative Fragen Verw. Gefechtsbereitschaft u. op. Ausbildung, pp. 30–35.

115. See “Strelitz, Fritz,” in Barth et al., *Wer war Wer in der DDR*, pp. 722–723.

116. Generalleutnant Fritz Strelitz, “VS-Nr.: A 360 179, Informationsbericht Nr. 15 zur Lage im Nahen Osten: Stand: 20.10.1973, 0500 Uhr,” in BA-MA, VA-01/32899, pp. 65–75.

with Russian-language markings and accompanying documentation.¹¹⁷ The 2,200 tons of military equipment was a fraction of what the Soviet Union was sending to Syria and an even smaller fraction of the massive U.S. resupply operation to Israel, “Operation Nickel Grass,” which President Richard Nixon had ordered and which was crucial for Israel’s ability to recover from the initial Arab surprise attacks on Yom Kippur. Nevertheless, the East German shipments were important enough to Honecker that he received thirty daily reports on the journey of the *Freyburg* and *Klosterfelde* and the unloading operation in Tartus.¹¹⁸

Conclusion

The Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies, including East Germany, engaged in an undeclared war with the state of Israel. This war entailed a spectrum of antagonism ranging from frequent propaganda denunciations—both in the domestic press and media and at international institutions, above all the United Nations—to economic assistance, military training, and weapons deliveries. East Germany was an active, willing, and enthusiastic participant beginning in the 1950s and was particularly engaged during the two decades that included the Middle Eastern wars of 1967 and 1973 and the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, as well as the ongoing terrorist war waged by the PLO and its affiliates during these years.

East Germany under Ulbricht and Honecker did not guide policy during the Soviet bloc’s undeclared war on the Jewish state. Moscow did. Antagonism to Israel and to Zionism may have awakened memories of National Socialist anti-Semitism among Germans in the GDR. Yet the primary source of this war was Communist ideology and Soviet policy following the anti-cosmopolitan purges in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe from 1949 to 1953. After the purges, it became impossible everywhere to remain a Communist and simultaneously support the existence of Israel as a Jewish state. The strategic centrality of the Middle East, both its geographical location and its oil reserves, led the Soviet Union to place enormous significance on defeating American policy in the region. East Germany, within the limits of its economy and military and short of sending East German soldiers to Middle Eastern battlefields to engage in combat with Israelis, did all it could, as Hoffmann said in Damascus, to defeat the enemy.

117. “Heinz Hoffmann to Generalleutnant Stechbarth,” 14 October 1973, in BA-MA, VA-01/32899, p. 265.

118. “Informationsbericht Nr. 30 zur Lage im Nahen Osten: Stand: 04.11.1973, 05.00 Uhr,” in BA-MA, VA-01/32899, pp. 218–224.

East German participation in the Soviet-bloc assault on Israel was crucial for the GDR's greatest diplomatic successes: its recognition breakthrough in the spring and summer of 1969 and its later popularity among radical but non-Communist Third World states at the UN in the 1970s and 1980s. Communist ideology and traditional national self-interest and the search for recognition mutually reinforced one another. Much as they pretended otherwise, "the Jewish question" in German history and the GDR's hostility to the Jewish state played a key role in the East Germans' ability to find friends and allies around the world. On the world stage, East Germany benefitted enormously from its antagonistic posture toward Israel, an antagonism that it worked hard to justify and disseminate. Soviet and East German diplomacy was a decades-long game of rhetorical cat and mouse, a calculated ambiguity offering a tiny fig leaf of reference to UN resolutions and "political settlement" of the Middle East conflict combined with a continuous stream of vitriol directed at an Israel that was described as a racist instrument of imperialist aggression. Israel survived these decades despite the efforts of the Soviet Union and its allies, including East Germany, to aid the Arab enemies then seeking to destroy it.

The undeclared war with the Jewish state had the added benefit offered by a national liberation struggle of a rather different sort than the term's customary meaning. Rather than liberation from an external power, the East German Communists' "anti-imperialist solidarity" drew on but also fostered a sense of liberation from burdens of German history in the Nazi era. It was of a piece with the broader German Communist conviction that an anti-fascist regime had no particular obligations or responsibilities to Jewish survivors of the Holocaust. Solidarity with Assad and Arafat appeared to lift the East Germans out of the continuities of German and even European history and to place them instead on the correct side of a historical dialectic of global anti-imperialist revolution. The East German Communists were oblivious to the fact that they were the second German dictatorship in the twentieth century to adopt policies that would bring death and injury to Jews. Of course, East Germany's support for the Arab states and Palestinian terrorist organizations was not comparable to Nazi Germany's Final Solution, but it did constitute support for governments and organizations whose clear goal was the destruction of the Jewish state and with it the death and suffering of many Jews, included Jewish survivors of the Holocaust and of anti-Semitism in the Arab countries after World War II.

Following the collapse of the Communist dictatorship in fall 1989, the first freely elected parliament (Volkskammer) in eastern Germany since 1932 met from 5 April to 2 October 1990. On 12 April 1990, the Volkskammer unanimously passed a resolution that drew particular attention to the Nazi

genocide of the Jews of Europe and expressed shame in the face of this burden of German history.¹¹⁹ The Volkskammer asked “the Jews in the entire world for forgiveness. We ask the people in Israel for forgiveness for the hypocrisy and hostility of official GDR policy toward the state of Israel and for the persecution and humiliation of Jewish fellow citizens in our country.”¹²⁰ The parliament looked forward to establishing diplomatic relations with Israel, something the GDR never did. On 2 July 1990, the Volkskammer passed a resolution distancing

itself from all forms of the anti-Israeli and anti-Zionist policies that were practiced in this country [i.e., East Germany] for decades and from their domestic and foreign policy consequences. It distances itself in particular from [East Germany’s] agreement to Resolution 3379 of the 30th United Nations General Assembly of 10 November 1975 [and from the resolution’s] equation of Zionism with racism.¹²¹

Twenty-three members of the parliament spanning the spectrum of all the parties—excepting the successor party to the East German Communists—signed the resolution, including its leading proponent, Konrad Weiss; a future president of the Bundestag, Wolfgang Thierse; and future German president Joachim Gauck.¹²²

Despite its intrinsic historical significance and the importance that the East German parliament in 1990 gave to addressing the issue, neither histori-

119. “Antrag aller Fraktionen der Volkskammer der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik zu einer gemeinsamen Erklärung,” in Deutscher Bundestag, *Protokolle der Volkskammer der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 10 Wahlperiode (5. April bis 2. Oktober 1990)*, Vol. 1: *Protokolle der 1. Sitzung bis 9. Sitzung, Nachdruck* (Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag; Leske und Budrich, 2000), pp. 23–24. On the Volkskammer resolution, see Herf, *Divided Memory*, pp. 364–365.

120. “Antrag aller Fraktionen,” p. 23. The second part of the statement expresses similar sentiments toward the peoples of the Soviet Union, the third addresses East German support for the suppression of the Prague Spring in 1968, and the fourth proclaims a “special responsibility” to the peoples of Eastern Europe in the course of German unification and affirms that the German-Polish border lies on the line of the Oder-Neisse Rivers. See *ibid.*, pp. 23–24.

121. “Antrag von 23 Abgeordneten über die Distanzierung von der Resolution Nr. 3379 der UNO-Vollversammlung vom 10. November 1975 und ihren Aussagen über den Zionismus durch die Deutsche Demokratische Republik,” in Deutscher Bundestag, *Protokolle der Volkskammer der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik 10 Wahlperiode (5. April bis 2. Oktober 1990)*, Vol. 3, *Protokolle der 26. Sitzung bis 38. Sitzung, Nachdruck* (Bonn: Deutscher Bundestag; Leske und Budrich, 2000), pp. 1280–1283. Wahlperiode, Drucksache Nr. 169, available online at <http://webarchiv.bundestag.de/volkskammer/dokumente/drucksachen/100169.pdf>.

122. *Ibid.* The 23 signers were Johannes Gerlach (SPD); Jörg Brochnow (CDU/DA); Sabine Bergmann-Pohl (CDU/DA); Harald Ringstorff (SPD); Hans Geisler (CDU/DA); Konrad Weiß (Bundnis 90/Grüne); Werner Schulz (Bundnis 90/Grüne); Wolfgang Ullmann (Bundnis 90/Grüne); Stefan Gottschall (DSU); Nikolai Tschalamoff (CDU/DA); Bertram Wiczorek (CDU/DA); Boje Schmuhl (CDU/DA); Uwe Grüning (CDU/DA); Hans-Dirk Bierling (CDU/DA); Joachim Steinmann (CDU/DA); Reinhard Höpper (SPD); Eberhard Brecht (SPD); Joachim Gauck (Bundnis 90/Grüne); Ibrahim Böhme (SPD); Rainer Ortleb (Liberale); Wolfgang Thierse (SPD); Helmut Krause (Liberale); and Lothar Klein (DSU).

ans of the Cold War nor of the history of East Germany have devoted enough effort to this very significant set of events in Germany's twentieth-century history. The lack of interest is odd and troubling, especially in view of the availability of published and archival sources. In spring and summer 1990, caught up in the momentous events of the collapse of the Communist regimes in Europe, the members of the short-lived, democratically-elected Volkskammer grasped the importance of events. Now, almost a quarter century after the Volkskammer resolutions, we are able to give the undeclared war waged by the Soviet bloc and East Germany against Israel the scholarly attention it deserves.

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