

The Far Side of the Wall

The Other Germany, by John Dornberg, *Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1968. 370 pp. \$6.95.*

OF EAST GERMANY Mr. Dornberg writes "it is a Germany about which the Western world knows as little (perhaps even less) as China." The observation is better than the grammar and Mr. Dornberg succeeds in telling us a good deal more about this Germany than other recent writers on the subject; more than Welles Hangen in his easy gallop around the East German countryside in his book *The Muted Revolution* and with far more detail than Amos Elon recorded in *Journey Through A Haunted Land*. Dornberg was born in Erfurt in what is now part of the "German Democratic Republic." The son of Jewish parents, he remembers seeing as a child the burning of the synagogues in Erfurt, an event that took place before he managed to escape the full fury of the Hitler pogroms by emigrating to the United States. His wife lived in East Germany until 1948 when as a teenager she moved to West Germany. Thus Dornberg writes with the same reservations toward the German past though not with the same depth as Amos Elon, who as an Israeli, came to see and as far as possible

to understand the Germans of both East and West who have survived the Third Reich.

Dornberg, who was on the staff of *Newsweek* in Bonn and is now living in Vienna as *Newsweek's* Bureau Chief for Eastern Europe, is essentially friendly to the East Zone. Although he records many of the defects of the East German society, the persecutions and brutality of the regime in its recent past and the present limitations on the freedom of its inhabitants, his emphasis is on its achievements and on the weaknesses of the West German Republic in its smug affluence, as he sees it, and its inflexible policies toward East Germany. He *wants* the East Germany of the Communist Bloc to be better than the *Bundesrepublik* and while his sketches of the party leaders, his account of the economic and social system include the usual criticisms of the party bureaucrats and *apparatchiks*, he is on the whole lavish in his praise of the pragmatic, hard-working managers, technologists, and party members who despite every obstacle have managed to bring the East German economy to the eighth highest rank in the world and its standard of living to the highest in the whole Communist Bloc. The East German educational system he finds far superior to that of the *Bundesrepublik*; it has cracked the heavy shell of class distinction and stale pedagogy, and all young people, but especially the children of peasants and workers who are still given preferential treatment, get more and better schooling than their contemporaries in West Germany. The army too, according to Mr. Dornberg, is better adapted to the post-Hitler world; its generals and higher officers are, unlike those of the West, younger men who had little or no connection with the high command of the Third Reich, for here as in the political scene the house cleaning of former Nazis and career officers has been far more thorough than in the Federal Republic. The upper echelons of the East German military establishment have been chosen for their political piety far more than for their military experience and to

new . . . timely

ASPECTS OF MODERN COMMUNISM

Edited by Richard F. Staar

This penetrating study of modern Communism was published for the Institute of International Studies of the University of South Carolina. It is based on the proceedings of a symposium held in Atlanta, Georgia, under the auspices of the Department of Political Science at Emory University.

Footnotes, 35 tables, 2 charts, Notes on Contributors, Index
SBN 87249-136-6 LC 68-9362
448 pp. \$7.95

"JUNE 22, 1941": Soviet Historians and the German Invasion

By Vladimir Petrov

This book contains a complete translation of *JUNE 22, 1941*, a controversial book by Russian historian A. M. Nekrich. The author presents a discerning and searching examination of the facts and issues involved in the relations between the Germany of Hitler and the Soviet Russia of Stalin.

Footnotes, Appendix
SBN 87249-134-X LC 68-9364
256 pp. \$5.95

CHINA AND THE WEST

By Wolfgang Franke \$5.95

Available at better bookstores

UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTH
CAROLINA
PRESS



Columbia, South Carolina 29208

have fought on the loyalist side in the Spanish Civil War has been more likely to lead to high rank than valiant service in the armies of the Third Reich on the Eastern front.

Dornberg has done his homework; he has read the list, compiled by the Free German Jurists, of former Nazis who have attained high office in the East, he concedes that they have played some role in the Communist state, even that the number of ex-National Socialists in public life up to 1967 increased in East Germany while it declined in the *Bundesrepublik*, but they nevertheless, and this is the author's main point, have held a much smaller percentage of important places in the East than in the West. He recites the old charges against President Lübke, Chancellor Kiesinger, former Federal Minister Oberländer, et al, but not the defense which in the case of these men especially has seemed a convincing one to those who are not predisposed to find them guilty.

While the blemishes on the fair face of Communist Germany are depicted they are treated as minor disfigurements. An economy run by eager young technicians many of whom could be employed at far higher salaries in the West, social security that makes workers feel they are better off than their Western colleagues, a pride in the collective accomplishment, and soaring hope for the future—these are the characteristics the author highlights. Mr. Dornberg even predicts the possibility of East Germany's developing what he calls a free market economy with state and cooperative industry replacing private economy, although he does not explain precisely how such a fabulous beast could develop.

Such is Mr. Dornberg's enthusiasm that he is sometimes careless with his facts. On page 21, for example, he tells us that 25,000 East Germans have escaped since the building of the Wall in August 1961, and that 68,000 West Germans have migrated to the "German Democratic Republic" dur-

FOUNDATION FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS SERIES

Peaceful Co-Existence—AN ANALYSIS OF SOVIET POLICY

No 3

by Wladyslaw W. Kulski, *Duke University*

A study of Soviet foreign policy since the Revolution in which Professor Kulski, former Polish Minister to London, examines the possibility of peaceful co-existence. **\$12.50**

Strategic Intelligence and the Shape of Tomorrow

No 5

by William Montgomery McGovern, *Northwestern University*

An analysis of the actions of nations as they relate to the national economies, the ideology, and the cultural and ethnological characteristics of their peoples. **\$4.00**

Berlin and the Future of Eastern Europe

No 7

edited by David S. Collier, *Foundation for Foreign Affairs* and Kurt Glaser, *Southern Illinois University*

A definitive examination of the problem by twelve prominent scholars of international affairs from Europe and the United States. **\$6.00**

Western Integration and the Future of Eastern Europe

No 9

edited by David S. Collier and Kurt Glaser

This book is based on twelve papers presented at the Wiesbaden conference in 1963 by political scientists, historians, journalists, professors, and governmental officials. **\$6.00**

published by Henry Regnery Company in cooperation with



FOUNDATION FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, INC.
154 EAST SUPERIOR STREET • CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60611

ing that period. It is a ratio that has evidently impressed him for he says again on page 122 that the East German regime can now even boast of a reverse flow of refugees the ratio now being 3-1 in its favor. Mr. Dornberg is mistaken. Since 1961, according to West German statistics, some 240,000 East Germans have gone over to West Germany, about half of them illegally over the Wall or by sea or through the barbed wire and the mine fields, men, women and children who risked limb and life to get out. How many have tried to escape and failed is not known but 75 per cent of the prisoners in East German jails are said by former inmates to be political prisoners, most of them young and many of them convicted of the crime of having attempted to leave the socialist paradise. In addition, some of these who have attempted to escape have been shot down within sight of observers in the West who were impotent to help them. Confident statements are made deadpan by the author and pages later qualified or retracted. In telling of the suicide of Erich Apel, the brilliant young East German economist, Dornberg tells us first that

Apel killed himself because of despair over the harsh economic terms imposed by the Soviet Union on East Germany and later, and this is the true story, that we really don't know why he killed himself. Recounting the attempts of Paul Froehlich, the first secretary of the SED in the Leipzig district, to do away with Western influences on the cultural life of Germany, Dornberg tells us on page 86 that Froehlich hired thugs who systematically beat up all jazz and pop musicians in the Leipzig area. Then on page 324 he informs us that Froehlich *may* have hired rowdies—although there is no conclusive evidence the possibility cannot be ruled out. . . .

Many of Dornberg's observations, including his character sketches, suffer from this slipshodness. Ulbricht, for example, is said to have been caught cheating by the Soviets when he attempted to keep Russian raw materials for the use of the East German economy in obtaining hard foreign currency, but we are not told the source of such a statement nor how it was obtained. When Dornberg compares the crime rates of East and West Germany he neglects to

 THE
INTERCOLLEGIATE
REVIEW

Contributors to recent issues:

William C. Bark
Louis I. Bredvold
Yale Brozen
Donald Davidson
Lev E. Dobriansky
Lawrence Henry Gipson
William R. Kintner
Wm. Oliver Martin
Gerhart Niemeyer
Stefan T. Possony
Leo Strauss
Robert Strausz-Hupe'
Frank N. Trager
Eric Voegelin
Simon N. Whitney
Frederick D. Wilhelmsen
Francis G. Wilson
David McCord Wright

A journal of scholarship and opinion publishing articles in the fields of philosophy, political science, economics, literature and social criticism. THE INTERCOLLEGIATE REVIEW is made available free of charge to faculty and students four times during the academic year by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute. Subscriptions are invited from those outside the academic community: one year, five dollars; two years, eight dollars; three years, eleven dollars. Subscriptions and inquiries should be addressed to: ISI, 14 South Bryn Mawr Avenue, Bryn Mawr, Pa. 19010.

separate the statistics for crimes peculiar to the communist countries, for example, the "crime" of *Republikflucht*, attempting to flee the state, the crime of sabotage which can mean anything from accidentally damaging a piece of machinery to failing to get something done on time that the authorities had set their minds on, and crimes against the state or party. In East Germany it is a crime to damage morale, to calumniate or make inflammatory statements about either the Soviet Union, East Germany, or any members of their party elite. Such crimes do not exist in West Germany so there can be no statistics for them. Only 7,000 West Germans, Dornberg says, have been prosecuted for war crimes as against 12,800 convicted by East German courts. But here again the figures are awry, the Ministry of Justice of the Federal Republic has reported that up to January 1, 1964, and the number has risen by several hundred since then, 12,882 people had been charged in West Germany with "National Socialist crimes."

Nevertheless, much of what Mr. Dornfeld tell us is thought provoking; it represents a prevailing liberal interpretation of a police state and a clear if one-sided view of it. The author has interviewed, he tells us, hundreds of people, travelled all over the country, knocked on doors of strangers in apartments and industrial plants, picked up acquaintances on park benches and in the streets, and his reading has included a wide spectrum of the literary work of the East Zone. It is all the more unfortunate in the light of his enterprise that the picture is not in better focus. It is not enough to admit, as Mr. Dornberg does, that the kind of election for the choice of a prepicked set of candidates that is held in East Germany is largely eyewash, and a travesty of democratic procedure, since the observation is considerably watered down by quoting East Germans on the page following as saying:

We exercise far more influence over our candidates and representatives than is generally believed in the West. We may not have a choice of parties but we know who the candidates are and they

get a careful screening from everyone before they are finally selected. They have to answer questions, outline their views, explain their positions and tell about their past in countless meetings before they are confirmed on the ticket. In the Western democracies what choice does the voter really have? He can pick between parties but does he have any influence on the candidates they have proposed to represent him? These are nominated by a party machine over which the members, not to mention the vast majority of voters, have no control. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred the voter won't know anything about the candidates when it is time to vote. The West jokes about our unity lists and national front. But believe me, plenty of people here prefer knowing all about the candidates before the election than having to choose between names which mean nothing and being represented by men and women over whom they have absolutely no leverage.

That is one way to justify the admittedly pseudo democratic methods of the Communist state and to leave the reader with the notion that both systems have their disadvantages but that they are not so very far apart. Mr. Dornberg in other words likes or wants to like much of what he saw in East Germany and he dislikes much of what he knows of West Germany. In his evaluation he brings to mind the book that Erich Fromm wrote many years ago, *Escape from Freedom*, with the theme that much of the totalitarian phenomena of our time arose from the fear of freedom, the yearning of modern man for authority, for an *Obrigkeit*. The author seems to take part in the flight. Somewhere in his text, to be sure, are to be found the criticisms, the outs, the admissions of the excesses of the police state. But these are always balanced with a happy picture of the benefits, despite everything, of living there. "There is no one here," says one man he talked to, "who would trade socialism for capitalism. We live well, we are proud of our achievements—everyone, Jews and non-Jews." The au-

thor then adds his amen: "I believed him and said goodbye."

The style of the book is occasionally irritating with its strained journalese: "Hennecke, the Zwickau miner, paragoned in 1948 as the GDR's first Activist." "Yes, I would, you bet I would," staccatoed Harald at the top of his larynx, . . ." "Rotund, balding, dolefully dog faced Professor Albert Norden. . ." A flag flutters "limpidly" instead of limply in a light breeze. The Federal Government's policy, he tells us, "contributed to widening the German schism, to ossifying the positions and to provoking crescendos of opprobrious polemics, the dénouement of which is an atmosphere so poisoned that even honest overtures encounter rebuffs." Here the erratic style is one with the erratic thinking, for East Germany, a state wholly under Russian domination, demands recognition as a sovereign power coequal with West Germany and honest overtures could scarcely be expected of it toward a *Bundesrepublik* that East German newspapers and officials daily denounce as fascist, imperialist, revanchist, a projection of the Hitler state run by the same monopoly capitalists who unleashed World War II and are planning World War III.

Despite these defects the book contains a good deal of information on the other wonder state left over from the German Reich. If communism would work efficiently anywhere it might well be in a German context of hard work and discipline, competent craftsmen, and a people who strive to make the best they can of their imprisonment. And their success in these last years since the erection of the Wall has indeed been remarkable. They had been deprived of everything, their cities were devastated, raw materials available somewhere else, factories destroyed or dismantled for their machinery or taken over for the benefit of their conquerors, they had been raped and plundered and exploited, they had gone hungry, they wore the patched clothes they had had when the war started, and out of the rubble they built a thriving industrial

state. In 1953 they had fought the Russian tanks with their bare hands but the tanks had won in the end and the Wall in 1961 had taken from thousands of them the last hope of ever getting a reduction in their sentence. So they have made the prison a bleak success and some of them accept it as a way of life and as the author truly says, this group of converts, many of the managers and no doubt some of the workers, would not exchange their lot for the fleshpots of the *Kurfürstendamm*. But life in that dour part of Europe is not nearly as appealing as he makes it. If it were, there would be no Wall, no barbed wire or mine fields where people are still gunned down when they have found their socialist prison, with all its welfare provisions, intolerable.

Reviewed by EUGENE DAVIDSON

**HAVE YOU AN
ORPHAN BOOK
THAT NEEDS ADOPTION?**

Scholarly and textbook MSS receive expert editing, professional book design and manufacture, and prompt publication from Exposition Press. Trade and library quality books are dynamically promoted and distributed. Write for free literature on our subsidy plan and contract terms, plus our complete catalog of titles. Send MS for free appraisal and cost estimate, without obligation.

DEPT. 67M

EXPOSITION-UNIVERSITY BOOKS

Exposition Press, Inc.

50 Jericho Turnpike

Jericho, New York 11753

Telephone (516) 997-9050