



Volume 8. Occupation and the Emergence of Two States, 1945-1961
Directive on *Republikflucht* (March 18, 1953)

The GDR leadership strove to counter *Republikflucht* (the flight of East Germans from the German Democratic Republic to the West) on a variety of levels. In March 1953, the SED district leader in Erfurt, Erich Mückenberger, demanded that the GDR's success in integrating expellees from the former German regions in the East be highlighted and contrasted to the "misery of the refugees" in the Federal Republic.

**The District Chief [*Bezirksleiter*] of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany in Erfurt, Erich Mückenberger, to all County Administrative Offices [*Kreissekretariate*]
"Directive on *Republikflucht*"**

Erfurt, March 18, 1953

[. . .] The aforementioned numerical figures from the districts demonstrate clearly and unambiguously that *Republikflucht* can certainly be stopped wherever the party, in conjunction with the mass organizations, wages a vigorous battle against it. [. . .] We also believe that the representatives of the district and county assemblies should take time during their office hours to address the problem of the misery of the refugees [in the Federal Republic], and that particular attention should be given to [. . .] [the question of] how we in the German Democratic Republic solved the resettler issue. [. . .] How we gave the resettlers land so they could become new farmers [*Neubauern*], how they developed into medium-sized farmers and are today voluntarily coming together in Agricultural Production Cooperatives [*Landwirtschaftliche Produktionsgenossenschaften*] in order to further boost their social and material prosperity. How with us, resettlers are no longer new citizens but fully equal citizens who are today themselves members of the popular representative bodies, are master craftsmen and technicians, and how their children are attending the Workers' and Farmers' Colleges and universities in the hundreds. Thus, one must clearly underscore the difference between the social state of affairs in West Germany and the German Democratic Republic. [. . .]

Source: SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/IV 2/13/394, official copy (excerpts). Re.: Darstellungsband 8, III 12 (Ausgleich von Kriegs- und Diktaturfolgen, soziales Entschädigungsrecht) [(Comparison of the Effects of War and Dictatorship, Social Reparations Law)], note 1; reprinted in Dierk

Hoffmann and Michael Schwartz, eds., *Geschichte der Sozialpolitik in Deutschland seit 1945*.
Bd. 8: 1949-1961: *Deutsche Demokratische Republik. Im Zeichen des Aufbaus des Sozialismus*
[*History of Social Policy in Germany since 1945*, Vol. 8: 1949-1961: *German Democratic
Republic. Under the Sign of the Build Up of Socialism*]. Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2004, no. 8/103.

Translation: Thomas Dunlap