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Stasi Report on the Size and Structure of the East German Opposition (June 1, 1989)

Worried about the proliferation of 160 opposition groups with about 2500 members, the East German secret police analyzed their aims (which included peace, ecology, gender equality, and human rights) and their networking structures and interpreted them as a form of subversion from without rather than an opposition from within.

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One of the main lines of attack in the enemy's subversive action against socialism is the attempt to create and legalize a so-called domestic opposition, and to inspire/organize political underground activity in the socialist states as a "domestic pressure potential" intended to soften up, undermine, politically destabilize, and ultimately do away with socialism.

In carrying out the anti-socialist "program for democracy" approved by imperialist circles in the USA, leading political forces in the NATO states are working – under the banner of "democratization, liberalization, and advocacy of Western-style political pluralism in Communist countries" – to develop and promote opposition parties and movements in these states, and thereby provide active support for the legalization of already existing so-called independent groups. This action is reflected both in the state policy of the major imperialist powers and in the various subversive activities of antagonistic centers and organizations as well as of additional forces hostile to socialism and acting against the socialist states. (Through abuse of the CSCE process, and through reference to certain developments in some socialist states, these activities are increasingly intended to provide political, material, and moral support to hostile, oppositional forces and personal alliances in the GDR, and to inspire and trigger actions directed against the socialist political and social order.)

It is estimated that the political, ideological, and subversive influences of the enemy, as well as the influences deriving from the current situation in some socialist countries, are achieving certain effects among sections of the GDR's population. They are reflected particularly in the presence of personal alliances (manageable and under the control of state and society) and of corresponding groupings and groups that, in agreement or cooperation with reactionary clerical persons, and together with external enemies, are attempting to advance this oppositional strategy.

Since the beginning of the 80s, persistent attempts at gathering and assembling by such persons – who have made it their goal to weaken, undermine, and politically destabilize the GDR to the point of changing its social relations – have led to the formation of corresponding groupings and groups. These are almost exclusively embedded in the structures of the Protestant churches in the GDR, or they are able to make extensive use of the material and technical resources of these churches for their activities. Correspondents accredited in the GDR

and the staff of diplomatic missions (including secret intelligence staff under cover as diplomats) from non-socialist states, especially from the FRG, the USA, and Great Britain, play a decisive role in this process. They inspire hostile, oppositional forces and personal alliances to undertake anti-socialist activities, offer them continual support, and popularize actions in this connection with the aim of placing such persons and alliances under the protection of international public opinion. (Appearing especially active in this regard are the correspondents BÖRNER, HEBER, and HAUPTMANN – ARD, BRÜSSAU, SCHMITZ – ZDF, SCHWARZ – "Der Spiegel," and RÖDER – epd, as well as SCHWELZ – AP and NESIRKY – Reuters.)

Currently there are ca. 160 alliances of this kind in the GDR. Among them are a significant number from which hostile-negative actions, or actions otherwise directed against the socialist state and social-order, emanate continuously or in connection with a particular occasion. They are divided into just 150 so-called church-based, grass-roots groups that designate themselves, based on the demagogically claimed "aim" and "content" of their activity or on their personal composition, as "peace circles" (35), "ecological groups" (39), mixed "peace and environmental groups" (23), "women's groups" (7), "physicians' circles" (3), "human rights groups" (10) or "2nd/3rd-world-groups" (39), and so-called regional groups of conscientious objectors. [ . . . ]

In addition, there are over 10 personal alliances with specific coordinating functions and assignments, such as the "Follow-Up Committee – Concretely for Peace," the "Working Circle Solidaristic Church" (in 12 regional groups), the "Church from Below" (in 4 regional groups), the "Green-Ecological Network Ark," the "Initiative Peace and Human Rights," and the "Circle of Friends of Conscientious Objectors" [ . . . ]

Over half of all these kinds of alliances were formed before 1985. Political and social efforts to reduce their total number have not thus far succeeded. Personal alliances that have been dissolved are countered by an equally large number of newly formed [alliances] – thus, in 1988 alone, 7 new regional groups of the "Working Circle Solidaristic Church" were formed, as well as 8 new "peace circles" and 8 new "ecological groups."

The total potential of these alliances – including peripherally affiliated forces, which generally represent mere participants in activities/events, who do not pay dues – amounts to ca. 2500 persons total. (Not included in this figure are sympathizers or the politically misled, who are frequently drawn to their activities to influence the public as a result of the calculated influence of the above-named forces – including, among other things, the creation of so-called solidarity effects – and thereby considerably increase the potential and effectiveness of such alliances.) About 600 persons may be categorized as members of the executive committees, while the so-called hard core is made up of a relatively small number of fanatical, frequently obstinate enemies of socialism, driven by a so-called sense of mission, a craving for personal recognition, and a mania for political distinction. In this category there are ca. 60 persons, among others the pastors EPPELMANN, TSCHICHE, and WONNEBERGER, as well as Gerd and Ulrike POPPE, Bärbel BOHLEY, and Werner FISCHER; [and] the persons RUDDENKLAU, SCHULT, Dr. KLEIN, and LIETZ. They are the leading inspirers/organizers of political underground activity and – with their connections at home, abroad in the West, and to anti-socialist forces in other socialist states – they determine the specific content of the hostile activity of personal alliances and their nationwide radius of action.

The composition of the above-mentioned personal alliances demonstrates a broad spectrum extending from those with a strong religious affiliation to those holding atheistic positions, most of them young people, who possess a complexly hostile, oppositional attitude towards the socialist state and social order. The greater part of these forces is characterized by politically

indifferent, unstable, wavering attitudes and positions. They also represent, in part, "alternative" or pseudo-alternative views, ideas, positions, and ways of life with regard to socialist development. The proportion of workers and others employed in the productive sector is relatively small. Considerable, by contrast, is the proportion of persons without legally recognized employment (12 percent of all active members/executive leaders).

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Source: "Stasi Bericht über ‚Persönliche Verbindungen oppositioneller und anderer negativer Kräfte“ [“East German Secret Police Report on ‘Personal Ties to Oppositional and Other Negative Forces’”], in Armin Mitter and Stefan Wolle, eds., *„Ich liebe Euch doch alle!“ Befehle und Lageberichte des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit* [“*But I Do Love You All!*” Orders and Updates from the Ministry for State Security]. Berlin, 1990, p. 46 ff.

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