



## Cabinet of the Deutsche Demokratische

### Republik (DDR)

#### Historical Context of The Cabinet

The *Deutsche Demokratische Republik* (DDR) has been under Soviet influence since the end of WWII. The stark difference between the USSR and its capitalist counterparts has never been more apparent than in the divided territory of the DDR and the *Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (BRD). The Iron Curtain between East and West Germany has been an area of conflict since the failed attempts at reunification of the 50's. The place where these tensions have manifested has always been Berlin. The uprisings of 1953 during the Sovietization process were caused because of the resistance to an established Communist government.

After the end of World War II Germany was occupied and divided in 4 sections, these sections were each held by one of the main Allied Powers who were in charge of administration of their own zone, these ones being The United States, The United Kingdom, France and The Soviet Union. Due to the beginning of the cold war tensions between these past nations began rising, this forced the allied nations of the US, UK and France to unify their sections therefore creating the German Federal Republic (West Germany) and the German Democratic Republic also known as East Germany, officially founded October 7, 1949. This new socialist state established an egalitarian education, healthcare, and social system, and guaranteed equal rights between men and women. The DDR's government, led by the Socialist Unity Party (SED), faced mounting pressure from a populace yearning for greater political freedoms, economic prosperity, and a reunification with West Germany. The strong migrations to the west were a strong problem the DDR suffered both socially and economically this led to the government responding with fortifying its inner german border and later on the creation of the berlin wall in 1961. Mass protests, particularly in Leipzig and East Berlin, gained momentum, with citizens demanding democratic reforms and an end to the authoritarian rule that had defined the DDR for decades.

#### Context of the Central Theme

Since the end of World War II and the division of Germany into east and west, a strong wave of political and social change had spread all throughout Eastern Europe. Since the declination of the Unification of west and east germany proposed by former Soviet leader Joseph Stalin on 1952, the SED set as main goal to eliminate any trace of nazim left on their territory imprisoning anyone who promoted those ideologies and preventing them from holding any form of position in the government. The rejection of this note not only caused for the government to start taking strong actions to fully install a strong socialist republic but also

formed a great discontent among the population thanks to the soviet socialist actions such as and increase in investment allocated to heavy industry, discriminatory taxation against the last private industrial enterprises, forced collectivization of agriculture and a concerted campaign against religious activity. These changes deteriorated the average worker living standards greatly, culminating in the East German uprising of 1953 a strike held by construction workers in East Berlin against the Government of East Germany and the Socialist Unity Party. This uprising was suppressed violently by tanks of the Soviet forces in Germany and the Kasernierte Volkspolizei.

After the uprising of 1953 the SED's reputation became even lower with the population than it was before even though after the strike they never tried to introduce arbitrary, blanket work quota increases like those of May and June 1953. Even though discontent was rising, it hit an all time high when Gorbachev started implementing ways to liberate the Soviet regime. Changes in all of eastern europe started emerging but the DDR's government didn't budge. Socially, the desire for personal freedoms, expression, and reunification with West Germany resonated strongly among the populace. Even though the DDR searched for help from the Soviets, Gorbachev had a different mentality and approach to the Warsaw pact members including other eastern europe nations. Gorbachev tried to convince the East to proceed with reforms, along the lines of perestroika. The ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED) grappled with the need for reform, but they have yet to make any changes.

In relation to these uprisings, it was common for citizens of the DDR to want to leave the republic, this high peaks of immigration caused multiple economic falls that alarmed SED and the sedentary population. By the end of 1953 it was estimated that around 2.1 million eastern german citizens had emigrated to west germany and west berlin. These big movements in and out of east germany and east berlin generated an extreme loss of manpower which plummeted more their economical status and made the tension between the civilians and the DDR government stronger. After seeing the serious problems the high levels of immigration were causing the DDR decided to close its borders in 1961, this was ordered by the premier Walter Ulbricht, and formally consulted with Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev. This strategy was made to prevent more easter german workers from leaving the DDR workforce and create pressure on the newly-elected United States president John F. Kennedy, short after the borders were closed the construction of a wall to divide East from West began immediately. The Grenztruppen were the primary force on protecting the border control alongside the newly created Berlin wall, they were ordered to protect the borders and not let anyone flee from the republic by any means necessary. As it was expected, the SED received strong backlash by implementing these decisions and the illegal immigration from east to west incremented highly therefore border control was forced to become more and more violent with passing of time.

The internal subversion that happened to the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan was an event that alarmed the multiple eastern soviet governments that had problems maintaining control over their population among them de DDR. The DDR was pushed to reinforce national security especially after the uprising of 1953 that was handled in a rather violent way. The tumultuous events unfolding in Eastern Europe, coupled with the lessons learned from the failed soviet Afghanistan, underscored the importance of a robust security apparatus and the need to address internal challenges effectively. The events that occurred in the Soviet Afghan Republic were a pivotal point for members of the Warsaw pact because Afghanistan acted as a barometer of the extent of autonomy that members experienced in foreign policy.

## Research Questions

### **Topic A**

Navigating Transition: Political, Economic, and Social Reforms in the DDR Amidst inside a Changing Geopolitical Landscape.

- What are the main ways that the DDR is changing with respect to the new Soviet leadership of Gorbachev (Perestroika, Glasnost)? How is this more globalized way of governing affecting the DDR?
- How might the changing relationship with other Warsaw Pact members affect our political, economic, and social situation? What responses should the DDR government have to these changes?

### **Topic B**

Fostering Governance, Upholding Rule of Law, and Managing Internal Migration: Safeguarding DDR's Stability by Curtailing Unauthorized Border Crossings.

- What resources and institutions does the DDR government have at its disposition (Stasi, State Owned News, Social Reform) to handle internal migration and the civil unrest currently boiling?
- What groups and ideas are instigating the most civil unrest inside the DDR? What are the main ways they are operating?

### **Topic C**

Lessons from the Democratic Afghan Republic: combat internal subversion and reinforce National Security and by strengthening its institutions.

- What led the government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan to fail containing the internal social and political unrest? What National Security policies were taken to get to that point?
- How did the external intervention of the USSR affect the outcome of the Afghan Government, both positively and negatively?
- How did the subversive movements gain so much favor, both internally (support of local populations) and externally (foreign military aid and international community)?

## Character Research Questions

- What were some of your character's personal reasons to support or not support the changes made by global powers regarding the DDR and the division of Germany?
- How does your character's personal motivations affect the way they interact among other members of the cabinet?

## Discussion questions

- How can my position in the cabinet help manage the political pressures, economic challenges, and social dynamics during this transitional period?
- What are some of the faculties my character has and how can those be used to help my cabinet and my nation?
- How does the actions taken by my cabinet affect other nations such as the Soviet Union or members of the Warsaw Pact?

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