

THE BERLIN WALL, OSTPOLITIK, AND DÉTENTE

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Willy Brandt: [I]n August 1961 a curtain was drawn aside to reveal an empty stage. To put it more bluntly, we lost certain illusions that had outlived the hopes underlying them . . . Ulbricht had been allowed to take a swipe at the Western superpower, and the United States merely winced with annoyance. My political deliberations in the years that followed were substantially influenced by this day's experience, and it was against this background that my so-called *Ostpolitik*—the beginning of détente—took shape.¹

President Kennedy: It's not a very nice solution but a wall is a hell of a lot better than a war.²

The building of the Berlin Wall on August 13, 1961, was an essential precursor to West Germany's *Ostpolitik* and East-West détente. This essay will examine the connections between the Berlin Crisis of 1958-61 and the years of *Ostpolitik* and détente from 1969 to 1972. The construction of the Berlin Wall signaled both the external strength of the East German communist regime and its fundamental internal weakness. The communists possessed the strength to close the border around West Berlin, but their need to do so to stop the flow of refugees indicated the core weakness of the regime and its lack of legitimacy. The brutal decision by the East Germans and Soviets to seal off access to West Berlin by erecting a wall had two paradoxical outcomes. On the one hand, it led the West Germans to realize that if they wanted to help the East German people, they would have to stop ignoring their leaders and instead establish direct relations with the East German regime. Thus, the building of the Wall affected West Germany's *Ostpolitik* over the next decade. On the other hand, it also contributed to East German popular disaffection with the regime, culminating in the revolution almost three decades later in 1989 that led to the collapse of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the East's unification with the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG).

This essay will highlight some of the dynamics leading up to and/or set in motion by the building of the Berlin Wall, and it will discuss the way these dynamics between and among the U.S., West Germany, East Germany and the Soviet Union (with China as a fifth key element) played out in the détente period. These dynamics include the acceptance of superpower spheres of influence, the complicated alliance relations of both superpowers with their German allies, and a distracting Chinese role in East-West relations.

The U.S. Commitment to West Berlin and Implicit Recognition of a Soviet Sphere of Influence in the East

In the years surrounding the building of the Berlin Wall, U.S. leaders made it clear that, all rhetoric aside, they were really only committed to defending their sphere of influence in the West and not to rolling back Soviet influence from East Berlin, East Germany, or Eastern Europe. In effect, the U.S. recognized a Soviet sphere of influence in the East. Thus, the U.S. did not attempt to defend the East Berliners from Soviet tanks in 1953, the Hungarians in 1956, or the Czechs in 1968.³ In the face of Soviet pressure on West Berlin during the Berlin Crisis of 1958-61, President John F. Kennedy gave a speech on July 25, 1961, focusing U.S. interests on “three essentials”: defending the West Berliners, ensuring Western access to West Berlin, and maintaining an Allied presence in West Berlin.⁴ Kennedy did not include movement between East and West Berlin or the freedom of the East Berliners in his priorities.

Khrushchev launched the Berlin Crisis in November 1958, threatening to transfer to the GDR control over the access routes between West Germany and West Berlin if the West did not agree to a World War II peace treaty with the two Germanies (thus recognizing East Germany) or with a united Germany. He also demanded the transformation of West Berlin into a “free city” (characterized by the withdrawal of Western troops and a drastic reduction in Western influence). Khrushchev’s goal was to solidify his own sphere of influence in East Germany by reducing Western influence there. Unable to push the West out after almost three years of trying, he had to settle for a more defensive strategy of shoring up the GDR with the Berlin Wall.

To the surprise of the East German leadership, Kennedy and the other Western leaders made no attempt to interfere with the construction of the Berlin Wall. East German leader Walter Ulbricht wrote to Khrushchev on September 15, confiding, “I must say that the enemy undertook fewer countermeasures than anticipated.”⁵ In fact, Kennedy felt relief that the communists had finally found a way to halt the refugee exodus in a way that did not threaten a war. Kennedy observed to his aides, “It’s not a very nice solution, but a wall is a hell of a lot better than a war.” After Khrushchev’s many threats during the Berlin Crisis to turn over to the GDR control of Western access to West Berlin and his talk of launching nuclear missiles against the West, the erection first of barbed wire and then of cement bricks just inside the borders of East Berlin and East Germany surrounding West Berlin looked much more defensive than offensive. Senator William Fulbright had publicly stated on July 30 that he did not understand why the East Germans were not closing their border to stop the refugee exodus, something he believed they had a right

to do.⁶ In early August, Kennedy himself privately told Walt Rostow, his Deputy Special Assistant for National Security Affairs: “Khrushchev is losing East Germany. He cannot let that happen. . . . He will have to do something to stop the flow of refugees—perhaps a wall. And we won’t be able to prevent it. I can hold the Alliance together to defend West Berlin but I cannot act to keep East Berlin open.”⁷ While no evidence has surfaced that Kennedy knew in advance of Soviet and East German plans to build a wall, to say nothing of any private acquiescence he made to such a wall, it is clear that his policy was guided by a sense of de facto spheres of influence. This same sense, as well as a recognition of nuclear parity and a desire to avoid nuclear war, would underlie Nixon and Kissinger’s steps toward détente with the Soviets.

In the aftermath of the Wall, the U.S. quickly reached out to the Soviets to resume talks on Germany and Berlin.⁸ These talks between Secretary of State Dean Rusk and Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko began in New York in September 1961 on the occasion of the annual convening of the UN General Assembly. Gromyko later reported to the Soviet Central Committee: “The Western Powers are not even raising in the talks the question of eliminating the control on the borders of West Berlin. Even more, representatives of the USA recognized in talks that the measures of August 13 correspond to the vital interests of the GDR and the other socialist states.”⁹ The Soviets got the message that Kennedy recognized the status quo. U.S. acquiescence in the Berlin Wall was a prelude to the U.S. and Western détente agreements of the 1970s, including the 1975 Helsinki Final Act, which formalized the recognition of post-World War II European borders and regimes.

The tension of the three-year Berlin Crisis and then the Cuban Missile Crisis a year later led the superpowers to seek détente. They both realized that the risks of confrontation were too great and that neither side was willing to relinquish its sphere of influence. Tensions over Berlin in particular were to be eliminated with the 1971 Quadripartite Agreement.¹⁰

The Complicated Dynamics of U.S.-West German Relations

While each superpower had a tight alliance with its German ally, there were some clear differences in interests and priorities between the superpowers, on the one hand, and the Germans, on the other, that were apparent both in the crisis surrounding the building of the Berlin Wall and in the détente years. On issues concerning Berlin and Germany, the two German leaders were understandably more adamant about protecting their interests than the U.S. and Soviet leaders were, while the superpowers always had to keep in mind the broad picture of East-West relations and not just the German question. These differences in perspectives led to some diverging policies and tactics.

During the Berlin Crisis, Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy both expressed exasperation with Chancellor Konrad Adenauer's hard line on negotiations with the East. Eisenhower could not understand why Adenauer felt so insecure during the Berlin Crisis, why he was so afraid of publicly dealing with the East German regime. Adenauer, however, believed that if they gave the Soviets and East Germans an inch, they would take a mile; that recognizing East Germans as more than just "agents" of the Soviet Union would lead down "the slippery path" to the recognition of the East German regime.¹¹ As William Burr observes, during the Berlin Crisis Eisenhower "was a 'prisoner' of German sensibilities . . ."¹² "Throughout the crisis, Eisenhower had to shape and reshape positions so that they were politically tolerable to Adenauer. The degree to which this requirement gave Bonn a veto over the Allies' Berlin policy became a source of frustration, with Eisenhower finally seeing Adenauer as a barrier to a negotiated settlement."¹³ Kennedy felt the same way, but "West German resistance precluded pursuit of a new policy" of more constructive, less rigid relations with the East.¹⁴

Adenauer's hard-line policy toward the GDR relied on a combination of military and economic pressure and a diplomatic strategy, known as the Hallstein Doctrine, of ignoring the GDR and insisting that other countries also refuse to recognize the GDR. As the U.S. and Britain became increasingly interested in finding a new *modus vivendi* with the Soviets on Germany and Berlin during the Berlin Crisis so as to dampen international tensions, Adenauer remained steadfast in his insistence on not making any concessions. Both Eisenhower and Kennedy let their policies be guided by West German sensitivities because they were concerned that any wavering of American support for Adenauer might lead him to doubt the U.S. commitment to the defense of the FRG and hence to adopt a more neutral strategy between the blocs to keep the FRG out of a war. The U.S. leaders believed that the reliability of Adenauer's Western orientation hinged on their hard-line stance toward the Soviets on matters concerning Germany and Berlin.

A similar, albeit opposite, dynamic was apparent in U.S.-West German relations by the late 1960s. Whereas during the Berlin Crisis the West Germans favored stonewalling in negotiations with the Soviets, after the construction of the Berlin Wall—and particularly under Chancellor Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*—the West Germans became more eager than the U.S. to reach out to the Soviet bloc and to establish ties across the Berlin Wall. Again, U.S. leaders were worried about the reliability of their West German ally. Kissinger was concerned that Brandt might focus so much on *Ostpolitik* that he would give up West Germany's post-war focus on integration with the West. Thus, he and Nixon "were determined to spare

no effort to mute the latent incompatibility between Germany's national aims and its Atlantic and European ties."¹⁵ Kissinger felt that

a free-wheeling, powerful Germany trying to maneuver between East and West, whatever its ideology, posed the classic challenge to the equilibrium of Europe, for whichever side Germany favored would emerge as predominant. To forestall this, or perhaps to outflank it, each of Brandt's colleagues—including Nixon—sought to preempt Germany by conducting an active *détente* policy on its own. In this sense, *Ostpolitik* had effects far beyond those intended. It contributed to a race to Moscow . . .¹⁶

Kissinger and Nixon "were [thus] moved to develop an American *détente* with the Soviet Union in part to preclude a West German-led European *détente* with the Soviet Union from excluding the United States and thus splitting the Western alliance."¹⁷

During both the Berlin Crisis and the years of *Ostpolitik* and *détente*, West Germany exercised significant influence over U.S. policymaking. In the first case, it hindered the U.S. in its efforts to negotiate with the Soviets; in the second, it acted to push the U.S. into serious negotiations with the Soviets.

The Complicated Soviet-East German Relationship

Just as West German preferences influenced U.S. policy, East German proclivities affected Soviet policy and led to tensions between the two socialist states. Differences in tactics and priorities between the Soviet and East German leaders became at times dangerously clear during the Berlin Crisis and ultimately led to Ulbricht's ouster during the *détente* period. East Germany's persistent urging of the Soviets since 1953 to agree to close the Berlin sectoral border and its independent behavior there were crucial factors in leading the Soviets reluctantly to acquiesce in the summer of 1961 to building the Berlin Wall.¹⁸

The Soviets rebuffed the East German request in 1953 to close the inter-Berlin border by telling them such a step was "politically unacceptable" and "grossly simplistic."¹⁹ Instead, the Soviets urged the East German regime to institute more liberal policies, such as the "New Course" of June 1953, that would slow the pace of communist development, thus making life more enjoyable to the East German citizens and inducing them to remain in the country instead of fleeing to the West. Ulbricht never convincingly modified his policies in this way and continued to pressure the Soviets to sanction the border closure in Berlin, which was his preferred way of dealing with the refugee exodus. In spite of Khrushchev's admonitions to Ulbricht "not to undertake unilateral action in

Berlin" while the Soviet leader waited to meet with the new American president in 1961,²⁰ Khrushchev continued to receive reports from Soviet diplomats in Berlin that Ulbricht wanted to "close 'the door to the West' [. . .] at the sectoral border between democratic [East] and West Berlin" and that he was "exercising impatience and a somewhat unilateral approach to this problem [of refugees escaping across the Berlin border]."²¹

When Kennedy and Khrushchev failed to reach an agreement on Berlin at their Vienna summit in June 1961, Khrushchev granted Ulbricht approval for his plans to close the border in Berlin. But even after the border closure, Khrushchev remained concerned about Ulbricht's unilateralist tendencies and warned him not to institute any more new policies on the border in Berlin.²² Similarly, Foreign Minister Gromyko and Defense Minister Malinovsky were so concerned about the East German practice of shooting too readily and frequently at people on the border that they advised Khrushchev in October "that Ulbricht be counseled against taking any new measures [at the Berlin border] without prior discussion with the Soviets."²³

While Khrushchev resented Ulbricht's independent behavior, as well as his constant requests for more economic aid and his harsh style of rule in the GDR, which left the Soviets no choice other than closing the border to save Ulbricht's regime, he put up with him. Khrushchev's successor, Leonid Brezhnev, however, decided that Ulbricht's arrogant, unilateral style was too risky. In the Ostpolitik negotiations with the West Germans between 1969 and 1973, the Soviets did not allow for any East German independence, since the Soviets felt "Ulbricht seemed unreliable" and that "there was a chance that he might disobey the USSR."²⁴ It was precisely because of Ulbricht's unilateral behavior earlier in the Berlin Crisis that the Soviets were so worried about controlling him in the Ostpolitik period. Thus, "once Moscow saw that ratification [of the Moscow Treaty between the Soviet Union and the FRG] was dependent on progress in the German-German talks," Brezhnev "finally acted on the Honecker faction's requests to [. . .] forc(e) Ulbricht out."²⁵ Brezhnev also resented Ulbricht's "superior attitude" toward him and the other Soviet leaders.²⁶

The Soviet strategic situation in the world was different under Brezhnev than it had been under Khrushchev, making it easier for Brezhnev to sack Ulbricht. Precisely because Khrushchev had agreed to build the Wall, Brezhnev had more flexibility in his policy; he could afford to reach out to the West and have East Germany reach out to West Germany without worrying about the collapse of the East German regime. The Soviet strategic nuclear arms buildup of the 1960's was also very important. Brezhnev enjoyed a parity in his high-level talks with the U.S. that Khrushchev had longed for. If Khrushchev had had the same opportu-

nities that Brezhnev finally had for U.S. and West German recognition of the status quo, maybe he would have sacrificed Ulbricht, too.

In addition to Ulbricht's unilateral behavior, there is another aspect of Soviet bloc relations that connects the Berlin Crisis and the years of Ostpolitik: the question of economic, cultural, and other ties with West Germany and West Berlin. In the 1950s and 1960s, there were many disagreements between the Soviets, East Germans, and other East Europeans over these ties. Ulbricht sought to control all Soviet bloc relations with West Germany and West Berlin, and he was quite hostile to independent efforts by his socialist allies to develop ties with them, especially without FRG diplomatic recognition of the GDR.²⁷ At the August 1961 Warsaw Pact meeting in Moscow, which sanctioned the border closing in Berlin, Ulbricht's Polish, Czechoslovak and Hungarian allies made clear their reluctance to sacrifice their own economic relations with the FRG. They feared that signing a separate peace treaty with the GDR would provoke a West German economic embargo against the Soviet bloc. None of them wanted to jeopardize their economic relations with the FRG. Similarly, in response to Khrushchev's insistence that they join him in helping the GDR economically in the case of targeted sanctions by West Germany against the GDR, the East Europeans again resisted.²⁸

Thus, an East European independent approach to economic relations with the FRG was already well established before their receptive response in the mid-1960s to Chancellor Ludwig Erhard and Foreign Minister Gerhard Schröder's bridge-building policy, which focused on expanding economic ties with the East European states. Ulbricht tried to use this against the Czechs and others during and in the aftermath of the Prague Spring of 1968. As part of his ongoing efforts to thwart East European economic and political ties with the FRG, Ulbricht blamed the Prague Spring unrest on West German influence in Czechoslovakia. In contrast to Brezhnev's view that the Warsaw Pact's forceful crushing of the Prague Spring allowed them to deal with the West from a position of strength, Ulbricht argued that the lesson of the Prague Spring was to avoid deepening relations with Bonn.²⁹ Ulbricht also took the chance to lecture his allies about the dangers of economic dependence on the FRG.³⁰ Given East Germany's own significant economic reliance on trade with West Germany, a constant source of concern to both Khrushchev and Brezhnev, the skepticism of Ulbricht's allies about his calls for reducing their economic ties with the FRG was understandable.³¹ All the East European countries were worried about each other's economic dependence on the FRG, but none of them was willing to reduce its own. The Kremlin leaders also valued economic ties with West Germany. The Soviet practice of continuing and even expanding its economic relations with West Germany in spite of difficult political relations was in evidence during the

Berlin Crisis and afterwards and was an important factor in Soviet acceptance of West Germany's Ostpolitik overtures.³²

The Role of China

Another important connection between the years of the Berlin Crisis and those of détente was Chinese pressure on the Soviets. While Khrushchev had to contend with the burgeoning Sino-Soviet rift during the Berlin Crisis, of which Ulbricht took advantage, Brezhnev was strongly motivated to come to détente agreements with the U.S. in the aftermath of the Sino-Soviet military clashes in the Far East in March 1969.³³ Khrushchev's advisor Oleg Troyanovsky has observed that "China was never far from Khrushchev's mind,"³⁴ and China must have been an even greater pre-occupation for Brezhnev.

As the Sino-Soviet split developed in the years 1958–61, Chinese leader Mao Zedong was very critical of Khrushchev's policy of "peaceful coexistence" with the West and insisted that the West was really a "paper tiger" the communists need not fear. Khrushchev accordingly felt pressure from Mao to be harder on the West, which partially contributed to his bellicose attitude during the Berlin Crisis. Ulbricht made use of Chinese pressure in his campaign to persuade Khrushchev to close the border in Berlin. The East Germans and Chinese shared key national goals: taking back "their" land in West Berlin and Taiwan from "the imperialists" and having Soviet support in the process. In a move calculated to add pressure on Khrushchev to carry out his threats against the West in the Berlin Crisis, in January 1961, Ulbricht sent a high-level delegation to China without first notifying the Soviets.³⁵ Premier Zhou Enlai told the East Germans on more than one occasion that they and the Chinese occupied the two external fronts of the socialist bloc and that the German front had precedence in the Cold War.³⁶ In this vein, Foreign Minister Chen Yi later expressed his satisfaction that the East Germans were shooting at their own citizens trying to escape after the August 13, 1961, erection of the Berlin Wall.³⁷

A Chinese role can also be seen in another Cold War crisis, the Cuban Missile Crisis. The Soviet decision to deploy missiles in Cuba in 1962 was partially due to indications that some top Cuban leaders were considering closer ties with China. The missile deployment was one way to keep the Cubans on the Soviet side of the Sino-Soviet split.³⁸

The Chinese role in East-West relations changed completely from the years of the Berlin Crisis to the years of détente. The hostile Chinese attitude toward the U.S. of the earlier period was replaced in the late 1960s and 1970s by a willingness for rapprochement with the U.S. and a designation of the Soviet Union as the main enemy.³⁹ Thus, China exerted

an equally strong, if opposite, influence on Soviet relations with the United States. A Soviet-Chinese competition for a hard-line against the U.S. in the 1950s and early 1960s was replaced by a competition for agreements with the U.S. by the early 1970s. The Soviet leaders' need to avoid military conflict on both their eastern and western fronts was a strong factor in their receptivity to Brandt's Ostpolitik and Nixon and Kissinger's détente following the Sino-Soviet border clashes of March 1969.⁴⁰

The Effect of the Berlin Wall on the West German Leaders

The most direct connection between the Berlin Crisis and Ostpolitik came in the person of Willy Brandt. Mayor of West Berlin when the Wall went up, Brandt went on to become the West German foreign minister in 1966 and then chancellor in 1969. When the first barbed wire appeared in the early morning hours of Sunday, August 13, 1961, Brandt was on a train to Kiel from Nuremberg, where he had spent Saturday launching his election campaign for the chancellorship. When the train stopped in Hannover and Brandt received the news about the border closure, he immediately flew to Berlin to survey the scene at the central points of Potsdamer Platz and the Brandenburg Gate. Live TV broadcasts showed him at the barbed wire.⁴¹

Brandt was almost as angry with the U.S. and other Western Allies for not doing anything to stop the Berlin Wall as he was with the Soviets and East Germans for its construction. This was the sentiment behind his statement about the "empty stage" and "lost illusions" that introduced this chapter.⁴² In an angry letter to Kennedy on August 16, Brandt spoke of a "crisis of confidence" among the West Berliners and "pointed out that the Western Powers . . . were in [the] process of being ousted from areas of joint responsibility [in Berlin]." Brandt requested that the U.S. bolster its garrison in West Berlin and that the three Western Powers clearly reinforce their responsibilities in West Berlin.⁴³ Although the U.S. did bolster its forces in West Berlin, send Vice President Johnson on August 19 to show support for the West Berliners, and appoint General Lucius D. Clay as President Kennedy's personal representative in West Berlin, Brandt recognized that fundamentally the U.S. accepted East Berlin and East Germany as within the Soviet sphere of influence:

I wondered then, not for the first or the last time, whether the two superpowers might not, with adamant consistency, have been pursuing the same principle in Europe in 1945: that, whatever happened, they would respect the spheres of influence broadly agreed at Yalta. . . . The basic principle governing the tacit ar-

rangement between Moscow and Washington remained in force during the construction of the Wall and thereafter.⁴⁴

Adenauer also seemed sufficiently content with the status quo, but Brandt was not. Instead, he sought “to create a climate in which the status quo could be changed—in other words, improved—by peaceful means.”⁴⁵

For Brandt and his advisor Egon Bahr,⁴⁶ the Wall was a huge wake-up call. They realized that Adenauer’s hard-line policy of non-recognition and pressure had not worked. Instead, a door had been slammed in their faces. The Wall went up. As Brandt wrote in his memoirs, “My new and inescapable realization was that traditional patterns of Western policy had proved ineffective, if not downright unrealistic.”⁴⁷ Brandt and Bahr realized that if they wanted to change anything on the other side of Wall and to help their compatriots, they had to take matters into their own hands “instead of relying solely on others to speak for us.”⁴⁸ They needed to change the nature of West German policy toward the East, probably without U.S. support. A Western policy of containment had not yielded any gains on German unification, so Brandt and Bahr decided to pursue engagement with the East German regime.

Brandt and Bahr developed a policy of “change through rapprochement” (*Wandel durch Annäherung*), believing that they could find ways to “mitigate the hardships and burdens arising from partition,”⁴⁹ ameliorate the lives of the East Germans, and try to change the harsh GDR government by reaching out to it, all hopefully leading to German reunification on Western democratic terms. “[W]ithin months of the building of the Wall, the first, strictly unofficial contact was made between a member of the Brandt team and an emissary of the East German leadership” to negotiate family reunifications: in return for West German hard currency, the GDR would release family members from East Germany to be reunited with their relatives in West Germany.⁵⁰ The first public, formal agreements would come two years later in 1963 with the Christmas and New Year’s day passes that allowed West Berliners to visit their relatives in East Berlin for a day at a time; some 790,000 West Berliners took advantage of this opportunity.⁵¹ In 1987, Bahr said of these visits “that the foundation-stone was laid for what later became known . . . as ‘Ostpolitik’.”⁵²

When Brandt became chancellor in 1969, he and Bahr expanded these first small steps into a whole framework of relations with the East: the Ostpolitik treaties of 1970 with Moscow and Warsaw, the 1971 treaty on Quadripartite control of Berlin, the 1972 Basic Treaty with East Berlin, and the 1973 treaty with Prague. The construction of the Berlin Wall had indicated to Brandt and Bahr not only that they had to deal with the East

German regime, but also that they had to deal more directly with the Soviet regime if they wanted to reach their fellow Germans across the Wall.⁵³ The Soviet crushing of the Prague Spring, just as the Czechs and West Germans had been negotiating expanded relations, reinforced this conclusion.⁵⁴ Thus, the Moscow Treaty was the first Eastern Treaty negotiated by the West Germans, paving the way for the Basic Treaty with the GDR two years later.⁵⁵

Conclusion

This essay has emphasized the connections between the Berlin Crisis of 1958-61 and the years of Ostpolitik and détente. Already ten years before the treaties of the 1970s were signed, there were important precursors to the dynamics of the détente period, both in terms of the nature of superpower relations and of their relations with their German allies. Willy Brandt's desire to build bridges over the Wall was a crucial and direct connection between the years of crisis and the years of Ostpolitik and détente. The superpowers' acceptance of each other's spheres of influence, Chinese pressure on the Soviets, and complicated U.S.-West German and Soviet-East German relations were also evident continuities.

Notes

¹ Willy Brandt, *People and Politics: The Years 1960–1975*, trans. J. Maxwell Brownjohn (Boston, 1978), 20.

² JFK's words to his aides, cited in Michael Beschloss, *The Crisis Years: Kennedy and Khrushchev, 1960–1963* (New York, 1991), 278.

³ Christian F. Ostermann, "'Keeping the Pot Simmering': The United States and the East German Uprising of 1953," *German Studies Review*, XIX, no. 1 (February 1996): 61–89; C. Ostermann, ed., *Uprising in East Germany, 1953: The Cold War, the German Question, and the First Major Upheaval Behind the Iron Curtain* (New York and Budapest, 2001); Csaba Bekes, Malcolm Byrne, and Janos Rainer, eds., *The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents* (Budapest, 2002); and Jaromir Navratil et. al., eds., *The Prague Spring, 1968* (Budapest, 1998).

⁴ "Report by President Kennedy to the Nation on the Berlin Crisis, July 25, 1961," U.S. Department of State, *Documents on Germany, 1944–1985* (Washington, DC, 1985), 762–65.

⁵ Ulbricht's September 15, 1961 letter to Khrushchev. Berlin, Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR im Bundesarchiv (SAPMO-BA), DY 30, J IV 2/202/130, p. 1. Khrushchev had also remarked at the August 4 Warsaw Pact meeting in Moscow that he and his colleagues felt the West had been reacting less severely to Soviet proposals about Berlin than they had expected. He said that they had "expected more force," but the strongest intimidation was Kennedy's [July 25] speech." See the speech in Bernd Bonwetsch and A. M. Filitov, intro. and annot., "Iz stenogrammy soveshchaniia pervykh sekretarei TsK kommunisticheskikh i rabochikh partii stran-ychnastnits Varshavskogo Dogovora po voprosam, sviazannym s podgotovkoi k zakliucheniiu Germanskogo mirnogo dogovora, Moskva, 4 avgusta 1961 g, Utrennee zasedanie, Vystuplenie tov. N.S. Khrushcheva," *Novaia i Noveishaia Istoriiia* 2 (March–April 1999): 141.

⁶ *New York Times*, August 3, 1961, cited in Honoré M. Catudal, *Kennedy and the Berlin Wall Crisis: A Case Study in U.S. Decision Making* (Berlin, 1980), 201.

⁷ W.W. Rostow, *The Diffusion of Power: An Essay in Recent History* (New York, 1972), 231.

⁸ Telegram from the Department of State [Rusk] to the Embassy in the Soviet Union, September 3, 1961, U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961–1963. Volume XIV, Berlin Crisis, 1961–1962* (Washington, DC, 1993), 138–39.

⁹ "Proekt materiala po voprosy o germanskom mirnom dovogore dlia obsyzhdeniia i soglasovaniia s dryz'iami," October 22, 1961, Arkhiv Vneshnei Politiki Russkoi Federatsii (AVPRF), Fond (collection, F.) 0742, Opis (file group, Op.) 6, Portfel' (portfolio, Por.) 36, Papka (folder, Pap.), 46, p. 10.

¹⁰ See the essay by David E. Geyer in this volume.

¹¹ On West German constraint of U.S. policy during the Berlin Crisis, see William Burr, "Dwight D. Eisenhower and American Policy During the Berlin Crisis, 1958–1960" unpublished paper presented at the conference, "New Perspectives on the Berlin Crisis," Washington, D.C., the Woodrow Wilson Center, May 20–21, 1993; idem, "Avoiding the Slippery Slope: The Eisenhower Administration and the Berlin Crisis, November 1958–January 1959," *Diplomatic History* (Spring 1994): 177–205; Marc Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945–1963* (Princeton, 1999), 274–82; and Kara Stibora Fulcher, "A Sustainable Position? The United States, the Federal Republic, and the Ossification of Allied Policy on Germany, 1958–1962," *Diplomatic History* 26, no. 2 (Spring 2002): 283–307.

¹² Burr, "Dwight D. Eisenhower and American Policy During the Berlin Crisis, 1958–1960," 55.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁴ Fulcher, "A Sustainable Position?," 306.

¹⁵ Henry Kissinger, *The White House Years* (Boston, 1979), 408–410.

¹⁶ Kissinger, *Years of Upheaval* (Boston, 1982), 146.

¹⁷ Raymond Garthoff, *Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan*, rev. ed. (Washington, 1994), 126–127; Kissinger, *The White House Years*, 408–11, 529–30, and *Years of Upheaval*, 143–46.

¹⁸ See the author's book *Driving the Soviets Up the Wall: Soviet-East German Relations, 1953–1961* (Princeton, 2003) as well as her Working Paper No. 5 with the Cold War International History Project (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, May 1993).

¹⁹ Foreign Minister Molotov's recommendation to the Council of Ministers of the Presidium, 18 March 1953, AVPRF, F. 06, Op. 12, Pap. 18, Por. 283. This document is reprinted in English in Ostermann, ed., *Uprising in East Germany, 1953*, 50–51.

²⁰ "Zapis' besedy tovarishcha N.S. Khrushcheva s tovarishchem V. Ul'brikhtom, 30 noiabria 1960 goda," AVPRF, F. 0742, Op. 6, Por. 4, Pap. 43, pp. 9–10. For an English translation, see Appendix A in Harrison, "Ulbricht and the Concrete 'Rose'."

²¹ Report from Soviet Ambassador Pervukhin in the GDR to Foreign Minister Gromyko, May 19, 1961, AVPRF, Fond: Referentura po GDR, Op. 6, Por. 34, Pap. 46, pp. 2–3. For an English translation, see Appendix C in Harrison, "Ulbricht and the Concrete 'Rose'."

²² Letter from Khrushchev to Ulbricht, September 28, 1961, SAPMO-BA, DY 30, J IV 2/202/130, p. 2. For an English translation, see Appendix J in Harrison, "Ulbricht and the Concrete 'Rose'."

²³ Bruce Menning, "The Berlin Crisis from the Perspective of the Soviet General Staff," in William W. Epley, ed., *International Cold War Military Records and History: Proceedings of the International Conference on Cold War Military Records and History Held in Washington, D.C., 21–26 March 1994* (Washington, 1996), 59.

²⁴ M. E. Sarotte, *Dealing with the Devil: East Germany, Détente and Ostpolitik, 1969–1973* (Chapel Hill, 2001), 31, 36, 56, 110, 167–68. See also Mary Sarotte's contribution in this volume.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 168.

²⁶ "Protokoll einer Unterredung zwischen L.I. Breschnew und Erich Honecker am 28. Juli 1970," SAPMO-BA, DY 30, J NL 2/32, also published in Peter Przybylski, *Tatort Politbüro: Die Akte Honecker* (Berlin, 1991), 284–85.

²⁷ "Zapis' besedy s zav. mezhdunarodnym otdelom TsK SEPG P. Florinom," May 12, 1958, from the diary of O.P. Selianinov, May 16, 1958, TsKhSD, R. 8873, F. 5, Op. 49, D. 76, pp. 2–5; "Zapis' besedy s t. Val'terom Ul'brikhtom, 11.6.58," from the diary of M.G. Pervukhin, June 12, 1958, Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Arkhiv Noveishei Istorii (RGANI), Rolik (microfilm reel, R.) 8875, F. 5, Op. 49, Delo (file, D.) 81, pp. 1–3; note from Deputy Foreign Minister Zorin to Pervukhin on April 6, 1959, AVPRF, Referentura po GDR, Op. 5, Por. 26, Pap. 30; "Zapis' besedy s zamestitelem ministra inostrannykh del GDR I. Këningom," from the diary of O.P. Selianinov, 4 December 1959, RGANI, R. 8911, F. 5, Op. 49, D. 189; and "Otcheot o rabote Posol'stva SSSR v GDR za 1960 god," 15.12.60, Pervukhin, RGANI, R. 8948, F. 5, Op. 49, D. 287, p. 85.

²⁸ See the record of the August 4, 1961 discussions in Bernd Bonwetsch and Alexei Filitov, "Dokumentation. Chruschtschow und der Mauerbau. Die Gipfelkonferenz der Warschauer-Pakt-Staaten vom 3.–5. August 1961," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 48 (2000): 175–78, 196 and Khrushchev's August 4 speech in *idem.*, "Kak prinimalos' reshenie o vozvedenii berlinskoi steny," *Novia i noveishaia istoriia* 2 (March–April 1999): 70–72.

²⁹ Michael Sodaro, *Moscow, Germany, and the West from Khrushchev to Gorbachev* (Ithaca, 1990), 133–34; and Angela E. Stent, *Russia and Germany Reborn: Unification, the Soviet Collapse, and the New Europe* (Princeton, 1999), 15.

³⁰ Sodaro, *Moscow, Germany, and the West from Khrushchev to Gorbachev*, 115–121.

³¹ For Khrushchev's concern about East German economic dependence on West Germany, see his conversation with Ulbricht on November 30, 1960, "Zapis' besedy tovarishcha N.S. Khrushcheva s tovarishchem V. Ul'brikhtom, 30 noiabria 1960 goda," AVPRF, F. 0742, Op. 6, Por. 4, Pap. 43, pp. 9, 12–14. For Brezhnev's concern, see Sarotte, *Dealing with the Devil*, 66, 77–82.

³² Angela Stent, *From Embargo to Ostpolitik: The Political Economy of West German-Soviet Relations, 1955–1980* (New York, 1981), 79, 163–78.

³³ See the contribution by Chen Jian in this volume.

³⁴ Oleg Troyanovsky, *Cherez gody i rostoianniia: istoriia odnoi cem'i* (Moscow, 1997), 232.

³⁵ See the one-page report sent by Yuri Andropov to the Central Committee on January 18, 1961, written by I. Kabin, Chairman of the German section in the CPSU Central Committee Department on Relations with Communist and Workers' Parties of Socialist Countries, RGANI, R. 8978, F. 5, Op. 49, D. 377.

³⁶ See Zhou Enlai's statement to GDR Ambassador Hegen, "Vermerk über den Antrittsbesuch Botschafter Hegens beim Ministerpräsident der VR China, Genossen Tschou En-lai am 9.6.1961," written by Hegen, June 12, 1961. Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (PolAA), Ministerium für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten der DDR (MfAA), A 17879, pp. 2–3, 6.

³⁷ See Foreign Minister Chen Yi's comment on August 31, "Aktenvermerk über ein Gespräch des Botschafters mit dem Mitglied des Politbüros und Aussenministers der VR China, Genossen Tschen Ji, mit anschliessendem Mittagessen am 31.8.61 in der Zeit vom 11.00 bis 12.45 Uhr," written by Ambassador Hegen, September 5, 1961. PolAA, MfAA, A 17879.

³⁸ Aleksandr Fursenko and Timothy Naftali, *"One Hell of a Gamble": Khrushchev, Castro, and Kennedy, 1958–1964* (New York, 1997), 167–70.

- ³⁹ On the Chinese motivations for changed relations with the U.S., see Chen Jian, *Mao's China and the Cold War* (Chapel Hill, 2001), 238–76.
- ⁴⁰ Brandt was quite aware of this at the time: *People and Politics*, 194. See also Sarotte, *Dealing with the Devil*, 21–23, 24, 108–109, 177.
- ⁴¹ Ann Tusa, *The Last Division: A History of Berlin, 1945–1989* (Reading, Mass., 1997), 280.
- ⁴² Brandt, *People and Politics*, p. 20.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 31; and “Telegram From the Mission at Berlin to the Department of State,” Berlin, August 16, 1961, midnight, U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961–1963, Vol. XIV: Berlin Crisis, 1961–1962* (Washington, 1993), pp. 345–46.
- ⁴⁴ Brandt, *People and Politics*, 29.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 168.
- ⁴⁶ Egon Bahr was initially Brandt’s press spokesman and close advisor in Berlin, then head of the planning staff in Brandt’s foreign ministry and finally key negotiator of the Eastern Treaties when Brandt was chancellor.
- ⁴⁷ Brandt, *People and Politics*, 20.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 168.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 167.
- ⁵⁰ Timothy Garton Ash, *In Europe’s Name: Germany and the Divided Continent* (New York, 1991), 61.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 61–62.
- ⁵² *Ibid.*, 62.
- ⁵³ Brandt, *People and Politics*, 169, and W.R. Smyser, *From Yalta to Berlin: The Cold War Struggle over Germany* (New York, 1999), 212–213.
- ⁵⁴ Brandt, *People and Politics*, 217–18.
- ⁵⁵ See Carsten Tessler’s contribution in this volume.