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Introduction

It is commonly recognised that the German Democratic Republic (GDR) was a dictatorship. Under the auspices of the Socialist Unity Party (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands* or SED), whose dominant position in government was never legitimated by free democratic elections, judicial, executive and legislative powers were also never rigorously separated, compromising the rule of law and allowing the infringement of basic human and civil rights in the name of the party's ideological goals.¹ The nature of the SED dictatorship, as it changed over the forty years of the GDR's existence, remains nonetheless a matter of considerable debate among historians seeking to explain both the causes of the state's longevity and its ultimate collapse. Using material largely unexamined since the collapse of the GDR, this book addresses the role of low-level political and economic functionaries in the organisation and management of the collective farms (*Landwirtschaftliche Produktionsgenossenschaften* or LPGs), and in the implementation and development of agricultural policy from the agitation campaigns of the 'Socialist Spring' in 1960 to the development of industrial-scale agriculture during the 1970s and 1980s in *Bezirk* Erfurt.² In so doing it aims to illuminate the changing practice of authority (*Herrschaft*) at the grass roots and contribute to our understanding of the interrelated history of politics and society in the middle two decades of the GDR's existence, as the SED regime gradually attained an unprecedented level of stability, yet found itself increasingly vulnerable to financial collapse.

The implementation of SED agricultural policy occurred via an administrative network that was by no means simply a well-oiled conduit of dictatorial authority but was itself evolving. At the grass roots the mere creation of the LPG and the establishment of a hierarchy of chairman and work brigade leaders on paper did not automatically create a channel for the consistent transmission of information and authority. Moreover, farmers themselves were no willing dupes, nor indeed merely victims of the imposition of state power. Particularly with regard to agriculture, where knowledge of the locality and the intimacy of the connection between the farmer and his land and livestock retained an

economic value (above all under the constraints of the shortage economy), the practice of authority necessarily involved a – albeit unequal – dialogue. The aspirations and policies of those leading the dictatorship were necessarily reshaped to some extent in accordance with the interests and objections of LPG farmers on the ground. The context in which this process occurred was defined in large part by the shifting educational and political background of the LPGs' leading functionaries and their relationship with their constituent farmers on the one hand and with the state and party hierarchy on the other.

During the course of the 1960s and 1970s, the SED leadership pursued the development of agriculture on an industrial scale and sought to make the process of agricultural production not only more successful but also more responsive to the demands of the economic system – more predictable and thus more plan-able. Against the background of technological development and economic fluctuation, the farming population themselves were necessarily incorporated into a new apparatus of agricultural administration, whose basic unit was the LPG. In the process their understanding of farming – not least of ownership and responsibility to the land – and their relationship with the state and to their fellow farmers underwent considerable, if gradual, redefinition. The contexts in which those working in agriculture pursued their careers and conceived of (and foresaw) their future in the GDR were very different in the late 1970s than they had been in the late 1950s or even the late 1960s.

The changed context of the late 1970s was the product of considerable conflict. Over the years the limits on the expression of divergent opinion among collective farmers and on local resistance to the implementation of SED agricultural policy were settled incrementally. It was also the product, however, of a (albeit limited) compromise, in which the aspirations of the SED leadership were necessarily mitigated by the process by which its authority was transmitted and received. The attempts of collective farmers to assert their own interests not only in spite of or in contradiction to, but also increasingly in conjunction with, those of the SED culminated by the late 1970s in the establishment and consolidation of essentially new structures of farm organisation and stable systems of agricultural administration. These new structures appeared to guarantee steadily improving incomes and working conditions as well as steady (and plan-able) improvements to productivity. A degree of internalisation or at least acceptance of the norms of the socialist system certainly took place in the 1960s and 1970s among the GDR's farmers, driven to a large extent by the reduction in the size of the agricultural workforce and by a steady growth in the proportion of

those with technical training in the forms and methods of socialist agriculture. This was matched by growing recognition of the limitations on rights to property, to participation in decision making and self-determination and to the articulation of complaint by the late 1970s.

Furthermore across the economy and society as a whole in the GDR in the 1970s, the end of radical social upheaval and economic austerity marked a high point for the stability of the SED regime. Internationally recognised in 1972 and a signatory to an international declaration on human rights in Helsinki in 1975, the GDR appeared outwardly to have achieved an unprecedented degree of harmony both domestically and internationally. The introduction of welfare and consumerist measures designed to bring about immediate improvements to living conditions, alongside continually improving wages, brought too an unprecedented degree of affluence to the population at large. For many, if not all, members of the collective farms levels of income, levels of educational attainment and working conditions also reached an unprecedented high. Improvement was by no means universal, however. Moreover, underlying this harmony were the beginnings of serious financial crisis.

The cost of welfare and consumerist policies (as well as a failed yet costly attempt to develop a high-tech electronics industry) in the GDR came at the price of an ever-increasing national debt, much of it to West German banks. This debt, compounded by the negative impact of increases in oil prices on the international markets and the reduction of some financial support from the Soviet Union, began during the 1980s seriously to undermine the GDR's economic stability. This had serious consequences for agriculture in the GDR, which more than ever depended on the ability of the rest of the economy to supply it with machinery, fuel and chemical fertiliser. Under increasingly desperate economic conditions, the mistakes of overindustrialisation of agriculture and the vulnerability (when faced with shortage) of the structures established to coordinate agricultural production were exposed. Working conditions in farming became thus increasingly fraught with crises at the same time as rural communities in general were badly hit by shortages in the supply of consumer goods and a growing environmental crisis.

By the end of the 1980s, the effectiveness of the system of agricultural organisation was being seriously undermined by economic stagnation. As the GDR headed towards bankruptcy and the prospects of future stability in agriculture, as in other sectors of the economy, receded, so the ability of the SED leadership to satisfy the expectations which it had set itself and encouraged not only the population at large but also its constituent functionaries throughout the state and party network to adopt,

seemed increasingly unattainable. If the basis on which the SED regime could achieve relative stability had been established in the 1970s, by the late 1980s this stability was increasingly fragile. The clear superiority of the West German economy and the failure of the SED to sustain the standards it had set itself, or even play the role it claimed of protecting the interests of the working class and the peasantry, left it with as little popular support in the countryside as it had in the towns of the GDR. Ever-growing problems of production and increasing differentiation in the quality of life and the standard of working conditions in rural communities had compromised the validity of the material and epistemic bases of the SED leadership's claim to legitimacy. The East German population had been encouraged to expect consistent (planned!) improvement to living and working conditions across the economy and society. These expectations had been sorely disappointed.

Bezirk Erfurt

In order to maintain a focus on the grass-roots relations between the party, state and farming collectives, the scope of this study is limited to the villages of *Bezirk Erfurt*, the largest and westernmost of the three regions (*Bezirke*) formed in 1952 to replace the former *Land Thuringia* in the southwest corner of the GDR. While being roughly average in size and number of inhabitants compared with the GDR's other *Bezirke*, it has the added advantage of allowing the examination, from a regional perspective, of some of the broader issues faced by the GDR during its existence. Religiously, the population of the *Bezirk*, in containing a concentrated minority of Catholics in the northwestern *Eichsfeld* region alongside Protestants of both the Lutheran and Reformed Evangelical churches, reflected the mixture of Christians in the GDR as a whole. Its long border with the Federal Republic makes possible too examination of the regional impact of the erection of the Wall in August 1961. Five districts (*Kreise*) in the *Bezirk* bordered West Germany: in the far north the district centred on the town of Nordhausen, in the northwest the *Eichsfeld* districts around Heiligenstadt and Worbis and to the southwest, Eisenach district. Lying between the Harz mountains to the north and the *Thüringer Wald* to the south, *Bezirk Erfurt* covered 7,349 km² and comprised thirteen rural districts and two urban districts (Weimar and Erfurt) subdivided in 1970 into 803 settlements of which forty-nine were classed as towns.³

Prior to the GDR's existence, the state of Thuringia was largely cultivated by relatively small family farms, lacking almost any grand estates

of the size that existed in the northeast of the country. At the end of the war 98 per cent of the farms were under 50 hectares in size, cultivating 84 per cent of the arable land.⁴ As a result, the effects of the initial land reform – the expropriation of large landowners and the parcelling of property to be handed out to *Neubauern* ('New Farmers': largely industrial workers, refugees or formerly landless farm labourers) – was felt less severely here than for example in Mecklenburg and Brandenburg, where over 40 per cent of arable land was redistributed.⁵ Only with the second stage of the land reforms, which were carried out as part of denazification measures against farmers with up to 100 hectares and which lasted until 1950, did the proportion of those affected increase significantly. With a steady influx of refugees and expelled Germans from the former eastern territories into Thuringia after the war (albeit in fewer numbers than in most of the rest of the GDR), a large proportion of rural communities were required to accommodate the newcomers.⁶ As recent work on the fates of the so-called '*Umsiedler*' (refugees from the East) in the GDR has shown, a relatively small proportion of these newcomers were able to benefit from the land reforms and become so-called *Neubauern*.⁷ Rather the vast majority of newcomers to rural communities found initial employment as agricultural labourers, replacing the foreign workers and prisoners of war who had been freed on the collapse of the Nazi regime, and making up for the absence of the generations of young men killed during the war. Many of those employed in this way had, however, no experience of farming nor saw their long-term future in agriculture, hoping either for a return to their homeland or at least employment in their former trades. Even those who had sought and received land as part of the land reforms found in many cases that it did not enable them to make a sufficient living – not least because the quality of the land and the livestock that they were allocated was seldom of the best.⁸ Consequently, over the course of late 1940s and early 1950s, encouraged by the state, there was a steady exodus from rural communities and agricultural employment into urban settlements and industry. The proportion of newcomers among landless labourers, which had been nearly 50 per cent for the GDR as a whole in 1949 (though far lower in Thuringia), was thus greatly reduced by the time the collectivisation of agriculture was under way.⁹ For the majority of farmers in *Bezirk Erfurt*, therefore, vigorous attempts to persuade them to collectivise in the 1950s represented the first major disruption to the organisation of farmland as a result of communist control since the war.

Of course conditions for farming in the *Bezirk* varied considerably. Purely in terms of the nature and quality of the land, the *Bezirk* may be

divided into three basic sections. Firstly, there were the flat fertile arable lands of the Thuringian basin, which included parts of the districts of Weimar-Land, Bad Langensalza, Sömmerda, Erfurt-Land and Apolda. Farms in these areas tended to be the most successful with high yields of crops and correspondingly well-fed livestock. As a consequence those who farmed them could on the whole afford to remain full-time farmers; secondly, there were the highlands in the north of the Bezirk which included much of the districts of Worbis, Heiligenstadt and Nordhausen. These areas, in contrast, had a much smaller proportion of arable land, relying heavily on pasture land for livestock feed. Owing to the relative poverty of farming in this part of the country, there was a long tradition of migration by men looking for work in mining and industry as well as on farms and estates elsewhere, leaving large numbers of small-scale farms (most well under 5 hectares) in the hands of women and the elderly. Similarly, to the far south of the Bezirk, in the southernmost parts of Arnstadt, Eisenach and Gotha districts, the beginnings of the hilly Thuringian forests reduced agricultural production to a minimum. Much of the rest of these districts, however, constituted a third section, along with districts such as Mühlhausen and Sondershausen, in which relatively successful farmers each with between 10 and 20 hectares of land predominated.¹⁰

The pattern of urban settlement and the development of industry within the different districts also varied considerably and inevitably made an impact on the nature of rural communities and agricultural activity. With the hardening division of Germany following the war, the prewar economic structure of what had become the Soviet zone could no longer be maintained. It was essential that the exploitation of native raw materials be stepped up and new heavy industry as well as manufacturing be developed in the GDR. As a consequence, during East Germany's own (less flamboyant) economic miracle in the 1950s, a rapid expansion of industry and urban settlement took place which not only drew on the agricultural workforce (as I have mentioned with regard to Umsiedler) but on agricultural land as cities expanded and incorporated rural areas. Moreover, some rural communities began to lose their dominantly agricultural character, by their proximity to industrial centres and the high proportion of commuting members of the industrial workforce. With the further expansion of industry into previously exclusively rural areas and the growth of the commuting population, the combination of small-scale agriculture with industrial employment accounted for a not insignificant proportion of farming in some districts in the 1950s. In Bezirk Erfurt, in the vicinity of the many small towns in the Gotha and Eisenach districts in particular, there was

a tradition of part-time farmers and smallholders who also worked in industry. The expansion of mining operations, particularly the potash mines in Nordhausen, had a similar impact on the surrounding rural communities that supplied much of the workforce.

While progress in industrialisation during the 1960s and 1970s alongside the mechanisation of agriculture did result in a reduction in the numbers living in small rural settlements in conjunction with the drop in the agricultural workforce, a considerable number of people in the Bezirk continued to commute from villages.¹¹ Thus although the agricultural and food production sectors dominated the economies of certain Kreise such as Bad Langensalza, Weimar-Land and Erfurt-Land, a large proportion of the inhabitants of these areas were employed in industrial centres, notably in Sömmerda and Erfurt. The largest factories in the Bezirk, such as the People's Own Factory (*Volkseigener Betrieb* or VEB) 'Office Machine Works Sömmerda', VEB 'Automotive Works Eisenach' and VEB 'Electric Works Erfurt', operated largely in the manufacture of machinery and vehicles and from the 1970s electrical goods and technology. Elsewhere in the Bezirk textile and chemical industries were developed, such as the VEB 'Chemicals Rudisleben' near Arnstadt and the VEB 'Cotton Weaving Leinefeld' in Worbis district.¹² In 1971, of approximately 600,000 people in active employment in the Bezirk, 14.5 per cent worked in agriculture and 38 per cent worked in industry. The numbers of those in the Bezirk working in agriculture in the 1970s continued to drop – albeit more gradually than during the 1960s. By the beginning of the 1980s, the size of the agricultural workforce in the Bezirk, as in the rest of the GDR, did stabilise, however, as the minimum level of manpower required to sustain production was reached.

New recruits to the LPGs in Bezirk Erfurt in the 1970s joined farms much changed since full collectivisation in 1960, which were nevertheless by no means uniform in size, structure and organisation. By the 1980s a peculiarly socialist modernisation and (mis-)industrialisation of farming had taken place in the GDR. How this process occurred in the specific, yet not wholly unrepresentative, circumstances of the territory of Bezirk Erfurt and the impact it had on working and living conditions for the rural population forms the background to the shifting relations between state and society with which this study is concerned.

Pre-1989 Studies of Agriculture and Rural Society in the GDR

Given the declining status of farming within the economies of Europe's industrialised countries and the proportionate growth of the urban

population, the attention of historians of postwar Europe in general has shifted proportionately away from the development of rural society.¹³ Nevertheless the significance and immediacy of the upheavals in rural society in the Soviet zone of occupation in Germany after the Second World War and then the GDR has made it something of an exception in this regard. The social development of the countryside as well as the politics of agriculture in the Soviet Zone and GDR were the subject of interest in the West from the beginnings of the land reform in 1945 and the first drive for collectivisation of agriculture in the early 1950s, provoked in part by the immediate plight of the steady flow of farmers and landowners fleeing the GDR as a result. Equally, the significance of the transformation of the countryside for the SED regime, both in terms of the ideological battle for the rural population and in terms of its goals of autarkic food production, saw a large number of historical and political works published in the GDR itself in clarification as well as justification of socialist agricultural policy. Literature has thus come from a number of different quarters in both East and West, with works by historians and journalists as well as social scientists alongside more technical literature on specific agricultural issues.

A range of different types of studies was produced in East Germany prior to the *Wende* on the subject of agriculture, village development and collective farm management. While much of the content is formulaic and ridden with ideological jargon, there was scope too for debates on the future direction of agriculture, particularly during the 1960s, amid a climate of innovation generated by the new economic policy and with the exact path of development for the farm collectives not yet fixed. The scale and complexity of agriculture and (would-be) autarkic food production in a planned economy raised numerous questions for debate among agricultural scholars as well as economists and theorists of socialist management. While the more accessible works on these subjects often did not necessarily reflect the real problems of the average farming collective, they and other more technical publications nonetheless highlight the potential for debate, albeit within certain bounds.¹⁴

A number of works published in the late 1960s and 1970s in the GDR addressed the progress of village development, triumphantly highlighting the success of the policy of '*Annäherung*' ('converging') of living standards in villages and towns with examples of modern housing in rural areas and the availability of modern urban amenities in the countryside.¹⁵ Alongside these largely superficial analyses, several sociological studies of aspects of rural society were carried out in the 1970s and 1980s, largely under the direction of Kurt Krambach.¹⁶ While again couched in the rhetoric of progress, these nonetheless looked more

closely at the specific issues facing rural society, such as the problem of the loss of young people to the towns, and often used interesting, if ideologically skewed, questionnaires to gauge the opinions of farmers on the latest developments of agricultural policy and the position of the farmer within the collective.

The development in the 1970s of the large industrial specialised production units in some advanced LPGs also prompted interest from journalists within the GDR. The reportage on life and work in the industrial milking station in Berstedt, Kreis Weimar by Ursula Püschel, a cultural functionary and literary critic, is notable for the mixture of workers' and managers' perspectives on the problems and successes which she portrays.¹⁷ More controversially, the recorded testimonies of workers and managers in the specialised fruit farms of the Havelland in Bezirk Potsdam, edited by Gabrielle Eckart in the 1980s, highlighted the everyday problems faced by a range of different people living and working in a rural area since the development of specialised industrial agricultural production.¹⁸ Both these works were published in West Germany in the 1980s, filling a gap in West German conceptions of the state of East German agriculture.

The focus of most Western studies of East German agriculture and society before the *Wende* concentrated on the period of the land reforms after 1945 and the later process of collectivisation.¹⁹ In the 1950s and 1960s, this was to some extent the natural result of the Cold War ideological division, with the emphasis on the 'totalitarian' control and repression exerted on the German population by the SED regime. With the thawing of relations between East and West from the early 1970s, a number of Western analysts began to examine the current state of development in the GDR with a more favourable predisposition. As a result, analytical works on the functioning of the LPGs and the development of specialisation and industrial-style production were published, which presented a more positive picture of agriculture than had hitherto been produced.²⁰ The direction of agricultural policy in the GDR towards larger-scale production units was contrasted favourably with the limited small-scale family farms that still predominated in West Germany.²¹ Enthusiasm for the socialist model, however, was tempered by the 1980s as it failed to prove more efficient when compared with the continuing superiority of West German agricultural production levels. Furthermore, the social and environmental impact of the extreme extent of specialisation of agriculture in the GDR made for further points of criticism.²² Although in many respects accurate, ultimately all Western analyses of the contemporary state of agriculture in the GDR were largely limited to the information provided by party-approved sources –

making debates in West Germany on the success or not of the East German transformation of the countryside as much a matter of opinion as of evidence.²³

The Historiography of Agriculture and Rural Society in the GDR since the *Wende*

During the early 1990s political divisions continued to find a reflection in analyses of the effects of the *Wende* on rural society and the future of agricultural organisation in the new Germany. Competing evaluations of the morality as well as the practical validity of the collective farming model were made, as particularly East German commentators sought to reassert the positive impact on rural society of the development of the LPG and the relative success of agriculture in the GDR, compared with the rest of the economy, against criticism from West German academics and renewed interest in the land reforms and the forced collectivisation.²⁴ Since the collapse of the GDR and the reunification of Germany, historical as well as journalistic debate on agricultural policy and rural society in the GDR has, however, primarily focused again on the land reforms and the development of collectivisation in the 1950s and early 1960s. Amid ongoing disputes over land ownership and claims for compensation from both East and West Germans, much journalistic interest was provoked by the chance to re-examine the issues of expropriation and forced collectivisation as part of the process of coming to terms with the legacy of the SED dictatorship in the countryside. Against this background, historians too have focused on reexamining the earlier periods of agricultural development in the GDR. As the eminent German agricultural historian Ulrich Kluge wrote in 2001,

no phase of development in GDR agriculture has been so closely investigated as the initial years 1945/49 up to the conclusion of collectivisation in the early 1960s. Almost three decades are sinking into oblivion. Only the unextinguished claims for land and farm property from farmers who fled to the west under the pressure of political coercion made headlines after reunification, which agricultural studies then took up, presented and evaluated.²⁵

Taking the opportunity to use newly available archival sources, several historians have re-examined the structure and organisation of agriculture and the impact of agricultural policy on rural society in the postwar period and under the SED dictatorship up to the early 1960s.²⁶ Looking broadly at agricultural development and SED policy, particularly Arnd Bauerkämper has re-examined the processes of land reform

and collectivisation in northern East Germany using archival sources to assess primarily the balance between the continuity of traditional social structures and the consequences of (forced) socialist modernity in rural society and farming.²⁷ Jens Schöne too has provided new insights into the development of the policy of collectivisation during the 1950s,²⁸ while new archival research by Theresia Bauer on the development of the German Farmers' Party (*Demokratische Bauernpartei Deutschlands* or DBD) up to 1963 has illuminated the functions and attitudes of party members at the grass roots during the process of collectivisation.²⁹ Specifically with regard to Bezirk Erfurt a collection of excerpts from documents detailing the collectivisation process in each of the districts of the Bezirk has been compiled by Jürgen Gruhle, providing interesting source material for the activities of party and state functionaries at local and regional level in the administration of agriculture in the 1950s – if little actual analysis.³⁰

In comparison, analyses of agriculture and rural society post full collectivisation are relatively few in number. Specific aspects have received some examination by social historians. For example, Dagmar Langenhahn and Sabine Roß have written on the patterns of qualification attainment and career advancement for women farmers in the 1970s and 1980s.³¹ Thomas Lindenberger has written on the local police constables' involvement in overseeing agricultural transformation in the 1950s and 1960s; Patrice Poutrus has written on the phenomenon of the '*Goldbroiler*' roast chicken, as part of a growing consumer culture in the 1970s and 1980s for which industrial-scale agricultural production was essential; and Christel Nehrig has addressed the changing position of the chairmen of state-owned farms up to 1970.³² A number of studies of individual villages in the GDR have also dealt with the combination of influences of modernisation and invasive party policy on the peculiar traditions of the rural milieu after collectivisation. Daphne Berdahl's anthropological study of a Catholic border village in the Eichsfeld, while focusing primarily on the experience of transition following the Wende, retells her subjects' retrospective understanding of life between duty as Catholics and as GDR citizens in a highly sensitive region during the latter course of the GDR.³³ Barbara Schier's study of the village of Merxleben between 1945 and 1990 reconstructs elements of everyday life in the village as well as analysing the socioeconomic effects of SED agricultural policy over this period in order to contrast the reality with the socialist ideal of 'a village community of an historically new type'. Schier, on the basis of extensive interviews with villagers and LPG members, also provides analysis of the functioning of the LPG caught between its special status as a model collective and

its own internal conflicts, particularly in the early years of its development.³⁴ Antonia Maria Humm's study of the village of Niedertzimmern (in comparison with a similar village in West Germany), between 1952 and 1969, demonstrates the complex relationship between some aspects of SED policy and the response to its implementation within the village and the LPG. She also provides some insights into the functioning of the local government in the village and other local socialist organisations, which go beyond much of the available literature on the subject of political institutions at and below district level.³⁵

With specific regard to the development of socialist agricultural policy and rural society since the end of the collectivisation campaign, there have, however, been few convincing in-depth studies that make satisfactory use of archival sources now available.³⁶ Many of the most interesting works on the subject of agriculture in the GDR in the late 1960s, 1970s and 1980s published since the *Wende* are the accounts by former LPG members and functionaries of the development of their LPG and their experiences as collective farmers. While one must be careful to see such accounts in the context of developments since the *Wende*, they need not be dismissed as valueless.³⁷ With regard to Thuringia, Manfred Kipping's local history of farmers in Oberwiera between 1945 and 1990 provides some interesting insights into his experience as an LPG functionary amid the constrictions of SED policy on cooperation and specialisation.³⁸ Similarly, the history of agriculture in Worbis district by a former LPG chairman, Dr Heinrich Klose, provides an outline of local agricultural development as well as some impression of his own experiences as an LPG chairman. More broadly, a volume published for the Thuringian Interior Ministry gives a methodical overview of the development of agriculture in Thuringia after collectivisation, reaching conclusions as to the technical deficiencies of policy decisions made during the GDR – in particular the problems associated with the overexpansion of the farming units. The particular value of this book, however, is the transcribed interviews with former LPG functionaries that it contains.³⁹

There are thus some considerable gaps in the research done since the *Wende* on SED agricultural policy and the development of rural society in the GDR from the mid-1960s onwards, which this book is designed to fill. Articles by Christel Nehrig and in particular Dagmar Langenhahn in recent years have raised some of the questions which have yet to be thoroughly addressed with regard to the structure, formation and changing organisation of LPGs and the implementation of SED agricultural policy through the later 1960s and 1970s. Langenhahn, for example, most recently has written on the position of leading agricultural functionaries in the 1970s as they responded to the problems

of cooperation between LPGs and the separation of crop and livestock production. More than anything, however, these articles highlight the need for greater research in precisely these areas.⁴⁰

The process of consolidation of LPGs, and the development of cooperation, industrialisation and specialisation in agriculture as they transformed the working conditions of farmers and affected the living conditions of rural communities are essential to a complete picture of the workings of the SED regime and the stability as well as the failure of the GDR. The day-to-day working of the collective farms – the experience of ‘collective democracy’ within the LPG, the reception of and reaction to SED agricultural policy by collective farmers and in particular the pivotal role of LPG functionaries in the dual transmission of authority and information – needs to be more definitively assessed as it varied over time. Investigation into the structures of authority in the administration of agriculture and rural communities via the bureaucracies of state and party and the significance of the presence or absence of strong SED groups in rural areas versus those of other bloc parties are essential to understanding a large proportion of the politics, economics and society of the GDR. In order to gain an effective view of the network of institutions and influences shaping agriculture and rural society, this book seeks to provide a limited regional study aiming thereby to go beyond the specific intricacies of a study of a single LPG or village, yet retaining a focus on the grass roots of state and society.

Sources

My sources come predominantly from the archives of a range of institutions concerned with rural affairs at different levels of the party and state hierarchies. My intention is both to gain a closer perspective on the functioning of the regime at the grass roots within one Bezirk and to develop an understanding of the process of policy implementation and information transfer within the various administrative hierarchies from the regions to the centre. Consequently the bulk of my sources come from the level of the Bezirk and Kreis administrations, which played a naturally key role in the transmission of information and the process of policy implementation between the centre and the regions. Nevertheless I have also examined the files of the various figures and institutions with an influence over the development of rural affairs at a national level, on the one hand, and on the other the documents of individual LPGs – primarily the minutes of board meetings and members’ assemblies – and of individual SED party organisations.

In accordance with my intention to gain a picture of the experience of 'ordinary' East Germans and the low-level functionaries operating primarily in the LPGs and other institutions at a local level, I have paid particular attention too to those sources that highlight local concerns. Thus alongside general mood and opinion reports compiled by the regional administration (*Bezirksleitung*) of the SED, the regional leadership (*Bezirksvorstand*) of the DBD and the State Regional Council (*Rat des Bezirkes*), among others, I have used the files of district state and party administrations as well as samples of *Eingaben der Bevölkerung* (People's Petitions) and reports on public village meetings. Where possible I have used police, Stasi and SED Party Control Commission reports as evidence not only of state and party discipline and law enforcement methods but also as sources describing local circumstances. With these as with the other archival sources I have sought where possible to balance statistical evidence with evidence of contemporary opinion among the rural population. In addition, I have carried out a number of interviews with former functionaries in LPGs as well as in the Kreis and Bezirk administrations of party and state which have aided my understanding of some finer points of state and party policy as well as farmers' responses to the same.

Dealing with the documents of a vast bureaucracy, one has to be aware that even if one examines a huge quantity of documentary evidence, there is nonetheless considerable room for a distorted picture to be presented, in which minor concerns take on a greater significance in the surviving sources, or in which the concerns of the bureaucrats are unrepresentative of the concerns of those with whom they are dealing. Nonetheless, this in itself is revealing of the manner in which the bureaucracy functions and the relationship between the various operatives of the regime, those above and below them in the hierarchy and their relationship with the system and the society which they served. The documents of the system – in their falsehoods, vagueness or accuracy – provide in themselves valuable insight into the manner in which the administration functioned and the tensions within it. There is no doubt that there is a regularisation of the bureaucracy involved in running collectivised agriculture in the planned economy which is visible in the style as well as content of the sources. There are advantages and disadvantages to the historian in this respect. Documents of the late 1950s and early 1960s, particularly in the LPGs and at the lowest levels of the party and state bureaucracy, are often more revealing as a result of their lack of ideological polish or formulaic content. By the same token, the increasing competence of the report writers in the 1970s and 1980s, in their selection of information and its presentation within a

fixed ideological framework, compromises the value of the document as a source for the event or the issue under discussion. Nonetheless, the value of earlier reports as descriptions of actual events or circumstances may be compromised too by the sheer inconsistency of the picture presented and by gaps in the information provided. By contrast, later sources are often more comprehensive in the extent – if not the depth – of information they impart.

As to the reliability of the sources, it must be taken into account that there is considerable potential for the statistical information offered in certain documents to be inaccurate. The importance of presenting an image of progress to the world certainly was apparent in presentation of statistics to the international community. The accuracy of internal statistics and indeed reports requires some consideration, however, too. There was good reason to falsify, under- or overstate at various levels of the bureaucratic hierarchy, from the LPG right up to the State Planning Commission (*Staatliche Planungskommission* or SPK). Nonetheless, the administration of agriculture relied heavily on the collation of accurate statistical information: for the system to have functioned at all, there must have been some accuracy in the reporting. In most respects the statistical analyses of the problems in agriculture in the GDR (if not the actual figures) are borne out by alternative sources – such as the complaints of the farmers or villagers in Eingaben (petitions) or the mood reports of the police, Stasi as well as the SED and DBD party organisations.

With regard to the mood reports and analyses of popular opinion among farmers, there is considerable variation in the degree of scepticism which needs to be applied, depending on the time and reference points of the document. There are long lists in the files of statements of gushing support for the SED, for Walter Ulbricht as well as his successor as the leading figure in the SED regime, Erich Honecker, or for particular policies or achievements of the GDR or the Soviet Union. Many of these include quotes from farmers or LPG functionaries. I have tended to exclude such declarations of opinion as reliable sources of popular attitudes, not on the basis that no such opinions were ever expressed but on the basis that they present an artificially sanitised response to the SED regime. Many other analyses of opinions among farmers were also clearly sanitised to some extent. The coherence and complexity of arguments opposed to SED agricultural policy are often summarised in single phrases, or reduced to the catch-all notion of '*Unklarheiten*' (points of uncertainty/confusion). In this respect analyses referring to specific circumstances (Eingaben, party control commission/police/Stasi investigations, individual LPG documents/party

organisation documents) are useful in giving examples of the possible broader individual/local concerns surrounding common complaints. Analyses by state functionaries, as well as the DBD and the SED, are consistently vague in many respects. Opinions among farmers, for example, are often attributed variously to gradations of 'a few', 'some ... and others' or 'many' without the actual scale becoming entirely clear. I have found it expedient to reproduce these classifications myself, backing them where possible with statistical evidence. There was undoubtedly misreporting, intentional and unintentional, to go along with the vagueness and ideologically motivated distortion of information. Nonetheless, with due awareness of the possible flaws of individual documents, the quantity and quality of evidence available is capable of providing a reasonably comprehensive picture of the concerns of both farmers and functionaries.

Such was the wealth of as yet unexamined documentary evidence available that, owing to time constraints, I was unable to analyse as much as I would have wished the files of the complete range of agricultural institutions other than the LPGs. For the same reason, my analysis focuses too on the agricultural elements of rural society, rather than village life as a whole. These remain topics requiring further research.

Contribution

The contribution of this study to the body of literature on the history of the GDR is twofold. On the one hand, it provides an insight into the process of agricultural development in the GDR during the 1960s and 1970s at the grass roots that has been largely absent from the historiography thus far. On the other, it offers a new perspective on the long-standing debates over the relationship between state and society in the GDR, seeking to highlight the long-term processes by which the SED regime attained stability in the 1970s but was increasingly vulnerable to economic decline in the 1980s.

Since the collapse of the GDR numerous attempts have been made to characterise the dictatorship and the relationship between state and society. In the immediate aftermath of the 'velvet revolution' of 1989, the concept of totalitarianism was resurrected by many observers and despite having been abandoned as a useful analytical concept for historians for much of the previous decade, began to be reapplied to the SED dictatorship.⁴¹ The totalitarian concept appears to suit well attempts to explain how things fundamentally were, claiming to explain the complete context in which all lived experience took place. While few users

of the totalitarian concept have not accepted that there were limits to the success of the regime's total claims on society, these claims are seen nonetheless as the benchmark against which anything meaningful can be understood about the society.⁴² However, while the totalitarian concept appears to explain all, in doing so it tends to leave much else unilluminated, making it a barrier against, rather than a tool for, understanding the way things 'really' were. Or rather, it explains some things better than others: since it is concerned primarily with the projects of rulers, it provides a top-down perspective on the ruled and the relationship between ruler and ruled, where other perspectives might give rise to a more differentiated picture.

Since the mid-1990s increasing numbers of historians of the GDR have found totalitarianism inadequate as a theoretical framework in which to position their research on the complex relationship between state and society. Certainly the SED regime had aspirations to total control over the population, seeking in theory to develop the socialist personality and infiltrate all aspects of society. However, recognition of these aspirations does not satisfactorily explain the variety and complexity of the relationships within and between the SED party hierarchy, the state and economic administrative apparatus and the citizens of the GDR over the forty years of its existence.

Alternative characterisations of the dictatorship have drawn upon arguably less rigidly prescriptive concepts, working outside the discourse of implied comparison with (Western) democratic rule. All too often, however, these have fundamentally replicated the top-down totalitarian perspective.⁴³ A significant strand of arguments has sought to point out the limits of the SED dictatorship. Among others, Ralph Jessen and Richard Bessel have argued that,

looking more closely it could prove to be the case, that many of the peculiarities of east German history between 1945 and 1989 may only be explained, once there is success in describing the complicated interaction between the total claim of the dictatorship and the conditions of the environment which acted upon it – in part created by but not always controlled by the dictatorship itself.⁴⁴

Not dissimilarly, Detlef Pollack has argued in opposition to the notion of an homogenous 'shut down society'⁴⁵ that the limits of the SED's control were such that all attempts to homogenise society were bound to come up against barriers from within society which then shaped future policies (e.g. the hardiness of traditional structures and milieus, the formation of networks of informal relations, loss of belief in the value of progress, the counterproductive consequences of state repression).⁴⁶

Attempts have also been made, however, to characterise the interrelations of state and society within the GDR by focusing on the practice of authority within society. The ideas of *Herrschaft als sozialer Praxis* ('authority as social praxis') and linked to it the notion of *Eigen-Sinn* (literally 'own sense or conception') have been developed in the context of the GDR in order to escape the top-down perspective by emphasising the interrelations and mutual impact of authority on society and society upon authority at the grass roots.⁴⁷ The artificial distinctions of active 'rulers' and passive 'ruled', and hence the distinction between oppressive 'state' and oppressed 'society', are from this perspective complicated by the actual interdependence of dictatorial control and the individual motives and intentions, identities and self-conceptions of those on whom and through whom authority is exerted. Thomas Lindenberger's use of the term 'Eigen-Sinn' has been to illustrate the potential for people in the GDR to use and negotiate with the structures of the regime for their own interests, adapting and changing but also building and sustaining them in the process within a limited local circumstance.⁴⁸

Building on these ideas, this study seeks to provide an historical analysis of the SED dictatorship, which qualifies the traditional top-down model of the functioning of authority in the dictatorship and a starkly dichotomous view of the state and society. In order to explain how the GDR functioned with regard to agriculture and rural society in practice, it is necessary to examine the internal complexity of the economic, political and administrative structures of the regime at the lower levels of the hierarchy. These structures as they operated at the grass roots over an extended period of time not only controlled and shaped the boundaries in which farmers lived and worked, but were shaped themselves by the integration and participation of people as farmers and agricultural functionaries into the system of rule. Using the example of Bezirk Erfurt I shall examine how East Germans responded to the end of private farming by resisting, manipulating but also participating in the new system of rural organisation. In addition, I shall attempt to show how LPG functionaries went about their work operating under as well as with a combination of compromise and material incentive, administrative pressure and physical force. Their relationship with and position within the communities of which they were part provides a new perspective on the interrelations of politics and society, of power, authority and changing agricultural practice in the GDR as it developed economically and technologically. Moreover, it offers some insight into the process by which SED authority, as produced and reproduced in the shifting social circumstances at the grass roots, stabilised in the rural

communities in the GDR, yet at the same time became increasingly vulnerable to economic decline.

Notes

1. C. Ross, *The East German Dictatorship*, Basingstoke, 2002, p. 20: Ross also points out, however, that there are 'well founded doubts about the analytical usefulness of the term'.
2. 'Der sozialistische Frühling' or 'the Socialist Spring' was the rather euphemistic name given to the intensive agitation campaign carried out in March and April 1960 to ensure all remaining independent farmers agreed to become a member of a collective farm.
3. Staatliche Zentralverwaltung für Statistik, Bezirksstelle Erfurt, *Statistisches Jahrbuch: Bezirk Erfurt*, 1970, Vol. I, p. 3.
4. T. Bauer, *Blockpartei und Agrarrevolution von Oben. Die DBD 1948–1963*, Munich, 2003, p. 33.
5. J.-C. Kaiser, 'Klientelbildung und Formierung einer neuen politischen Kultur. Überlegungen zur Geschichte der Bodenreform in Thüringen', in *Junkerland in Bauernhand*, ed. A. Bauerkämper, Stuttgart, 1996, pp. 119–31.
6. M. Schwartz, 'Vertrieben in die Arbeiterschaft. "Umsiedler" als "Arbeiter" in der SBZ/DDR 1945–1952' in *Arbeiter in der SBZ/DDR*, eds P. Hübner and K. Tenfelde, Essen, 1999, pp. 81–128, here p. 82.
7. M. Schwartz, *Vertriebene und Umsiedlerpolitik*, Munich, 2004, p. 1144.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 1146.
9. Schwartz, 'Vertrieben in die Arbeiterschaft' p. 126.
10. For information on the structure of farming in Thuringia see: G. Breitschuh et al., *Thüringer Landwirtschaft zwischen 2. Weltkrieg und Wiedervereinigung*, Jena, 1999; more specifically for Bezirk Erfurt: F. Augusten, *Die Organisation der Rinderzucht im Bezirk Erfurt von 1945 bis 1989*, Aachen, 1997.
11. B. Rauch, 'Der Bezirk Erfurt', in *Die Ersten und die Zweiten Sekretäre der SED: Machtstrukturen und Herrschaftspraxis in den thüringischen Bezirken der DDR*, eds H. Best and H. Mestrup, Weimar, 2003, pp. 31–39.
12. H. Mestrup, *Die SED – Ideologischer Anspruch, Herrschaftspraxis und Konflikte in Bezirk Erfurt 1971–1989*, Weimar, 2000, pp. 104–27.
13. This suggestion has been made with regard to the work of sociologists and anthropologists: C. Giordano, 'Die vergessenen Bauern. Agrarwissenschaften als Objekt sozialwissenschaftlicher Amnesie', in *Bauerngemeinschaften im Industriezeitalter. Zur Rekonstruktion ländlicher Lebensformen*, eds C. Giordano and R. Hettlage, Berlin, 1989, pp. 9–27, here p. 9.
14. W. Schütze, *Investitionsfinanzierung der LPG*, Berlin, 1966; W. Polsfuss, 'Die Aufgaben der Kreislandwirtschaftsräte und ihrer Produktionsleitungen bei der Planung des wissenschaftlich-technischen Fortschritts in der Landwirtschaft', in *Zum NÖS in der Landwirtschaft*, eds G. Egler et al., Berlin, 1965, pp. 208–31; K. Heuer, *Genossenschaftliche Demokratie als Führungsaufgabe. Rechtsfragen der Leitung der LPG und der Beziehungen zur Kooperationsgemeinschaft*, Berlin, 1968.

15. H. Grünberg, *Die sozialistische Wandlung des Dorfes*, Berlin, 1970; H. Hanke, *Kultur und Lebensweise im sozialistischen Dorf*, Berlin, 1967.
16. K. Krambach et al. (Autorenkollektiv), *Genossenschaftsbauer – Verantwortung – Bewusstsein*, Berlin, 1973; K. Krambach et al. (Autorenkollektiv), *Wie lebt man auf dem Dorf? Soziologische Aspekte der Entwicklung des Dorfes in der DDR*, Berlin, 1985.
17. U. Püschel, *Unterwegs in meinen Dörfern*, Rostock, 1982.
18. G. Eckart, *So sehe ich die Sache – Protokolle aus der DDR. Leben im Havelländischen Obstanbaugebiet*, Cologne, 1984.
19. For examples at the two ends of the period of the GDR's existence, see M. Kramer et al. (eds), *Die Landwirtschaft in der sowjetischen Besatzungszone: die Entwicklung in den Jahren 1945–1955*, Bonn, 1957; C. Krebs, *Der Weg zur industriemässigen Organisation der Agrarproduktion in der DDR – Die Agrarpolitik der SED 1945–1960*, Bonn, 1989.
20. K. Dreessen, *Die Bedeutung der landwirtschaftlichen Produktionsgenossenschaften für die DDR*, Tübingen, 1973; V. Bajaja, *Organisation und Führung landwirtschaftlicher Grossunternehmen in der DDR*, W. Berlin, 1978.
21. T. Hartmann, *Die Kooperation in der sozialistischen Landwirtschaft der DDR*, W. Berlin, 1971; H. Immler, *Agrarpolitik in der DDR*, Cologne, 1973; H.J. Thieme, *Die sozialistische Agrarverfassung der DDR*, Stuttgart, 1969.
22. K. Hohmann, 'Die Industrialisierung der Landwirtschaft und ihre Auswirkungen auf die Umwelt in der DDR', in *Umweltschutz in beiden Teilen Deutschlands*, eds M. Haendcke-Hoppe and K. Merkel, W. Berlin, 1986; see also for comment, U. Kluge, 'Die "sozialistische Landwirtschaft" als Thema wissenschaftlicher Forschung', in *Zwischen Bodenreform und Kollektivierung. Vor- und Frühgeschichte der 'sozialistischen Landwirtschaft' in der SBZ/DDR vom Kriegsende bis in die fünfziger Jahre*, eds U. Kluge, W. Halder and K. Schlenker, Stuttgart, 2001, p.16.
23. Kluge, 'Die Hauptschwäche westdeutscher Analysen ergab sich aus dem Mangel an nachprüfbaren Daten aus der DDR-Statistik. Die Geheimniskrämerei von SED Staats- und Parteiführung bescherte der westdeutschen DDR-Forschung ein hohes Mass an Informationsunsicherheit', in Kluge, Halder and Schlenker, p. 15.
24. For an explanation of the some of the conflicts see: T. Busse, *Melken und Gemolken Werden. Die ostdeutsche Landwirtschaft nach der Wende*, Berlin, 2001. For different sides of the argument see: H. Luft, 'Von der LPG zur Agrar-genossenschaft: Eine positive Entwicklung?', in *Die DDR war anders*, eds S. Bollinger and F. Vilmar, Berlin, 2002, pp. 206–25; S. Kuntsche, 'Die Umgestaltung der Eigentumsverhältnisse und der Produktionsstruktur in der Landwirtschaft', in *Ansichten zur Geschichte der DDR*, Vol. 1, eds D. Keller et al., Bonn, 1993, pp. 191–211; A. Weber, 'Usachen und Folgen abnehmender Effizienz in der DDR Landwirtschaft', in *Die Endzeit der DDR Wirtschaft*, ed. E. Kurt, Opladen, 1989, pp. 221–69.
25. U. Kluge, 'Rezension: Blockpartei und Agrarrevolution von Oben. Die DBD 1948–1963', *Zeitschrift für Agrargeschichte und Agrarsoziologie*, 1(53), 2005, pp. 131–33, here p. 131: 'Keine Entwicklungsphase der DDR-Landwirtschaft ist so genau untersucht worden wie die Anfangszeit 1945/49 bis zum Abschluss der Kollektivierung in den frühen sechziger Jahren. Fast drei

- Jahrzente versinken in Vergessenheit. Nur der nie erloschene Anspruch auf Boden und Hofeigentum von Bauern, die unter dem Druck politischer Zwangsmassnahmen in den Westen geflüchtet sind, machte nach der Wiedervereinigung 1990 Schlagzeilen, die die Agrarwissenschaft aufnahm, darstellte und beurteilte.'
26. For example the contributions in A. Bauerkämper (ed.), *Junkerland in Bauernhand*, Stuttgart, 1996, as well as J. Osmond, 'Kontinuität und Konflikt in der Landwirtschaft der SBZ/DDR zur Zeit der Bodenreform und der Vergenossenschaftlichung, 1945–1961', in *Die Grenzen der Diktatur: Staat und Gesellschaft in der DDR*, eds R. Bessel and R. Jessen, Göttingen, 1996, pp. 137–69, and A. Bauerkämper, 'Die Neubauern in der SBZ/DDR 1945–1952. Bodenreform und politisch induzierter Wandel der ländlichen Gesellschaft', in *Die Grenzen der Diktatur: Staat und Gesellschaft in der DDR*, eds R. Bessel and R. Jessen, Göttingen, 1996, pp. 108–36, and Christel Nehrig in numerous articles: C. Nehrig, 'Industriearbeit im Dörflichen Milieu. Eine Studie zur Sozialgeschichte der Niederlausitzer Nebenerwerbsbauern 1945 bis 1965', in *Niederlausitzer Industriearbeiter 1935–1970. Studien zur Sozialgeschichte*, ed. P. Hübner, Berlin, 1995, pp. 167–91; C. Nehrig, 'Das Leben auf dem Lande: Die Genossenschaften', in *Leben in der DDR – Befremdlich Anders*, ed. E. Badstübner, Berlin, 2000, pp. 195–218.
 27. A. Bauerkämper, *Ländliche Gesellschaft in der kommunistischen Diktatur: Zwangsmodernisierung und Tradition in Brandenburg 1945–1963*, Weimar, 2002.
 28. J. Schöne, *Frühling auf dem Lande? Die Kollektivierung der DDR Landwirtschaft*, Berlin, 2005.
 29. Bauer, *Blockpartei*.
 30. J. Gruhle, *Ohne Gott und Sonnenschein*, Nauendorf, 2000.
 31. D. Langenhahn and S. Roß, 'Berfuskarrieren von Frauen', in *Sozialistische Eliten. Horizontale und Vertikale Differenzierungsmuster in der DDR*, ed. S. Hornbostel, Opladen, 1999, pp. 147–62.
 32. T. Lindenberger, 'Der ABV als Landwirt', in *Herrschaft und Eigen-Sinn in der Diktatur. Studien zur Gesellschaftsgeschichte der DDR*, ed. T. Lindenberger, Cologne, 1999, pp. 167–203; C. Nehrig, 'Das Leitungspersonal der VEG 1945–1970', in *Eliten im Sozialismus, Beiträge zur Sozialgeschichte der DDR*, ed. P. Hübner, Cologne, 1999, pp. 309–24; P. Poutrus, *Das Phänomen der Goldbroiler in der DDR*, Cologne, 2002.
 33. D. Berdahl, *Where the World Ended*, Berkeley, 1999.
 34. B. Schier, *Alltagsleben im 'Sozialistischen Dorf'*, Münster, 2001.
 35. A.-M. Humm, *Auf dem Weg zum sozialistischen Dorf*, Göttingen, 1999.
 36. 'Vorliegende Gesamtdarstellungen ... vermögen inhaltlich und methodisch nicht zu überzeugen.' These comments by Jens Schöne (citing D. Gabler, *Entwicklungsetappen in der Geschichte der Landwirtschaft der DDR*, Berlin, 1995), aptly describe the current historiographical situation; J. Schöne, 'Landwirtschaft und Ländliche Gesellschaft in der DDR', in *Bilanz und Perspektiven der DDR-Forschung*, eds R. Eppelmann, B. Faulenbach and U. Mählert, Paderborn, 2003, pp. 254–9, here p. 259.
 37. C. Schneider, *Was bleibt von uns? Bauernstimmen*, Bautzen, 1991. Although stylised, the accounts here are nonetheless instructive on the tensions and concerns faced by LPG members during the transformation of GDR agriculture.

38. M. Kipping, *Die Bauern in Oberwiera: Landwirtschaft im Sächsisch-Thüringischen 1945 bis 1990*, Beucha, 2000.
39. Breitschuh et al., *Thüringer Landwirtschaft*.
40. D. Langenhahn, 'Machtbildung und forcierter Strukturwandel in der Landwirtschaft der DDR der 1970er Jahre', in *Zeitschrift für Agrargeschichte und Agrarsoziologie*, 2, 2003, pp. 47–56; D. Langenhahn, 'Auf dem Weg zur genossenschaftlichen Demokratie?', in *Der Schein der Stabilität. DDR Betriebsalltag in der Ara Honecker*, eds R. Hürtgen and T. Reichel, Berlin, 2001, pp. 263–74; Nehrig, 'Das Leben auf dem Lande', pp. 195–218.
41. K. Schroeder, *Geschichte und Transformation des SED-Staates*, Berlin, 1994.
42. I-S Kowalczuk, *Legitimation eines neuen Staates*, Berlin, 1997, p. 345. As L.H. McFalls has written, 'theories of communism's evolution and revolutionary end have, in fact, merely elaborated on one or more of the three possible sources of change that the classic theories of totalitarianism identified: international competition, ideological and institutional erosion and corruption, or societal resistance.' L.H. McFalls, *Communism's Collapse, Democracy's Demise*, London, 1995, p. 6.
43. For example Konrad Jarausch's description of the GDR as a modern welfare dictatorship in K. Jarausch, 'Care and Coercion: the GDR as Welfare Dictatorship', in *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, ed. K. Jarausch, Oxford, 1999, pp. 47–69.
44. R. Bessel and R. Jessen, 'Einleitung: Die Grenzen der Diktatur', in *Die Grenzen der Diktatur: Staat und Gesellschaft in der DDR*, eds R. Bessel and R. Jessen, Göttingen, 1996, pp. 7–23, here p. 9.
45. Sigrid Meuschel argued that the GDR was a 'stillgelegte Gesellschaft', suggesting that the totalitarian expansion of the state resulted in a dying away of society. S. Meuschel, *Legitimation und Parteiherrschaft in der DDR, Zum Paradox von Stabilität und Revolution in der DDR*, Frankfurt am Main, 1992; S. Meuschel, 'Überlegungen zu einer Herrschafts- und Gesellschaftsgeschichte der DDR', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 19, 1993, pp. 5–14.
46. D. Pollack, 'Die Konstitutive Widersprüchlichkeit der DDR', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 24, 1998, pp. 110–31.
47. Both terms were originally used by Alf Lüdtke in other contexts: A. Lüdtke, 'Einleitung: Herrschaft als soziale Praxis', in *Herrschaft als Soziale Praxis. Historische und sozial-anthropologische Studien*, ed. A. Lüdtke, Göttingen, 1991, pp. 9–63; A. Lüdtke, *Eigen-Sinn, Fabrikalltag, Arbeitererfahrungen und Politik vom Kaiserreich bis in den Faschismus. Ergebnisse*, Hamburg, 1993. But they have since been used in the context of the GDR, most notably by Thomas Lindenberger: T. Lindenberger, 'Der ABV als Landwirt', in *Herrschaft und Eigen-Sinn in der Diktatur. Studien zur Gesellschaftsgeschichte der DDR*, ed. T. Lindenberger, Cologne, 1999, pp. 167–203; T. Lindenberger, 'Herrschaft und Eigen-Sinn in der Diktatur. Das Alltagsleben der DDR und sein Platz in der Erinnerungskultur des vereinigten Deutschlands', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B40, 2000, pp. 5–12; T. Lindenberger, *Volkspolizei: Herrschaftspraxis und öffentliche Ordnung im SED Staat, 1952–1968*, Cologne, 2003.
48. T. Lindenberger, 'Die Diktatur der Grenzen. Zur Einleitung', in *Herrschaft und Eigen-Sinn in der Diktatur. Studien zur Gesellschaftsgeschichte der DDR*, ed. T. Lindenberger, Cologne, 1999, pp. 13–44.