Perspectives of Collectivisation - Popular Opinion and Memory in Saxony and Lower Silesia, 1948-1960

PhD in Russian and Slavonic Studies

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Walter Benjamin

Acknowledgements

Abbreviations

ABV	*Abschnittsbevollmächtigter*; community policeman
APW	*Archiwum Państwowe Wrocław*; State Archive in Wrocław, Poland
BArch	*Bundesarchiv;* Federal Archive in Berlin-Lichterfelde, Germany
CDU	*Christlich-Demokratische Union*; Christian-Democratic Union, GDR bloc party
DBD	*Demokratische Bauernpartei Deutschlands;* Democratic Farmers' Party of Germany, GDR bloc party
DDR	*Deutsche Demokratische Republik;* German Democratic Republic (GDR)
HStAD	Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden, main state archive in Dresden, Germany
HO	*Handelsorganisation*; state-owned and national trade and retail organisation in the GDR

KGW	*Koło Gospodyń Wiejskich*; Polish state-affiliated mass organisation for rural women
KPD	*Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands*; Communist Party of Germany
LDPD	*Liberal-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands*; Liberal-Democratic Party of Germany, GDR bloc party
LPG	*Landwirtschaftliche Produktionsgenossenschaft*; collective farm in the GDR
MAS	*Maschinen-Ausleih-Station;* Mashine lending stations, established 1948 in the GDR
MfS	*Ministerium für Staatssicherheit der DDR;* Ministry for State Security, commonly known as the *Stasi*
MTS	*Maschinen-Traktor-Station*; Mashine-tractor station in the GDR, successors to the MAS from 1952 onwards
PGR	*Państwowe Gospodarstwo Rolne*; Polish state-run farm
PiS	*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*; Law and Justice party, currently the strongest political party in the Polish parliament (*Sejm*)
PNZ	*Państwowe Nieruchomści Ziemskie;* national land agency in the PPR from 1946 onwards
PRL	*Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa*; Polish People's Republic (PPR)
PSL	*Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe;* Polish Peoples' Party, agrarian party disbanded in 1949
PPR	*Polska Partia Robotnicza;* Polish Worker's Party, merged in 1948 with the Polish Socialist Party to form the PZPR
PPS	*Polska Partia Socjalistyczna*; Polish Socialist Party
PZPR	*Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza*; Polish United Workers' Party, governing Communist Party in the PPR until 1989
SBZ	*Sowjetische Besatzungszone*; Soviet Occupation Zone in Germany until 1949
SED	*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*; Socialist Unity Party, governing Communist party in the GDR until 1989
SMAD	*Sowjetische Militäradministration*; Soviet Military Administration in Germany
SKK	*Sowjetische Kontrollkommission*; Soviet or People's Control Commission in the GDR, successor to the SMAD, active from 1949 until 1953
SPD	*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*; Social Democratic Party of Germany, merged with the KPD to form the SED in 1949
UB	*Urząd Bezpieczeństwa*, Department of Security in the PPR
VdgB	*Vereinigung der gegenseitigen Bauernhilfe*; Peasants' Mutual Aid Organisation, state affiliated mass organisation for farmers in the GDR, founded in 1946
VEG	*Volkseigenes Gut;* People-Owned Property, state-run farm in the GDR
VEB	*Volkseigener Betrieb*; People-Owned Factory, state-run entreprise in the GDR
VP	*Volkspolizei*; People's Police in the GDR
ZMP	*Związek Młodzieży Polskiej*; Union of Polish Youth, Polish Communist youth organisation from 1948 until 1956
ZSCh	*Związek Samopomocy Chłopskiej*; Organisation of Farmers's Self-Help

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Introduction

The endeavours of the East German and Polish state-socialist regimes to collectivise agricultural production stand at the centre of this thesis. The diverging experiences of collectivisation in East Germany and Poland are investigated through contemporary party reports and present-day memories of the 1950s and early 1960s. The aim is to open new perspectives on the history of collectivisation in both countries by studying two aspects of this topic which have been hitherto neglected: the every-day, standardised negotiation of popular opinion on the farms and the present-day memories of the period.

This introduction commences with an overview of the scope of the thesis before turning to the history of collectivisation in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Polish People's Republic (PPR). Following this, the concept of collectivisation is discussed with particular attention to its historical context and the Communist discourse about peasants and modernity.[1] The various frameworks of remembering the history of the 20th century in Europe, especially with regard to the Communist era, are briefly introduced before the methods and source material of the thesis are addressed. Overall, the aim of this introduction is to situate this PhD thesis in the academic landscape on collectivisation, to provide a survey of the main interpretations of its history, and to identify gaps in the literature.

1. Scope of the Thesis and Research Questions

This PhD project is concerned with the discursive representations of the collectivisation of agriculture. It does not cover the economic or political history of the collectivisation drives in each region. For reasons of space the land reforms of the

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1   The capitalised version of *Communism* is employed when referring to the organised entities of the Communist parties. The non-capitalised *communism* refers to the broad ideological movement beyond and before the Communist parties. With regard to the Warsaw Pact states after 1945 the terms *Communist* and *state-socialist* are employed interchangeably. P*easant* (*peasantry*) and *farmer* are also used interchangeably, with a preference for *peasants/peasantry* when speaking about the Communist construction of a social class, and *farmers* when referring to specific individuals. As Andreas Hofmann has rightly argued, 'the settler groups [in the former German territories], which were perceived of as social collectives, were suspected of insufficient loyalty without further differentiation, similar to ethnic minorities, and could thus be treated restrictively.' Andreas R. Hofmann, *Die Nachkriegszeit in Schlesien (Beiträge Zur Geschichte Osteuropas)* (Köln: Böhlau, 2000), 4. (Translation KMO).

immediate post-war years are also not included.[2] The time frame from 1944 until 1961 includes the onset of collectivisation in Poland in 1944, the first drive in the GDR in 1952, the abandonment in 1956 in Poland, and completion in 1960 in the GDR. The time line deliberately covers the late 1950s in Poland. Despite the fact that the policy was abandoned in 1956, the state-socialist system of farming nevertheless existed for 12 years and during this time was a central topic in the villages.

This study of collectivisation in Saxony and Lower Silesia does not aim to make general claims about typical East German or Polish experiences of this event. Rather, it is conceived of as a comparison of two regions which were distinct within their national frameworks.[3] The merit of comparing the two regions lies in this distinctiveness, the historical and economic parallels both share and their strong cultural ties which resulted from their geographic neighbourhood.

Both regions occupy a special role in their national histories of collectivisation. Saxony had already functioned as a pilot region for the land reform. Its heterogeneous economic structure – a highly developed industrial sector coexisting with a strong agricultural sector dominated by small- and medium-sized family-run farms – meant that the Saxon transformation as an indicator for national developments. The Saxon farmers who worked on hilly or mountainous terrain or in the lowlands with often poor soil quality shared little with those farming the large estates in Mecklenburg or Brandenburg – usually as hired labour employed by the land-owning aristocratic families. The coexistence of industry and agriculture could also be observed in Lower Silesia. When writing about Lower Silesia as a 'new territory' in post-war Poland, Yaman Khouli observed that 'it should be stressed that the "New Territories" consist of economic regions which each exhibit their own characteristics. (…) Lower Silesia has a well-developed industry and also a strong agricultural sector.'[4] It was industrially and structurally more developed than most

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2   The land reforms constitute a research object in their own right, and are linked to the distinct context of war, the construction of the party-states, and the interim period between both stages. The land reforms were also not an exclusively Communist aim as they were a prominent item on the agenda of almost all political groupings. At this stage, it suffices to note that the land reforms after the Second World War were complex and multi-layered processes whose inclusion in this study would go beyond the scope of this thesis.

3   A national study would have to synthesise case studies of highly heterogeneous regions both in Poland and the GDR. It would have to cover the range from small-scale mountain farming to part-time, medium-sized family farms to aristocratic estates while also including and evaluating the similarly diverse cultural and political histories. Bearing this in mind, the value of such a synthesis is to be doubted.

4   Yaman Khouli, *Wissen und nach-industrielle Produktion. Das Beispiel der gescheiterten Rekonstruktion Niederschlesiens 1936-1956*, Vierteljahresschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte 226 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2014), 49.

eastern Polish regions and in terms of farm size and farming techniques not dissimilar to neighbouring (Eastern) Saxony. Its status as a 'new territory' meant that the Communist power-holders paid heightened attention to its socialist transformation and cultural adaption. At the same time, Lower Silesia held the highest density and number of collective farms in the Polish People's Republic due to the population exchanges after the end of the war and the presence of the Red Army which took over larger estates before transferring them to state ownership.

As will become clear, Saxony and Lower Silesia both underwent parallel historical developments. Both had been part of the modern German state since 1871 and were socially and economically shaped by National-Socialist rule. Both had undergone the change from German National-Socialism to Moscow-backed Communist rule. In addition to this, the climate, soil quality and farming traditions were highly similar, especially in the piedmont regions of the Owl and Zittau mountains located east and west of the river Neiße.

Collectivisation in a comparative framework has rarely been the object of academic attention in the past. Most work on it has been undertaken in the field of history, usually focusing on the policy's political and economic implications. Contemporary memories of collectivisation have been investigated much less frequently, and until now qualitative and comparative study has not been undertaken until now. Similarly, no attempt at placing (the memories of) collectivisation in the post-Communist discourse in central and eastern Europe has been undertaken so far. Popular responses to other core policies of state-socialist regimes have enjoyed more attention from researchers, especially in the context of the Soviet Union. With regard to collectivisation, Bauerkämper and Iordachi have rightly argued that

> Although the transnational character and implications of the post-World War II processes of collectivisation in Eastern Europe are evident, the vast majority of published studies have not transcended the national realm. Few comparative investigations of collectivization are explorations of mutual relations, perceptions, and transfers across national borders have been published to date.'[5]

By providing a comprehensive and comparative analysis of the memories of collectivisation in the two regions, this study wishes to contribute to this body of literature.

The vast majority of secondary literature on collectivisation is concerned primarily with the reactions of male farmers. In view of this, it appears imperative to concentrate on

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[5]   'Introduction', in *The Collectivization of Agriculture in Communist Eastern Europe : Comparison and Entanglements*, ed. by Arnd Bauerkämper and Constantin Iordachi (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2014), 16.

the equal representation of female and male experiences. The party-state's rhetoric and drive towards emancipation and the political mobilisation of women at the time – in combination with widespread claims that everyday life 'defied the lofty slogans of a just, classless society in which women and men were supposedly equal' – highlight the need of paying close attention to female experiences of collectivisation.[6]

Generally, instances of the doubled stereotyping – the meeting of a pre-modern, autonomous peasantry with external, foreign and modernising Communist cadres – is also not uncommon in the academic treatment of the subject.[7] At the same time, Polish representations of the establishment of Communist power in first post-war decades have fixed 'a particular view of the period, which highlights coercion, violence and state-backed criminality at the expense of understandings relating to consent, acquiescence and social approval.'[8] Less attention has been paid to the non-violent, and often non-verbal, forms of establishing and maintaining control, and their limits. This understanding is by no means limited to Polish academia. In present-day Germany as well, studies subscribe to the meta-narrative of the Communist era which postulates the colonisation of social relationships as a result of Sovietisation pressures.[9]

In accordance with the prevalent Western European discourse, the era of Communist rule in the countryside is commonly interpreted as a non-European and thus backward episode – an aberration – which significantly slowed down the development of the societies concerned. The gap between ideology and reality is a key element of this interpretation. In other words, the differentiation between autonomous, private and thus more authentic spheres and behaviours which compete with, or even negate, their official and ideologically motivated counterpart.

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6 Eva Stachniak, 'Why Did We Not Become Feminists? Women in Poland', *NWSA Journal*, 7.3 (1995), 69–80 (70). In the spring of 1989, Jill Bystydzienski pointed out that 'women have not achieved equal status with men under any existing socialist system.' Jill M. Bystydzienski, 'Women and Socialism: A Comparative Study of Women in Poland and the USSR', *Signs*, 14.3 (1989), 668–84 (668).

7 For example, Andrzej Paczkowski has described the migration to the cities in a manner which mirrored the Socialist understanding of rural society: 'For those people flight from the overpopulated, impoverished, backward, and now persecuted countryside was the first step in social advancement.' Andrzej Paczkowski, *Spring Will Be Ours: Poland and the Poles from Occupation to Freedom* (Pennsylvania: Penn State Press, 2010), p. 212. Piotr Wróbel's interpretation of the history of collectivisation in Poland is another instance of the homogenising depiction of the peasantry's traditionalism: 'Polish peasants, spiritually attached to their land, saw no reason to join the collectives.' Piotr Wróbel, *Historical Dictionary of Poland 1945-1996* (Routledge, 2014), 57.

8 Michael Fleming, *Communism, Nationalism and Ethnicity in Poland, 1944-1950* (London: Routledge, 2010), 1.

9 With regard to collectivisation in the GDR, this interpretation underpins essays gathered in Michael Beleites, *Klassenkampf gegen die Bauern: die Zwangskollektivierung der ostdeutschen Landwirtschaft und ihre Folgen bis heute* (Berlin: Metropol, 2010).

As Péter Apor has noted, the overall aim of such studies lies in the (re-)discovery of more *real* or *authentic* history behind the ideological veil.[10] As a result, the original interest in the 'effects and pathways of power and discipline (...) paradoxically led to a (…) practice which ascribes and positively evaluates the authenticity of social actions'. One measure to counteract such a development is to consider those 'non-events' and 'non-objects' – the phantomized, anonymous, mundane and inconspicuous – which underpinned the rhythm of everyday life.[11] The reporting on standard, or at least not dramatic, exchanges and negotiations about collective farming and memories of the same represent valid sources for a research undertaking informed by the comments made above.

Generally, this study is interested in how the (failed) attempt to introduce collectivisation was understood and debated in rural communities at the time and today. With regard to popular opinion, how did communities and individuals respond to collectivisation? In which contexts did they speak about the Communist transformation of farming? Which material and social consequences of expressing one's opinion were expected by collectivised farmers? How can the relation between the statements by peasants and the party-state's representation of popular opinion be characterised? The presence and functions of mnemonic content in popular opinion and vice versa during and after the implementation of collectivisation is also of interest here.

Furthermore, the study addresses the question of how the period of collectivisation is remembered today by individuals. How is this memory structured and which value judgments can be identified? Where does memory of collectivisation, as a symbol of Communist policy, stand with regard of broader trends of post-Communist memory in Europe? Ultimately, it seeks to explore how the analysis of collectivisation memories can add to the critical discussion of representations of the peasantry, especially with regard to ascriptions of modernity?

Bearing these questions in mind, this study uses the case study of collectivisation to jointly investigate popular opinion and memory. It charts the changes in the references, reasoning and social setting of individuals expressing their views over the past seventy

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10 *History from below*, with its moral impetus, and *Micro-history*, that is the investigation of history through the social and cultural context of small-scale case studies, are not to be confused. A conflation of both approaches leads to small-scale alternative histories of the political instead of a context-sensitive social history. For a further distinction of both terms see the second part of this thesis and Peter Apor, 'The Joy of Everyday Life: Microhistory and the History of Everyday Life in the Socialist Dictatorships', *East Central Europe*, 34–35.1–2 (2007), 185–218.

11 Istvan Rév, 'The Advantages of Being Atomized: How Hungarian Peasants Coped With Collectivization', *Dissent*, 34.3 (1987), 335–50 (349).

years. The combination of both concepts has the potential of leading to a history of subjectivity – a potential confined by the problematic nature of the sources.

2. The Histories of Collectivisation in the GDR and the PPR

The history of collectivisation in the GDR and the PPR is one of similarities and divergences under the organisational and ideological umbrella of Communist agriculture. In the GDR, the land reform of 1945 was followed by the 1952 SED party conference decision to implement collectivisation, a process which was temporarily halted by the 1953 uprising and completed in 1960 under the slogan of *Socialist spring in the countryside.*[12] In Poland, Party debates on the issue had begun in 1944 and were very much linked to the aim of culturally and economically integrating the former German territories – of which Lower Silesia is one – into the Polish state. In 1948, the Central Committee of the Polish Workers' Party voted to implement collectivisation, an undertaking which came to an end in 1956 when spontaneous and country-wide de-collectivisation took place as a result of Gomułka's speech on the Polish path to socialism.[13]

Post-war Poland and Lower Silesia

The situation in the countryside in post-war Poland was defined by destruction and the onset of re-constructive efforts. The omnipresent rupture with pre-war life, however, also promised a discontinuation of economic misery based on antiquated social relations, deep-seated national divisions, fascism, genocide, occupation and war.[14] Despite ongoing resistance, the Communist takeover in 1944 promised a transformation of Polish society along more egalitarian principles and as such was welcomed by many within and outside

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12 The party slogan *Sozialistischer Frühling auf dem Lande* has been taken up again by Jens Schöne and Arnd Bauerkämper as titles of their writings on the history of collectivisation in the GDR. See further Arnd Bauerkämper, '"Sozialistischer Frühling Auf Dem Lande" - Die Kollektivierung Der Landwirtschaft', in *Dreißig Thesen Zur Deutschen Einheit* (Freiburg: Herder Verlag, 2009), pp. 99–111. Also Jens Schöne, *Frühling auf dem Lande?: die Kollektivierung der DDR-Landwirtschaft* (Ch. Links Verlag, 2005).

13 The *Polska Partia Robotnicza*, the Polish Workers' Party (PPR), merged in 1948 with the Polish Socialist Party (*Polska Partia Socjalistyczna*, PPS) to form the Polish United Workers' Party (*Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza*, PZPR) which remained in power until 1990.

14 Comp. T. Iván Berend, *Central and Eastern Europe, 1944-1993: Detour from the Periphery to the Periphery*, Cambridge Studies in Modern Economic History, 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 6.

the Communist party. Expectations of imminent prosperity and social advancement were widespread among the agrarian population while political demands of this nature had already been voiced in pre-war Poland.[15] Aware of this, the Communist regime devoted considerable political and propagandistic attention to the peasants in order to ensure their support or at least toleration.

In comparison to the Soviet Union and many Warsaw pact neighbours, the Polish Communists had been cautious in their approach to collectivised agriculture. Those who had taken over control in 1944 had a sense for the wide-spread resistance among the peasantry – which most post-Communist histories of the topic stress – and were accordingly ambivalent when it came to its implementation.[16] The Polish leadership's reluctance to collectivise was most prominently shown by Władysław Gomułka who until 1948 insisted that collectivisation would not take place in Poland.[17] Jakub Berman remembered how

> in no account did we want to force the issue, and we also recognized the true distribution of power and the resistance there was in the countryside. (…) I mean we thought we could inch our way forward slowly and with extreme caution, and gradually, very gradually, persuade people, win them over, show them the advantages.[18]

For the political centre, failure to implement the Soviet ideal appears to have been a distinct, if unspoken, possibility from early on. From 1948 until 1956, collectivised farming in Poland was to take place 'in a process of convincing and without the violent measures which had been used in the Soviet Union.'[19]

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15 These demands were voiced by the Polish Peasants' Party whose programme also referred to structural changes in the agricultural sector: 'The basis of the agrarian structure was still to be the independent farm, worked by the peasant and his family. The cooperative movement, however, was to be developed to form the foundation of a new social order, and cooperatives were gradually to replace the middleman between peasant and consumer.' Peter Brock, 'The Politics of the Polish Peasant', *International Review of Social History*, 1.2 (1956), 210–22 (220).

16 Edward Ochab recalled how 'Before we returned to Poland we thought the peasants themselves would take the land.' A. Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism: A Cold War History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 20. In 1946, Ochab maintained during a party lecture that 'we stand on the ground of individual farming and are against collectivisation.' Izabella Bukraba-Rylska, *Socjologia Wsi Polskiej* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2013), 335.

17 For a chronological outline of the Party debates see Barbara Turower, 'Kolektywizacja Olsztyńskiej Wsi W Latach 1949-1956 I Jej Następstwa', *Komunikaty Mazursko-Warmińskie*, 4 (2009), 533–43. Also, Bogdan Sekściński, 'Metody Kolektywizacji Rolnictwa Na Lubelszczyźnie W Latach 1950-1951 W Egzemplifikacji Powiatu Włodawskiego', *Studia Iurdica Lublinensia*, 19 (2013), 245–73 (246ff.).

18 The quotation is taken from Teresa Torańska's conversation with Jakub Berman in the late 1980s and should be treated with caution. Teresa Torańska, *Oni. Stalin's Polish Puppets* (London: Collins Harvill, 1987), 296.

19 Hofmann, 181. Arguably, the abandonment of the policy in 1956 was not only a result of the internal upheavals in the PZPR but also a long-term consequence of the leadership's ambivalence towards the issue.

Across Poland large areas of land had lain fallow as a result of expropriation during the land reform begun in 1944 as well as de-population, flight, and lack of material resources.[20] A chronic scarcity of food and the regime's attempts to control the burgeoning black markets went hand in hand with the population's sophistication in side-stepping the official markets and prices.[21] In addition to the infrastructural and material challenges, adverse weather conditions in 1947, 1951 and 1959 resulted in low harvests and subsequent turbulence on the crucial and extremely sensitive meat market.[22] Collectivisation was thus considered a viable means of guaranteeing a stable food provision and fostering the political stabilisation in rural areas.[23]

Generally, in Poland 'the process was exceptionally slow, limited, and overall a failed policy. In 1955 production cooperatives covered just over 2.1 million hectares, or 11 percent of the overall land and just 6 percent of peasant farms.'[24] Collectivisation was most extensive in the former German territories. All in all, the number of collective farms in the PPR never rose above the 9700 of 1955, and in the Cracow region never above 228.[25] In the Wrocław voivodeship, the numbers had risen from 38 in 1949 to more than 270 in 1950 and more than 1380 in 1953.[26] The number of collectivised farms in the region peaked in 1955 with 1678 and fell to 41 in 1956.[27] Before the decollectivisation, approximately 46% of the land was farmed by collective farms, on paper at least.[28]

The so-called *Regained* or *Western territories*, to which Lower Silesia belongs, occupy a special place in the history of the Communist takeover in Central and Eastern

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20 The post-war land reform in Poland began in 1944. In its course, landowners of estates larger than 100 hectares (later 50) were expropriated without compensation. On this see Beata; Halicka, *Polens Wilder Westen / Erzwungene Migration Und Die Kulturelle Aneignung Des Oderraums 1945 - 1948* (Paderborn ; München ; Wien ; Zürich: Schöningh, 2013), 221.

21 Comp. Jerzy; Kochanowski, *Jenseits Der Planwirtschaft / Der Schwarzmarkt in Polen 1944 - 1989*, Moderne Europäische Geschichte ; 7 (Göttingen: Wallstein-Verl., 2013). On the importance of the black market for the population's supply with food see also Halicka, p.174 and Gregor Thum, *Die Fremde Stadt: Breslau 1945* (München: Siedler, 2003), 60.

22 Comp. Jerzy; Kochanowski, 208ff.

23 See Bukraba-Rylska, 335.

24 Dariusz Jarosz, 'The Collectivization of Agriculture in Poland: Causes of Defeat', in *The Collectivization of Agriculture in Communist Eastern Europe. Comparisons and Entanglements* (Budapest: CEU, 2014), pp. 113–46 (113).

25 Franciszek Gryciuk, 'Kolektywizacja Wsi Polskiej', in *Represje Wobec Wsi I Ruchu Ludowego (1944-1956)* (Warszawa: IPN, 2003), pp. 145–66 (159).

26 A *województwo*, can be translated as voivodeship or province. It represents the highest administrative division below the national level in Poland. Between 1945 and 1947, the PPR consisted of 16 (later 19) voivodeships. They have since undergone substantial reforms.

27 The figures are based on the statistical yearbook of 1955 and 1956. Gryciuk, 159.

28 Marek Ordyłowski sets the number of farmers working on these collectives at 17 100 in 1951 and the figure of collective farms in the spring of 1956 at 1762. Marek Ordyłowski, *Wieś Dolnośląska W Latach 1945-1956 : Władza a Społeczeństwo* (Wrocław: Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego we Wrocławiu, 1999), 220.

Europe. As a result of the new border regime and population transfers, the establishment of the new Communist order took place in literally unknown territory and between strangers who had themselves arrived only recently. In the context of the transition from National-socialist Germany to Communist Poland the question with regard to post-war Lower Silesia was and is 'with which mental, historical and material equipment the (…) groups [of settlers] encountered each other' and their new homes'.[29]

In the whole region, an administrative infrastructure was only beginning to emerge while Polish, Soviet, and the remaining German institutions and individuals proceeded to delimit their spheres of influence.[30] The Western territories had suffered much less destruction than the traditional Polish regions further East or the industrial regions in western Germany.[31] Their appropriation by the Polish state – agreed upon by the great powers at the Potsdam and Yalta conferences – was considered both a compensation for the former Polish territories in the East which were annexed by the Soviet Union, and restitution/atonement for the losses inflicted by German occupation and war. The expulsion of the resident German population and the appropriation of the territories by Polish settlers and the state constitute the two main developments of the region's post-war history.[32]

The settlement of the Western regions was regarded as a crucial measure to reducing the acute population surplus in the central Polish voivodeships.[33] At the time, collectivisation in Lower Silesia was considered as an ideological and economic matter of necessity and as a means of administering the emerging society. At the time, it should be stressed, it was by no means clear that the policy would fail. Similar to the first Six-Year Plan – of which it was a constitutive element – the Soviet-type of planned economy was

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29 Anna Wolff-Powęska, 'Die Doppelte Identität in den West- und Nordgebieten Polens', in *Deutschlands Osten - Polens Westen: Vergleichende Studien Zur Geschichtichen Landeskunde* (Frankfurt/Main; Berlin: Lang, 2001), pp. 17–30 (20). Comp. Also Sebastian Siebel-Achenbach, *Niederschlesien 1942 Bis 1949 / Alliierte Diplomatie Und Nachkriegswirklichheit* (Würzburg: Bergstadtverlg., 2006).

30 Comp. Halicka, 155.

31 As Yaman Khouli has argued in this economic history of Lower Silesia from 1936 until 1956, the biggest loss of the region was that of knowledge after 1945, and less that of infrastructure during the war. Yaman Khouli, *Wissen und nach-industrielle Produktion. Das Beispiel der gescheiterten Rekonstruktion Niederschlesiens 1936-1956*, Vierteljahresschrift Für Sozial- Und Wirtschaftsgeschichte 226 (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2014).

32 Just as other histories of expulsion in 20th century Europe, the resettlement of the German population during and after the Second World War has elicited highly controversial debates in the political, media and academic sphere alike. In this context, Karol Jońca's work on the population transfer in the district of Świdnica represents a valuable, regional study of the post-war migration movements which is devoid of simplifications. Karol Jońca, *Wysiedlenia Niemców I Osadnictwo Ludności Polskiej Na Obszarze Krzyżowa-Świdnica (Kreisau-Schweidnitz) W Latach 1945-1948: Wybór Dokumentów.* (Wrocław: Leopoldinum, 1997).

33 Comp. Hofmann, 158.

widely considered a practicable avenue of development. As the Polish historian Andrzej Paczkowski has noted, it

> was an ambitious program calling for a huge investment effort, but in favourable circumstances, with good harvests and assuming that enough investment capital could be found, it was actually quite realistic, especially given the relatively low starting point. The problem was, however, that after being occupied by its two neighbours, (…) after nationalisation and the seizure of the larger landholdings, (…) after refusing all possibilities of foreign loans and foreign capital, the costs of this effort would have to be borne by the population. And, as future events were to show, by the very social groups that, according to official ideology, were supposed to benefit from the changes.[34]

As in other Communist regimes, the collectiviation drive resulted in substantial levels of violence vis-a-vis reluctant and unwilling peasants. The pressure originated from higher party cadres who postulated the foundation of new collective farms as the highest priority. As a result 'the belief appeared in the local party apparatus that outwardly one speaks of voluntariness, how that works out – is yet another story.'[35] The structural and physical violence enacted during the agitation has been covered extensively by the academic literature, both at the national and the regional levels.[36] Arguably, the violence linked to the collectivisation drive was an exception to the thesis 'that subjective violence ('unnecessary' violence) was tolerated as an outlet for social anger up until late 1947, early 1948.'[37]

The above formed the political and symbolic background of the experiences of Polish peasants and village communities in Lower Silesia from 1945 onwards. This study covers three periods of Lower Silesian post-war history: Polonisation/de-Germanisation

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34 Paczkowski, 212. The First Six-Year Plan was effective in the years 1950-1955 and was followed by the First Five-Year Plan from 1956-1960.

35 Dariusz Jarosz, 'Konflikty Chłopów Z Władzą W Okresie "Planowego Skupu Zboża" W Latach 1950–1951', in *Polska 1944/45-1989 : Studia I Materiały* (Warszawa: Instytut Historii PAN, 1995), pp. 151–83. (Translation KMO).

36 A number of regional studies focus on the violent events, such as Grzegorz Miernik, *Opór chłopów wobec kolektywizacji w Województwie Kieleckim 1948-1956* (TAKT, 1999). Bogdan Cmiała, 'Chłopi Śląska Opolskiego Wobec Kolektywizacji', in *Represje Wobec Wsi I Ruchu Ludowego (1944-1956)* (Warszawa: IPN, 2003), pp. 209–26. Sekściński. For a national history of the collectivisation drives c.f. Gryciuk. Tomasz Skonieczny, *Postawy Chłopów Wobec Koncepcji I Poczynań PPR (PZPR) W Poczatkowej Fazie Kolektywizacji Polskiego Rolnictwa (1948-1949)* (Słupsk: WN Akademii Pomorskiej w Słupsku, 2009). Antoni Kura, *Aparat Bezpieczeństwa I Wymiar Sprawiedliwości Wobec Kolektywizacji Wsi Polskiej 1948-1956* (Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej - Komisja Ścigania Zbrodni przeciwko Narodowi Polskiemu, 2006). For an English account see Jarosz, 'The Collectivization of Agriculture in Poland: Causes of Defeat'.

37 The argument that the early PRL managed the frustration and anger of its population through a mixture of permissible physical and symbolic aggression (for example in the sphere of nationality politics) is taken from Michael Fleming. Fleming, 20.

(1945-1948/49), Stalinism (1949-1955/56), the thaw of 1956 and the first years of the Gomułka era (from 1956 onwards).[38]

The Soviet Occupation Zone/German Democratic Republic and Saxony

May 1945 marked a radical caesura in the rural territories of the Soviet Occupation Zone (*Sowjetische Besatzungszone, SBZ*). In contrast to other regions in Germany like the Rhine-Ruhr industrial regions and big cities like Hamburg or Cologne, 'in many [Saxon] places peace-like conditions had prevailed and the immediate consequences of the war had reached the province relatively late.'[39] In everyday life in the Saxon countryside, the war had been present mainly in the form of heightened recruitment to the armament industry, the mobilisation of soldiers, and the retreating front towards the end. The absence of men, food scarcity, compulsory labour, and contact with victims of the bomb war were the most common points of contact with the realm of war.[40]

The occupation of the territory by the Red Army marked the end of the National-Socialist regime and the beginning of the whole-scale re-education and re-modeling of the German society living in the occupation zone. In this context, the political re-organisation of the countryside was an 'object of the political co-operation between the governing SED with the Soviet Union as victorious and occupying power. This co-operation was strongly dependent on the contemporary constellations of foreign policy and international law.'[41] The first major aspect of the re-organisation of the East German countryside was a comprehensive land reform.

Between 1945 and 1948, around 7100 farms were expropriated and their land distributed to 210 000 new owners.[42] The land reform was portrayed by SED propaganda

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38 This chronology of Lower Silesian post-war history is based on Marcin Miodek, 'Das Regionale Kulturerbe Im Propagandabild des "wiedergewonnenen" Schlesiens Der Jahre 1945-1948/1949 in Der Polnischen Regionalpresse Am Beispiel Der Zeitungen Pionier Und Słowo Polskie', in *Das Deutsche Kulturerbe in Schlesien: Fragen Und Perspektiven*, Schriften Des Bundesinstituts für Kultur und Geschichte der Deutschen im Östlichen Europa (Oldenburg: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2014), pp. 39–63 (40).

39 Mike Schmeitzner, Clemens Vollnhals, and Francesca Weil, *Von Stalingrad zur SBZ: Sachsen 1943 bis 1949* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), 11.

40 Comp. Schmeitzner, Vollnhals, and Weil, 13.

41 Elke Scherstjanoi, *SED-Agrarpolitik unter sowjetischer Kontrolle 1949-1953*, *Veröffentlichungen zur SBZ-/DDR-Forschung im Institut für Zeitgeschichte* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2012), 1. Elke Scherstjanoi's habilitation dissertation is a standard reference for the political history of agriculture in the early GDR. It charts the complex ideological and practical interaction between the Soviet occupation powers and German Communists in the run up to the first collectivisation drive.

42 These figures are taken from Arnd Bauerkämper, *'Junkerland in Bauernhand'?: Durchführung, Auswirkungen und Stellenwert der Bodenreform in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone* (Stuttgart: F. Steiner, 1996), 8.

as the logical predecessor of collectivisation and as the first revolutionary signal from the countryside. The actual contradictions and inconsistencies between both policies were not addressed in the public realm.[43] 43% of all newly created farms (*Neubauernstellen*) during the land reform were allocated to expellees so that overall their participation in this programme was higher than their share in the population.[44] This group consisted of refugees from the cities who had often been bombed out, former landless labourers, and expellees. For the new arrivals, the allocation of, usually small, plots of land opened up a tangible possibility of integrating themselves in the villages. Their perspective of long-term residence also had a bearing on the local communities: the 'existing social differentiation in the villages was indeed broken open by the distribution of land. At the same time, however, new inequalities were constructed.'[45] The same can be said about the collectivisation drives.

The onset of the Sovietisation of East German society and its Communist party in 1945 brought to light contentions between the national wing, those who had survived the war in the Third Reich and its concentration camps, and the Moscow fraction who had recently arrived with the Soviet Army. In 1946, the Communist Party of Germany (*Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands, KPD*) merged with East German sections of the Social-Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland, SPD*) to form the Socialist Unity Party (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands, SED*) under the increasing control of exile cadres around Walter Ulbricht. From 1947 onwards, the Stalinisation of the SED was mirrored in that of the GDR's society.[46] The tightening and unification of party discipline turned out to be a precondition for the increase of ideologically fuelled conflict on the countryside:

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43 The original, broad consensus of expropriating the *Junker* in the eastern regions was met with criticism from the Allies once it was implemented. This constituted the first conflict in the field of rural property rights because, in the eyes of the Allies, the expropriations were conducted without differentiations and without compensation. Furthermore, the wisdom of creating a group of landowners only to collectivise them soon after was debated widely within and outside the SED. On the history of the land reform in the GDR see Bauerkämper, '*Junkerland in Bauernhand*'?

44 In Saxony 5 800 new farms were created. Their average size was seven hecatres. Nationally, the 56 000 new farms had an average size of 7.7 hectares. All in all 214 000 hectares of land were re-distributed, of which 49 000 went to expellees. These received mostly ploughland which was sensible since this group possessed little or no cattle. On the other hand, the mechanical effort in crop production was higher than that of cattle husbandry. Comp. Wolfgang Meinicke, 'Die Bodenreform Und Die Vertriebenen in Der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone', in '*Junkerland in Bauernhand*'?: *Durchführung, Auswirkungen Und Stellenwert Der Bodenreform in Der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1996), pp. 133–52 (139 and 150).

45 Meinicke, 150.

46 Gareth Pritchard, *The Making of the GDR. From Antifascism to Stalinism* (Manchester: MUP, 2000), pp. 163-173-205. For a broad picture of the GDR society in the 1950s see Dierk Hoffmann, Michael Schwartz, and Hermann Wentker, *Vor dem Mauerbau: Politik und Gesellschaft in der DDR der fünfziger Jahre*, Reprint 2015 (De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2003).

> Whereas all farmers were initially considered to be allied in the re-construction of agriculture after the war, from autumn 1951 onwards the SED pushed back the "Capitalist elements" in agriculture. The precondition for this was the differentiation of farmers into "working peasants" (*werktätige Bauern*) and large farmers (*Großbauern*).[47]

The expansion of the state controlled sector which had been publicised with the party conference in 1952 was accompanied by anxieties over the persistent difficulties with raising productivity levels in agriculture and industry alike. In September 1952 there had been 380 collective farms which operated on approximately 30.000 hectares. Their number would rise to 4690 in December 1953, farming 754.00 hecatres with 128.00 members, and further to 6280 farms with 1.500.686 hecatres and 219.000 members. When the *Socialisation of Agriculture* was declared complete in 1960 more than 19.300 farms were registered, at least on paper. [48] By 1960, more than 4900 collective farms had been founded in Saxony, covering about 1.121.700 hectares of land.[49]

Within the GDR, Saxony was a region defined by its historical and structural distinctiveness: 'Especially in terms of industry it was a model province in both the Third Reich and the GDR.'[50] It had also been a 'stronghold of the left'[51] before 1933, nothing of which was left after 12 years of repression by the National-Socialist state and society. In contrast to northern regions like Brandenburg and Mecklenburg, where large farms were common, the Saxon agricultural sector has been dominated by small and medium-sized farms which were just as often run on a full-time as a part-time basis. Economic flexibility, and not expanding size, had proven a key to success so that 'under the pressure of the

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47 Antonia Maria Humm, *Auf dem Weg zum sozialistischen Dorf?: zum Wandel der dörflichen Lebenswelt in der DDR von 1952 bis 1969 mit vergleichenden Aspekten zur Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), 82.

48 These figures are taken from Arnd Bauerkämper, *Ländliche Gesellschaft in Der Kommunistischen Diktatur* (Köln, Weimar: Böhlau, 2002), 535 and 545. Their figure fell again to less than 10 000 as a result of the disbanding of farms and the consolidation of multiple subsumption of farms in co-operatives (*Kooperativen)* whose large fields dominated the GDR landscape until 1989 and after. The process of full-on rationalisation and industrialisation began in the late 1960s and was accompanied by more flexibility and independence in planning for the co-operatives as an incentive to higher production.

49 These figures are based on Mario Janello, 'Die Entwicklung der Landwirtschaftlichen Produktionsgenossenschaften in sen Sächsischen Bezirken zwischen 1960 und 1969' (unpublished PhD, TU Chemnitz, 2012), 245. These figures are taken from Janello, 245 (own calculation). According to him, most of the Saxon farmers joined the collective farms from 1958 until 1960. (Ibid, 20.)

50 Schmeitzner, Vollnhals, and Weil, 10.

51 Ibid. Compared to Pomerania and Brandenburg, few *Junkers* were resident in Saxony. The most famous exception were the von Arnim family whose estate around the Fürst Pückler park in Bad Muskau was the largest to expropriated. Saxony was also chosen as a model province for the land reform in the SOZ. This decision was based on the high degree of organisation of the KPD and the high industrial development of the province. On this decision c.f. Manfred Wille, 'Die Verabschiedung Der Verodrnung Über Die Bodenreform in Der Provinz Sachsen', in '*Junkerland in Bauernhand'?: Durchführung, Auswirkungen Und Stellenwert Der Bodenreform in Der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1996), pp. 87–102 (87).

process of industrialisation in the middle and late 19th century the family-run farms in Saxony had shown economic and operational stability'.[52]

The post-war countryside in East Germany was shaped by migration in three ways. After the military defeat, the arrival of expelles from the former German territories - euphemistically referred to as resettlers (*Umsiedler*) – set in motion processes of adaptation, integration, and dissociation which were by no means free of conflict.[53] Next to them, Displaced Persons (DP), liberated inmates from the concentration and death camps, and demobilised soldiers traversed the region in all four cardinal directions.

During the various campaigns many farmers had migrated to Western Germany in an act of *Republikflucht*. As in other sectors, their number was substantial, peaking during

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52 Ulrich Kluge, '"Die Bodenreform Ist in Erster Linie Eine Politische Angelegenheit." Agrarstruktureller Wandel in Sachsen 1945/46', in *'Junkerland in Bauernhand'?: Durchführung, Auswirkungen Und Stellenwert Der Bodenreform in Der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1996), pp. 103–17 (104). (Translation KMO).

53 The integration of the eastern Germans into the GDR's village societies is touched upon in more detail during the analysis. Michael Schwartz estimates that approximately 8.1 million expellees settled in the FRG and 4.1 million in the GDR. The latter made up 24% of the GDR's population. 70% of the new arrivals came from the territories east of Oder and Neiße, 20% had lived in the ČSR before. The majority settled in 'thinly populated and economically weak regions' and often experienced a second shock upon arrival – the reluctance or down-right unwillingness of the old-established families to integrate them into the social network. The mixture of assimilation pressures and offers of upward social mobility which characterised the GDR's treatment of the expellees was based, so Schwartz, on the workings of a modern industrial society. All in all, the GDR 'in a much clearer manner, pursued the individual integration of the expellees in the framework of a meritocracy. At the same time this meritocracy was politically moulded by the value system of a totalitarian dictatorship – social participation and even more so social advancement were only possible if the commitment to perform included the political adaptation to the SED regime.' Michael Schwartz, 'Vertriebenenproblem Und Umsiedlerpolitik in Der DDR', *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung*, 6 <http://www.fes.de/magdeburg/pdf/6_10_14_schwartz.pdf>. See also by the same author in English Michael Schwartz, 'Assimilation versus Incorporation: Expellee Integration Policies in East and West Germany', in *Vertriebene and Pieds-Noirs in Postwar Germany and France* (London; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 73–94. Friedrich and Spieler's article on the rural dimension of the integration of expelles, especially the battles overt the distribution of resources, can be similarly recommended. Söhnke Friedrich and Ira Spieker, 'Ausgrenzen und Anerkennen. Umsiedlerfamilien in der Ländlichen Gesellschaft der SBZ und der Frühen DDR', *Zeitschrift Für Volkskunde*, 109.2 (2013), 205–35. On the cultural representations of expulsion in the GDR c.f. Bill Niven, 'On a Supposed Taboo: Flight and Refugees from the East in GDR Film and Television', *German Life and Letters*, 65.2 (2012), 216–27.
At this stage it is also relevant to note that the term *Vertreibung* refers to all four phases of the re-settlement of German communities in central and eastern Europe between 1939-1949, and not just the last, partly chaotic, re-settlements after the end of the war. Eva Hahn and Hans Henning-Hahn have observed a 'Holocaustizing' of the discourse on *Vertreibung*, especially in Germany. This evolves around 'the understanding that the *Vertreibung* was a crime of "ethnic cleansing", committed by the Allies in 1945 and inspired by the same ideas which had led the Nazi regime (…).' (p.41) For a detailed discussion on the four waves which included voluntary departures, ordered resettlement by National-Socialist agencies and the lawless and arbitrary expulsion which is commonly *only* remembered see Hans Henning Hahn and Eva Hahn, 'Mythos "Vertreibung"', in *Politische Mythen Im 19. Und 20. Jahrhundert in Mittel-Und Osteuropa* (Marburg: Tagungen zur Ostmitteleuropaforschung, 2006), pp. 167–88. For an English version comp. Eva Hahn and Hans Henning Hahn, 'The Holocaustizing of the Transfer-Discourse. Historical Revisionism or Old Wine in New Bottles?', in *Past in the Making. Historical Revisionism in Central Europe after 1989* (Budapest; New York: CEU Press, 2008), pp. 39–55.

the *Socialist spring*.[54] For those who remained, or were as yet undecided, the threat to leave was commonly made as soon as the topic of collective farms was brought up. One answer of the SED's leadership was the construction of the Berlin Wall in August 1961 which transformed the 'general sense of societal crisis' of the 1950s into a sense of consolidation.[55] The other was a focus on stabilising the new collective farms. A steady stream of positive news was considered essential. Overall, Elke Scherstjanoi judges that 'flight was the clearest expression of the growing protest and opposition also among the rural population. For the SED regime, the flight of farmers did not constitute an intolerable economic burden, but was a symptom of the deep tremor of power relations.'[56] By fleeing, farmers 'were unable to prevent collectivization, but did shape how it was implemented.'[57]

In terms of the chronology of the GDR, this thesis covers the period from the state's foundation and the Stalinisation of the SED from 1949 until 1952, the first period of the socio-economic transformation under the banner of the *Construction of Socialism* which was temporarily halted by the 17th June uprising in 1953 and its aftermath. It stretches as

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54 Between 1952 and 1965 70 000 farms were abandoned, of which 30 % had been owned by large-scale farmers (owning 20 to 100 hectares). Andre Steiner, *The Plans That Failed : An Economic History of the GDR* (Oxford; New York: Berghahn, 2010), 76. For more information on *Republikflucht* in the context of agriculture see Bauerkämper, *Ländliche Gesellschaft in Der Kommunistischen Diktatur*, 192.

55 The first quote is taken from Corey Ross, 'East Germans and the Berlin Wall: Popular Opinion and Social Change before and after the Border Closure of August 1961', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 39, Nr. 1 (2004), 25–43 (27). See also Henrik Bispinck, *'Republikflucht': Flucht und Abwanderung aus der Sbz/Ddr 1945 bis 1961. Veröffentlichungen zur Sbz/Ddrforschung im Institut für Zeitgeschichte. Mit . ... für Zeitgeschichte Sondernummer)*, 1st edn (Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2006). With collectivisation 'successfully implemented', the leadership's attention in the SED and Politburo moved to the more pressing issues linked to raising productivity levels in all sectors. In a letter to Khrushchev, Walter Ulbricht drew a line between the closing of the borders in August 1961 and the transformation of the countryside: 'Simply put, the open border forced us to raise the living standard faster than our economic capabilities allowed. ... Of course we had similar difficulties with the transition to agricultural co-operatives as in other People's Democracies. But one should not overlook the fact that some things are much more complicated here. ... In all the other People's Democracies, in the context of their closed borders, such political-economic issues could be tackled differently than was possible under our political circumstances.' Quoted from Andre Steiner, 'Politische Vorstellungen Und Ökonomische Probleme Im Vorfeld Der Errichtung Der Berliner Mauer. Briefe Walter Ulbrichts and Nikita Chruschtschow', in *Von Der SBZ Zur DDR* (München: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 1995), pp. 233–68 (263–65). On Ulbricht's personal role in the context of the erection of the Berlin Wall see Hope M. Harrison, 'Walter Ulbrichts „dringender Wunsch"', *Politik Und Zeitgeschichte*, 2011, 8–15. For an overview over the genesis and impact of the Berlin Wall on GDR society see further Bernd Eisenfeld and Roger Engelmann, *13.8.1961: Mauerbau. Fluchtbewegung Und Machsicherung.* (Berlin: Temmen, 2001). Konrad H. Jarausch and Christoph Kleßmann, *Mauerbau Und Mauerfall. Ursachen - Verlauf - Auswirkungen*, ed. by Hans-Herrmann Hertle (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2002). Thomas Flemming and Hagen Koch, *Die Berliner Mauer. Geschichte Eines Politischen Bauwerks.* (Berlin: bebra, 2005). Patrick Major, *Behind the Berlin Wall: East Germany and the Frontiers of Power* (Oxford: OUP, 2011).

56 Scherstjanoi, 506.

57 Gregory R. Witkowski, 'Collectivization at the Grass Roots Level : State Planning and Popular Reactions in Bulgaria, Romania, Poland, and the GDR 1948 - 1960', in *The Collectivization of Agriculture in Communist Eastern Europe : Comparison and Entanglements.* (Budapest; New York: CEU Press, 2014), pp. 467–96 (486).

far as the closing of the borders in the summer of 1960 and the subsequent stabilisation and normalisation of the system.[58]

3. The Historical and Ideological Foundations of Collectivisation

The term collectivisation refers to the process by which land ownership and farming methods are transferred from individuals to either groups of farmers or the state. Generally, the distinction was made between farms nominally owned by the state and those owned by groups of farmers. The former were referred to in Russian as *sovkhozes*, in German as *Volkseigenes Gut* (VEG) and in Polish as *Państwowe Gospodarstwo Rolne* (PGR). With groups of farmers various degrees and types of communal ownership were possible, ranging from a complete fusion of ownership of land, cattle and machinery to shared land ownership but individual cattle and tilling operations.[59]

In central and eastern Europe this process was consciously modeled on the Soviet Union's collectivisation campaign under Stalin.[60] The conditions in the region, however, created their own dynamics and demands of adaptation of the Soviet blue-print. Thus, recent studies on the post-war Sovietisation of central and eastern Europe 'no longer assume an unimpeded and uni-directional transfer of ideas, institutions, and practices from the USSR to its "satellites", but take into account a wide-scale convergence of policies between communist dictatorships [and] a multi-lateral process of learning, alteration and adaptation of the Soviet model.'[61]

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58 The term *normalisation of rule* is based on Mary Fulbrook's argument. C.f. Mary Fulbrook, 'The Concept of "Normalisation" and the GDR in Comparative Perspective', in *Power and Society in the GDR, 1961-1979: The 'Normalisation of Rule'?* (New York ; Oxford: Berghahn, 2013).

59 In the GDR and the PPR *Type I* referred to farms where only the land and field work were undertaken jointly (in Polish these were called *Zrzeszeniach Uprawy Ziemi*, in German *Typ I)*. In a next step land and cattle were farmed together while machinery and buildings remained individually owned (Rolniczych Spółdzielni Wytwórczych, Typ II). On wholly collectivised farms (Rolnicze Zespoły Spółdzielcze, Tpy III) land, machinery and cattle were jointly owned and used.

60 The collectivisation of agriculture in the Soviet Union began in 1928 with the adoption of the First Five-Year Plan. Accelerated in 1929 and 1930, it caused widespread famines in the Russian and Ukrainian countryside; whether the famines qualify as genocide and how many people died continues arouse heated political and academic debates. The topic of collectivisation in the Soviet Union has been research extensively, especially its effects in the Ukrainian countryside. For spatial reasons this topic will not be discussed here. For a summary of the academic debates around the *Holodomor* c.f. Bauerkämper and Iordachi, 8–11.

61 Bauerkämper and Iordachi, 22. E.A. Rees identified three phases of Sovietisation which can be observed across central and eastern Europe: Government with limited nationalisation and supported by left-of-center parties (1945-1947/8); Stalinisation of party and state apparatus and accelerating nationalisation (1948-1953); beginning de-Stalinisation after 1953 as part of the political and economic New Course.

Ideologically, collective farming was based on Lenin's argument that land ownership was the causal reason of rural capitalism which would be overcome by 'the creation of large farms that could be mechanized and fertilized on an industrial scale, and [by] communal ownership [giving] poor and landless peasants a share in the means of production.'[62] The conviction that collectivisation would make the methods and the social configuration of farming more modern and equal was the common ideological thread of all Soviet(-type) reorganisations of agriculture.[63]

This reconfiguration served a number of socio-economic purposes – both in the Soviet Union and its satellite regimes. Firstly, the industrialisation of agricultural production promised higher yields and an increased control of the state over produce, yields, distribution and market prices. The combination of low production costs and higher market prices (controlled by the state) allowed for the accumulation of capital which could then be redirected at the speedily expanding industrial sector. In addition, food production was to be organised independently from international markets while also establishing the population's secure provision with food. Despite the violence which accompanied its implementation and its diverse shortcomings, collectivisation – as indeed the Soviet economic system as such – was perceived as a successful model in the 1950s and 1960s; its global reputation rose as

> Mechanization and irrigation enabled collectives to increase production of cereals above 1920s levels (in 1936), (…), and improved transport put more calories on Soviet plates than had been available before the collectives. (…) By the early 1960s, the Soviet Union was exporting grain, more than three million tons a year, for the first time since the First World War.[64]

Secondly, agricultural production, and with it rural life, was to be modernised; farmers and villagers were to become rural New Men and Women following their cultural and

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Comp. E.A. Rees, 'The Sovietization of Eastern Europe', in *The Sovietization of Eastern Europe. New Perspectives on Th Postwar Period* (Washington: New Academia, 2008), pp. 1–28 (10–16).

62 In his 1899 *The Development of Capitalism*, Lenin reasoned for this course of action. Quoted after Andro Linklater, *Owning the Earth. The Transforming History of Land Ownership* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 317.

63 The Soviet collectivisation of agriculture was in many ways a blue-print, model and a template for distinction in central and eastern Europe. The Soviet collectivisation drive also shaped how the Communist parties responded to obstacles and un-planned developments. At the time when the Soviet Russian countryside was everted, 'Stalin had developed an interesting new theory: that resistance to socialism increases as its successes mount, because its foes resist with greater desperations as they contemplate their final defeat. Thus any problem in the Soviet Union could be defined as an example of enemy action, and enemy action could be defined as evidence of progress.' Timothy Synder, *Bloodlands. Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 41.

64 Linklater, 318. On the promises of materialism in the Soviet planned economy, and its everyday dimension see Francis Spufford, *Red Plenty. Inside the Fifties' Soviet Dream* (London: Faber, 2010).

economic liberation from traditional structures on the countryside. The rural workforce was to be proletarised by their work in the new agricultural factories or in the urban factories to which many migrated after their labour was freed up by the rationalisation of farming.

Thirdly, collectivisation heralded a reversal in the relationship between the urban centre and the rural peripheries. The political and cultural control of the party-state's apparatus over the country-side was to be expanded. This aspect of internal control took on another quality in the aftermath of the second world war when the Soviet Union occupied and integrated hitherto foreign regions in central and eastern Europe. As David Feest has noted with regards to Estonia:

> The traditional dispersed settlement of the farms exacerbated their organisational registration and the traditional power structures could scarcely be broken. In this sense, the conquest of the country was only completed with the mass collectivisation of 1949.[65]

Post-war Estonia was an extreme case, but in central and eastern Europe the elements of increased control are not to be underrated, especially in regions like Lower Silesia which witnessed a whole-scale population transfer without the necessary established societal structures.

Collectivisation was also intricately linked to the expulsion of the German population and the Polonisation of the territory in Lower Silesia, especially as many German and Polish settlers and new farmers had been expelled or otherwise forced to leave their home regions. In both cases, the reordering of land ownership – also in the shape of land reform – was a manifestation and solidification of these experiences of migration while the educational and vocational perspectives of work on a collective farm could act as a way of overcoming the losses of expulsion.

This study's understanding of German and Polish experiences with collective agriculture is shaped by one aspect not directly related to the policy's ideological foundation in Communism. Collectivisation was a practice of making the countryside legible to the state itself, irrespective of its ideological orientation. The classification and structuring of information hitherto unavailable in its entirety to the political centre – such as field size, crop rotation, yields, market prices and distribution – was a prerequisite for the administrative processing of economic data which could then be customised to the political and economic steering by the planning authorities. The transformation of growing plants and tilled soil into (ideally) transparent sets of data thus ultimately resulted in the

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65 David Feest, *Zwangskollektivierung Im Baltikum. Die Sowjetisierung Des Estnischen Dorfes 1944-1953* (Köln/Weimar/Wien: Böhlau, 2007), 14. (Translation KMO).

integration of farming to the logic of modern statehood. In post-war central and eastern Europe this process set in simultaneously with the occupation by the Red Army, and later blended with the expansion of political control by the Communist party-state. [66] James Scott has rightly observed that

> The great achievement, if one may call it that, of the Soviet state in the agricultural sector was to take a social and economic terrain singularly unfavourable to appropriation and control and to create institutional forms and production units far better adapted to monitoring, managing, appropriating and controlling from above.[67]

It is perhaps in this extension of the state's way of thinking about farming, and less in its social consequences, that the modernising aspects of collectivisation, and the ensuing re-negotiation of autonomy in the villages, are most tangible.[68]

4. (Post-) Communist Discourses about the Modernity of Peasants

Concerns about the peasantry's loyalty have been an issue in Communist writing since Marx and Engels had framed them as subjects requiring above all political education.[69] The collectivisation of agriculture was charged with a plethora of aims on the side of the authorities, one of which was the insertion of the party-state as the key power in every aspect of farming – from the classification of land, to crop selection and amount, harvest, market structure and prices. The deep concerns of the Communist party-states about the backwardness of their rural population and their uneasy political position in the new society were crucial to the conception and implementation of collectivisation.

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66 Feest has argued that in Estonia 'mass collectivisation meant the destruction of the old single farmsteads but only constituted the beginning of the actual subjugation of the village. The same point can be made for the village as such in the regions liberated by the Soviet Union. Feest, 474.

67 James C. Scott, *Seeing like a State. How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed.* (New Haven ; London: Yale UP, 1998), 203.

68 In Poland, the necessity of naming and mapping the new territories added poignancy to the presence of the state in the countryside. On the negotiation of the new system of (cultural) signage see Christian Lotz, *Die Anspruchsvollen Karten. Polnische, Ost- Und Westdeutsche Auslandsrepräsentationen Und Der Streit Um Die Oder-Neiße-Grenze (1945-1972)* (Madgeburg: Meine Verlag, 2012).
     If the former German territories were *terra incognita* for the Polish settlers and state, the region became increasingly alien to its former masters the longer the new borders existed. On the tension between the remembered and the transformed *Heimat* see Andrew Demshuk, *The Lost German East: Forced Migration and the Politics of Memory, 1945-1970* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

69 On the ideological treatment of the peasantry in the writings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels comp. Bauerkämper, *Ländliche Gesellschaft in Der Kommunistischen Diktatur*, pp. 51–53. On the objectification of peasants in Lenin's argumentation of class struggle on the countryside comp. Jens Schöne, *Frühling Auf Dem Lande?: Die Kollektivierung Der DDR-Landwirtschaft*, Forschungen Zur DDR-Gesellschaft, 1. Aufl (Berlin: Links, 2005), pp. 50–54.

The communist movement had remained predominantly urban after its ascent to power. As a result, ideological glorification centered mainly on the working class which, as Mary Fulbrook noted, 'was represented as continuing to struggle in all sorts of ways to build a better society on the ruins of the defeated past.'[70] In contrast, images of the peasantry alternated between representations of them as the remnants of the past and reluctant brothers-in-arms.[71] In the first case, depictions of them focused on their egotism, traditionalism, religiosity, and superstition – all conflicting with the rationality, atheism, and belief in progressive development which the Communist cadres embraced. In the 20th century 'concerns about religion, rural backwardness, and the effectiveness of Soviet modernization' continued to coexist alongside proclamations of worker-peasant solidarity both in the Soviet Union and its satellite states.[72]

The eradication of the historical, socio-economic backwardness on which the Communist program staked much of its legitimacy was thus also aimed at the peasantry. In line with Communist convictions, re-education and ideological enlightenment were seen as important tools in achieving this.[73] Once collectivisation was declared completed, collectvised farmers were usually praised for their spirited response to the socialist agenda in the official propaganda channels. Behind the scenes, bias against them remained common among the party cadres and in society as a whole. This was often expressed through claims of cultural and educational superiority and only rarely tested through face-to-face encounters.[74]

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70 Mary Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven, Conn. ; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 215.

71 The bias against peasants expressed by communist representatives in the people's democracies was founded on a long tradition within communist thought, especially in Soviet Russia. This topic has features in a variety of studies on the imagery of peasants in the writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin. On attitudes towards peasants during Stalinism comp. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization* (New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). Tracy McDonald, 'A Peasant Rebellion in Stalin's Russia: The Pitelinskii Uprising, Riazan 1930', *Journal of Social History*, 35.1 (2001), 125. Mary Buckley, *Mobilizing Soviet Peasants: Heroines and Heroes of Stalin's Fields* (Lanham, Md. ; Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006). On views on peasants during the land reform in the Soviet Occupation Zone comp. Bauerkämper, *'Junkerland in Bauernhand'?*

72 Andrew Stone, '"Overcoming Peasant Backwardness": The Krushchev Antireligious Campaign and the Rural Soviet Union', *Russian Review*, 67.2 (2008), 296–320 (297). Comp. Also David L. Hoffmann, *Peasant Metropolis: Social Identities in Moscow, 1929-1941*, Studies of the Harriman Institute (Ithaca, N.Y. ; London: Cornell University Press, 1994), esp. 2–11.

73 For example, campaigns such as *Industriearbeiter aufs Land* brought thousands of factory workers to the newly established collective farms and tractor stations in the GDR. The campaign title translates into English as *Industrial workers to the country side!* Such campaigne were 'based on the belief that class-conscious workers, led by the party, could teach peasants how to work more productively as well as how to be more "politically engaged"'. Basically, they were to be molded into a rural working class with the potential for upward social mobility.

74 On non-peasant writing about peasants in the Russian context, comp. Andrew Verner, 'Discursive Strategies in the 1905 Revolution: Peasant Petitions from Vladimir Province', *Russian Review*, 54

Depictions of the peasantry as yet having to fully arrive in modernity did not disappear along with the Berlin wall. When in/exclusion from Europe was re-negotiated in the 1990s, the narration of Communist statehood as intrinsically non-European and economically non-viable was commonly shared. The 'reification of Eastern Europe as a civilising project'[75] by western Europe relied and relies crucially on the depiction of post-communist subjects as delayed, backward and less modern than their western European counterparts. They, and post-Communist societies as a whole, were assumed to having to 'learn Capitalism'. This usually meant adopting a range of socio-political reforms in order to become compatible with the western European model.[76] Within these 'learning' societies, peasants were regularly presented as those being most distanced from the new order. Their cultural traditionalism especially was seen as preventing them from becoming valuable members of the neoliberal market economy and full participants in the pluralist democratic society. In line with this reasoning farming post-Communist subjects continue to be portrayed as (financial) beneficiaries of European assistance whose skepticism is rooted in their cultural and social backwardness. This representation is exemplified by the expectations connected to the introduction of liberal market capitalism in the region after 1989. This economic system is based on individual property rights which are safe-guarded by the rule of law and exercised in an economic and social order characterised by its liberal principles. Civil society in particular was to be transformed by the introduction of the originally Anglo-saxon concept of property rights which

> would establish and guarantee the rights of access, monitoring, use, exploitation and alienation by a natural or a legal person, and therefore standardize social relations and expectations in the economy and society, by unambiguously assigning a comprehensive bundle of property rights to an individual. The property regime institutionalized and organized in this way would provide for an effective allocation of economic resources while aiming for the political effects of strengthening individuals in their social relations, and developing a society of active, self-conscious, autonomous citizens.[77]

(1995), 65–90 'Only in the past decade or so have historians, especially in the United States and Germany, begun to break out of the rigid framework that insisted on endowing the peasantry with essential characterstics and ignored both the context and contingency of peasant actions. (…) Unfortunately, the very nature of the sources used to study Russian peasants has helped to perpetuate simplistic notions. Starting with pre-revolutionary reports (…) these sources have usually been of non-peasant origin and thus have themselves been the products' of this essentialising practice.' (Ibid, p. 65). Arguably, the same is the case with regard the German and Polish peasantry since the majority of the sources originated outside the villages in the middle of the last century.

75 Natasa Kovacevic, *Narrating Post/Communism: Colonial Discourse and Europe's Borderline Civilization* (London: Routledge, 2008), 1.

76 Comp. Martin Müller, 'Merje Kuus: Geopolitics Reframed. Security and Identity in Europe's Eastern Enlargement. (English)', *Osteuropa*, 59.11 (2009), 170.

77 Hannes Siegrist and Dietmar Müller, *Property in East Central Europe: Notions, Institutions, and Practices of Landownership in the Twentieth Century* (Berghahn Books, 2014), 3f. Furthermore, in many

In this case, the cultural and economic backwardness to be remedied by legal instruments. The configuration of property rights – whose de-individualisation was the legal core of collectivisation – is another example were central and eastern European economic history is 'interpreted in terms of 'divergence' and 'deviation' from an idealized 'Western' path that represents a 'standard' or 'normal' path of successful modernization.'[78] The state-socialist and the post-Communist discourse on rural workers rest on temporal metaphors: the imagery of the proletariat's state dragging reluctant villagers into collective farms has been replaced by the notion that the very same villagers arrived late to the current capitalist/neoliberal order because they were delayed by the Communist mode of production, the original purpose of which was to overcome their backwardness.

The relationship between farmers and the urban centers (supposedly) emanating progress was defined by spatial distance and mental asynchronicity in both state-socialist and in post-Communist discourses. In this context, collectivisation is evoked as an epitome of the peasants resisting the Socialist modernisation because of their backwardness, or more positively formulated their traditionalism. After 1989 they are slow to embrace capitalist transformation (i.e. by holding on to their out-moded cultural traditionalism or holding on to their farms instead of selling to facilitate further rationalisation) because of their backwardness as state-socialist subjects. The post-Communist subject, and especially the post-Communist peasant, emerged as 'always living in another time, even when he is our contemporary'.[79]

5. German and Polish Memories of Communism in a European Context

With the transformation of 1989 the respective canons of national and official remembering of the history of the 20th century had to be renegotiated – both within and between the former Warsaw Pact states and Western Europe. Since then a tendency towards practising memory in an increasingly European framework has been discernible, especially with regard to the Second World War and the Holocaust. The advance of a European dimension of memory has been heralded as the overcoming of national(-ist) claims to history and as a sign of the advancing cultural integration in Europe. However, the creation

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ways this 'referred directly to the 'Western' concept of liberal-individualistic property, which defines property as a bundle of strong and absolute exclusive rights pertaining to an individual (…).' Ibid.

78 Siegrist and Müller, 4.

79 Maria Todorova, 'The Trap of Backwardness: Modernity, Temporality, and the Study of Eastern European Nationalism', *Slavic Review*, 64.1 (2005), 140–64 (155).

of a European canon of memories of the 20th century 'also creates new political schisms or deepens existing ones which have their roots in history'.[80] Such conflict lines do not only concern the topics and victims who are remembered but also the participants of commemorative events.[81]

This renegotiation has been accompanied by research on European memory and identity formation which has highlighted the parallel re-constructive efforts underpinning the mental and physical borders of Europe.[82] During the second half of the 20th century, the Iron Curtain offered a convenient line along which Western Europe could distinguish itself from the 'semi-European, semi-developed'[83] regions under Communist control. Western European attempts to assume interpretative supremacy over Eastern Europe frequently employ the trope of backwardness already mentioned above. The assumption of superiority in discourse is one facet of the 'proto-colonial relationship'[84] linking Western and Eastern Europeans and can be observed not only in the economic but also in the historical field.

The manner in which the European integration processes advanced has led to the assessment of Europe as 'once again an empire in the sense of a civilised and stabilized zone which must decide whether to extend or refuse its political power over violent and unstable cultures along its borders'.[85] In such a climate, the potential of central and eastern Europe to fully integrate itself to contemporary Europe has also been linked to its politics of memory.[86] In order to become fully European (again) the post-Communist countries

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80 Andreas Langenohl, 'Memory in Post-Authoritarian Societies', in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), pp. 163–72 (166).

81 The topic of joint commemorations is one area where the modalities of inclusion and exclusion from Europe were (re-)negotiated after the end of Communist rule and were frequently narrated as the return of the former Warsaw pact states to Western civilisation. The Baltic states' reluctance to take part in state acts commemorating the 'liberation' of eastern Europe by the Red Army is one example. Commemoration ceremonies which take place under the presence of representatives of the involved nations, e.g. the D-Day ceremonies in 2004 and 2005 where American, English, French, German and Russian heads of state came together, have become increasingly the norm. Similarly, the institutionalisation of a European memory of the Holocaust was initiated with the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust in 2000.

82 Prompted by the rapidly expanding interest in European identity, such issues have been addressed in academic work on political mythology, discourses of legitimacy and democracy, and European memory through a variety of disciplinary approaches. Analyses of the usage of Othering mechanisms employed in the historical emergence of the idea of 'Europe' have featured, emphasising the constructive efforts behind all conceptualisations and representations of 'Europe' in time.

83 Kovacevic, 3.

84 Ibid. 2

85 Pocok quoted from in Kovacevic, 1.

86 For an overview over the field of European memory politics and negotiations see Helena Gonçalves da Silva, Adriana Martins, and Filomena Viana Guarda, *Conflict, Memory Transfers and the Reshaping of Europe* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010).
Małgorzata Pakier and Bo Stråth, *A European Memory?: Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance* (Berghahn Books, 2013). Jan-Werner Müller, *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past* (Cambridge University Press, 2002). Aline Sierp, *History, Memory, and Trans-European Identity: Unifying Divisions* (Routledge, 2014). In this context, Charles Meier's

must subscribe to the Western canon and 'deal' with their Communist past accordingly. In this context, Timothy Garton Ash has written of the German DIN-norm of remembering the National-socialist dictatorship and the Holocaust:

> The entreprise in which the Germans truly are *Weltmeister* is the cultural reproduction of their country's versions of terror. No nation has been more brilliant, more persistent, and more innovative in the investigation, communication, and representation – the re-presentation and re-re-presentation – of its own past evils.[87]

The comprehensive reckoning with the dictatorial and war-ridden 20th century – including the acknowledgment of national guilt/responsibility – has been interpreted as a sign of advancing democratisation and consitutionalism, first in Germany and in the past years also in central and eastern Europe.

Fault-lines run between the two grand traditions of memory of the 20th century in Europe which are roughly congruent with the political constellations in the second half of the century. Stefan Troebst has spoken of a doubly divided memory of 20th century Europe. Firstly, the Holocaust, and to a lesser degree the Second World War, have assumed the position of a negative foundation myth in Western Europe. By contrast, memory of Soviet Russian occupation and hegemony in the decades after the war – epitomised by the GULag system – constitute the central objects of remembrance in the former Communist bloc states. Secondly, diverging interpretations of the post-war order can be observed between the former Soviet Union and the societies located to their West. In the Russian reading Stalingrad acts as a symbol of the onset of the liberation from fascism. This symbolism is countered in central and eastern Europe by evocations of Yalta as the last moment of Western treachery and the ultimate surrender of one half of Europe to Communist

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metaphor of hot and cold memories in western and eastern Europe was widely received. Charles S. Maier, 'Hot Memory … Cold Memory. On the Political Half-Life of Fascist and Communist Memory.', *IWM*, 2002 <http://www.iwm.at/transit/transit-online/hot-memory-cold-memory-on-the-political-half-life-of-fascist-and-communist-memory/> [accessed 6 January 2017].

87 Timothy Garton Ash, 'The Stasi on Our Minds', *The New York Review of Books*, 2007, 20. He also commented on the integration of the Eastern German economy into the Western social market economy: 'I am appalled and speechless with the neo-colonial attitude of the West Germans towards their fellow countrymen. This is internal colonialism.' Quoted from Étienne Balibar, *Sind Wir Bürger Europas? Politische Integration, Soziale Ausgrenzung Und Die Zukunft Des Nationalen* (Hamburg: HIS Verlagsgesellschaft, 2003), 275. (Translation KMO).

influence.[88] The memory regimes in Germany and Poland are also shaped by the fault lines described above.

In re-united Germany, the foundation of the *Stasi* Records Agency and the Federal Foundation for the Reconciliation of the SED Dictatorship set the direction for a victim-centred discourse.[89] At the same time, the Communist past tends to be sidelined in the public realm by the hegemony of the Holocaust as focal point of public and academic attention. In the remembering and public reworking of both periods, however,

> images of Germans as victims of war and violence increasingly shape the public perception. Alongside the "rediscovery" of the allegedly tabooed bomb war against German cities during the Second World War attention should be drawn to the frequently de-contextualised representations of the expulsions from Central Eastern Europe.[90]

The German Democratic Republic is only partially present in the public sphere, usually in connection with the anniversary of the 1953 Berlin uprising, the 1989 fall of the Berlin Wall, and, to a lesser degree, the closing of the borders in 1961.

In Poland the narrative of the colonisation of the Polish nation by Russian and non-patriotic Polish Communists is hegemonic, all the more so since the election success of the Law and Order party in October 2015.[91] A long-standing constellation has emerged where the question as to how to remember the Communist period is always/already linked to the Polish history in the Second World War – combined German and Soviet occupation - and the country's role as a main theatre of war and genocide. In the 1990s and 2000s the discourse on the Polish period of Communism was characterised by a stronger emphasis on the question of *lustration*, the legal and political settling of accounts, than in Germany. The

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88 For the full argument, which also covers 1956, see Stefan Troebst, 'Jalta versus Stalingrad, GULag versus Holocaust. Konfligierende Erinnerungskulturen Im Größeren Europa', *Berliner Journal Für Soziologie*, 3 (2005), 381–400. In a more positive manner, Claus Leggwie has suggested seven concentric circles of European history which are formulated broadly enough to allow for national and regional singularities. The circles range from the Holocaust to Soviet dictatorship, expulsion, war, colonialism, immigration to the successes of post-war Europe. Comp. 'Seven Circles of European Memory - Claus Leggewie' <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2010-12-20-leggewie-en.html> [accessed 6 January 2017]. The collection of essays edited by Todorova, Dimou and Troebst also deserves to be mentioned here. Maria Todorova, Augusta Dimou, and Stefan Troebst, *REMEMBERING COMMUNISM: Private and Public Recollections of Lived Experience in Southeast Europe* (Central European University Press, 2014).

89 The *Stasi* Records Agency, in German *Stasi-Unterlagenbehörde BStU*, is commonly referred to by the name of the current Federal Commissioner for the State Security Service of the former German Democratic Republic (*Bundesbeauftrage für die Stasi-Unterlagen*). Since 2011 this post has been held by Roland Jahn.

90 This has led Jan Behrends to note, correctly, that 'Germany is by no means a model country of a European memory culture; in fact, the German audience loves navel gazing.' Jan C. Behrends, 'Jan Józef Lipskis Europäischer Traum Zur Geschichtskultur in Polen, Russland Und Deutschland Nach 1989', 2006 <http://www.europa.clio-online.de/essay/id/artikel-3366> [accessed 14 November 2016]. (Translation KMO).

91 The Polish party *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS)* is currently the strongest party in the Polish Sejm.

Round Table talks produced a consensus of amnesty and closure of Communist rule in order to secure support for the transformation of the political system also by the former stakeholders. Nevertheless, (and because of this) many of the subsequent debates, both on current politics and historical events, assumed the character of a painful settlement with the past. In this context the interpretation of the Stalinist period continues to form a key historical debate, evolving around the idea of *hańba domowa* (domestic shame). At the same time the prominence of older, traditional interpretations of Polish history is notable, centering on the portrayal of Poland as continuous victim of its neighbours Germany and Russia. This plot is accompanied by the theme of Poland as a bastion of Catholic-European culture, thus continuing an essentially Romantic representation of Polish history. In the most recent past, the rise of populist and national-conservative interpretations of the Polish history by a substantial section of Polish society has been observed:

> Whereas in the 1990s understanding for its neighbours was shown and acted upon, sensitivities and targeted viciousness can be observed. The national-conservative victory had heralded the return of resentments as a means of politics in some parts of the Polish public. (…) The re-nationalisation of the conceptions of history (*Geschichtsbilder*) is accompanied by the purposeful revaluation of those myths which Jan Józef Lipski targeted in 1981. In this one paradox is remarkable: A government which claims to radically break with the country's Communist past utilises the repertoire of images of the enemy which themselves were used to legitimse the authoritarian rule of the "people's republic".[92]

In light of this European background, one question this thesis seeks to answer is where collectivisation as experience and remembered is located within these discourses on the Communist past in Germany and Poland.

6. Sources and Methodology

The thesis draws on two main source bodies. Firstly, mood and other reports composed by regime agents like instructors, party cell secretaries and others. Secondly, memories gathered in a series of qualitative interviews conducted in a Saxon and a Lower Silesian village. Both source types are henceforth discussed in more detail before turning to the structure of the thesis.

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92 Behrends, 'Jan Józef Lipskis Europäischer Traum zur Geschichtskultur in Polen, Russland und Deutschland nach 1989', 3.

Mood and Other Party Reports

For the analysis of popular opinion in the Lower Silesian voivodeship, the internal reporting of the Polish United Workers' Party (*Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza*, PZPR) held at the Main State Archive in Wrocław is drawn upon. The reports were commissioned by the PZPR's voivodeship committee. The cadres reporting on the local conditions were usually dispatched by this committee or its district counterparts. Where feasible, comparable documents from the Polish Worker's Party (*Polska Partia Robotnicza, PPR*) have also been consulted. The foundation and later supervision of the collective farms was handled across Poland by the provincial committees of the PZPR and their local branches.[93] These sources have been selected since the PZPR was the main, co-ordinating party of the collectivisation drive. Reports by its functionaries are considered to be the most informative sources for the discussion of popular opinion also because the PZPR was the main party after the traditional agrarian party PSL had been disempowered.[94]

In the context of the GDR, documents from the municipal archive in Görlitz (RAG), the Saxon Central State Archive in Dresden, and the Federal Archive in Berlin-Lichterfelde were consulted.[95] The municipal archive in Görlitz provided the minutes of party cell meetings within collective farms after the first collectivisation drive of 1952. At the State Archive in Dresden, documents from Niesky county council from 1950 to 1951 were consulted, as were reports to the Saxon Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry. In addition, the files of the regional People's Police headquarters in Dresden which dealt specifically with the transformation of agriculture were included. The regional and national mood reports compiled by the DBD were taken from the party secretariat's holdings at the Federal Archive in Berlin-Lichterfelde.

The DBD's files have been selected for because the academic processing of the SED mood reports has enjoyed both state funding and public interest in re-united Germany and has advanced accordingly. The comparable document series of the bloc parties feature less commonly, probably because the parties themselves are considered compromised as recipients of the SED's orders. In the country-side however, the ruling cadres relied upon

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93 Sekściński, 251.

94 As Jarosz noted, 'The destruction of the PSL (1947-49) and the forced merging (…) into the PZPR, coupled with a push for collectivisation, were followed by a general decline in peasant enrollment in political organisation.' Jarosz, 'The Collectivization of Agriculture in Poland: Causes of Defeat', p. 116. The analysis of Lower Silesian representations of popular opinion relies on PZPR sources from after 1949 when the PSL was no longer a relevant actor.

95 In the following analysis, the municipal archive in Görlitz will be abbreviated as RAG (*Ratsarchiv Görlitz*), the Main State Archive in Dresden as HstaAD (*Hauptstaatsarchiv Dresden*) and the Federal Archive in Berlin-Lichterfelde as BArch (*Bundesarchiv*).

the Democratic Farmer's of Germany (*Demokratische Bauernpartei Deutschlands, DBD*) for organisational and propagandistic support. The Democratic Farmer's Party of Germany was founded in 1948 as a tool for the political participation of the farmers. The party was seen by the KPD/SED and the SMAD as a means of procuring the political majority vis-a-vis the ongoing influence of more conservative parties.[96] Its task was to 'engage the small farmers and thereby to consolidate land reform, but very swiftly it became acquainted with its wider schizophrenic purpose.'[97] As a party loyal to the SED, the DBD was to support the reordering of class relations while providing a political home for independent farmers for whom the SED was too radical. The mood reports compiled by DBD instructors constitute rich sources for the analysis of popular opinion. Their merit as sources for the investigation of popular opinion are discussed in more detail during the conceptualisation of popular opinion and in the analysis proper.

Memories of Collectivisation

The memories of collectivisation were gathered through interviews conducted in two villages in the German-Polish border region. The interview partners were people who had been members of the village communities during the immediate post-war period and the onset of the communist restructuring of agricultural production. The focus of the conversations rested on the period from 1948 until 1960.

The Saxon village, Kemnitz, is located in the Upper Lusatian *Kreis* Löbau, roughly twenty-five kilometers from the German-Polish border.[98] Krzyżowa is situated approximately 140 kilometers from the German-Polish border, and ten kilometers outside the Lower Silesian town Świdnica, formerly Schweidnitz. Both villages lie on the foothills of the Zittau and Owl Mountains respectively and are ribbon-built villages. Two aspects underpin the decision to conduct the interviews in these specific villages. Beata Halicka has noted in her study of the post-war Oder region that 'the selection of a representative village is very difficult because of the great variety of factors which influenced the

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96 Similarly, the Christian-Democratic Union (*CDU*) and the Liberal-Democratic Party of Germany (*LDPD*) were bloc parties tailored to a conservative and liberal-democratic clinenéle. Comp. Christoph Wunnicke, *Die Blockparteien Der DDR. Kontinuitäten Und Transformation 1945-1990*, Schriftenreihe Des Berliner Landesbeauftragten Für Die Unterlagen Des Staatsicherheitsdienstes Der Ehemaligen DDR (Berlin: Der Berliner Landesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen DDR, 2014), XXXIV, 95 ff.

97 Jonathan Osmond, 'Review: Blockpartei Und Agrarrevolution von Oben: Die Demokratische Bauernpartei Deutschlands 1948-1963', *American Historical Review*, 19.4 (2004), 1331–32 (1331).

98 The term *Kreis* refers to an administrative unit – larger than a commune and smaller than a district (*Bezirk*) – and loosely translates as *county* into English.

development of each village. As a result it is hardly possible to determine an ideal and typical village.'[99] In these circumstances the second aspect of personal introductions to possible interview partners became decisive. As the history of the Communist period continues to be remembered as a (potentially) conflict-ridden period, conducting in-depth qualitative interviews in Kemnitz and Krzyżowa was made possible only by the support of local gatekeepers.

Interview Partners and Interview Duration

Interview partners were sought who had lived in the villages during the immediate post-war period and thus had experienced the onset of the communist restructuring of agricultural production. In the case of Saxony this limited the target group to people who came originally from the village or had arrived as expellees in the late 1940s – after the 1945 land reform and before the 1952 SED party conference which set the first collectivisation drive in the GDR in motion.[100] In Lower Silesia, the arrival of the new Polish settlers had begun in 1944, the same year as debates about collectivisation set in amongst the Communist cadres. Subsequently, interview partners were contacted who had moved to the region after 1948 and ideally experienced not only the cultural and economic integration of the former German territories to the Polish state but also developments in the countryside after the 1948 vote of the Central Committee of the PPR in favour of collectivisation.[101] Overall, fifteen interview partners in Kemnitz, and eight interview partners in Krzyżowa agreed to have their conversations taped.

In both villages, the majority of interview partners was born between 1930 and 1950. Interview partners who could only recall childhood and family memories also had to ben drawn upon due to the long lapse of time between the historical events and the interviews.

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99 Halicka, 222. She also observed that information on the settlement history was not available in the majority of cases. The same is the case with identifying a representative collective farm, since 'only few collective farms was obliged to archive their documents. As a result, the *Kreis* archives only hold records and earnings releases for selected farms. The same is the case at the three state archives in Saxony.' Janello, 11.

100 At the same time, people were sought who had also experienced the 1953 and uprising the 1960 *Socialist spring in the countryside.* This party slogan – *Sozialistischer Frühling auf dem Lande* – has been taken up by Jens Schöne and Arnd Bauerkämper as titles of their writings on the history of collectivisation in the GDR, comp. Arnd Bauerkämper, '"Sozialistischer Frühling auf dem Lande" - Die Kollektivierung der Landwirtschaft', in *Dreißig Thesen zur deutschen Einheit* (Freiburg: Herder Verlag, 2009), pp. 99–111. Also *Jens Schöne, Frühling auf dem Lande?: die Kollektivierung der DDR-Landwirtschaft (Ch. Links Verlag, 2005).*

101 The *Polska Partia Robotnicza (PPR)*, the Polish Workers' Party, which in 1948 merged with the Polish Socialist Party (*Polska Partia Socjalistyczna* PPS) to form the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR).

The social background of the interview partners was diverse. In order to arrive at a broad source basis, not only male farmers and heads of family were included in the target group. Farmers' wives, farm girls and maids, (seasonal) labourers, workers and functionaries in collective farms teachers as well as butchers, seamstresses and other providers of services were interviewed. All came from an agricultural background. Party membership in both interview groups was restricted to teachers and functionaries in collective farms. Overall, three German and one Polish interview partner were party members. Most of the women interviewed had worked as housewives or collective farm members, while one German woman had gone on to work for the postal service. As mentioned above, academic research into collectivisation has hitherto focused almost exclusively on male farmers and party members so that the inclusion of female perspectives constitutes a novel approach in the research literature. A more detailed discussion on the geographic background of the interview partners is provided in the respective analysis of the memories.

In this age group, family histories of migration played a large role, bearing in mind the extensive population movements in Central and Eastern Europe caused by the Second World War and its aftermath. Whereas Saxony primarily acted as a transit corridor for those expelled from former German territories, Lower Silesia witnessed an effective exchange of population, as the Germans left, some Jewish survivors returned, and Poles and Ukrainians arrived from the lands which had been annexed by the Soviet Union from Poland after the Yalta and Potsdam conferences.[102]

The qualitative orientation of this thesis aims at capturing the complexities of speaking about collectivisation and to anchor them in their specific historical context. As a result, a balance had to be struck between a sufficiently broad and inclusive source basis and the spatial and temporal limitations of a PhD project. In view of this, the decision was

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[102] The majority of expellees from the East settled in the northern regions of the GDR. For more details comp. Schöne, *Frühling auf dem Lande?*, 67–69. On the transfer of Ukrainians from and within the new Poland comp. Bohdan Kordan, 'Making Borders Stick: Population Transfer and Resettlement in the Trans-Curzon Territories, 1944-1949', *International Migration Review*, 31.3 (1997), 704–20. As mentioned already, the literature on the expulsion of the Germans is vast and varied, for a first introduction comp. R. M. Douglas, *Orderly and Humane: The Expulsion of the Germans after the Second World War* (New Haven, Conn. ; London: Yale University Press, 2012). The same applies to Polish resettlement from the former Polish territories (annexed by the Soviet Union) to Western Poland, comp. Krystyna Kersten, *Repatriacja ludności polskiej po II wojnie światowej studium historyczne* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1974). On the intersection of these issues comp. Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak, *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944-1948* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2001). On Jewish resettlement to Lower Silesia after 1945 c.f. Gregor Thum, *Uprooted: How Breslau Became Wroclaw during the Century of Expulsions* (Princeton, N.J. ; Woodstock: Princeton University Press, 2011).

taken to limit the overall size of the interview groups and conduct more than one recording with each interview partner. The interview duration was set at a maximum of 45 minutes per session. The duration of the initial interview ranged from 45 minutes to one hour. The decision to limit the duration of the interview sessions was based on two considerations. Firstly, the advanced age of the interview partners was considered. Two- or three-hour longs sessions would have been too fatiguing, both physically and mentally. Boredom and a wavering of attention could, occasionally, nevertheless be observed. Secondly, the time needed to establish a rapport with the interview partners was considered. It transpired early on during the field work that 'Single-session oral histories are like "audio snapshots". (…) It often takes more than one interview just to break the ice. Repeated visits help establish an intimacy than encourages candidness (…) [and] the rapport necessary to ask difficult questions and to give honest answers.'[103]

Anonymity, Transcription and Translation

To interview a group of people is to strive to 'reconstruct a shared, collective, and therefore anonymous history'.[104] In combination with a micro-historical approach anonymity is less an effect of large numbers. Rather, it is an ethical issue closely linked to the current social situation in narrators and the content of their stories. As most disputes over land and livelihood, collectivisation was a highly contentious topic at the time, and remains one for some people. In addition, the aspiration of an oral history project cannot lie in *publicly* reopening disputes which might damage present day relationships on site, especially as the interviewer leaves the context soon after the last word is spoken. On the other hand, a village is a place where identities and family histories are *known* collectively and over long stretches of time. In a way there cannot be anonymity in a village despite the fact that it might be desirable. Based on this consideration, the narrators were informed of the option of anonymisation.[105] Since the majority of narrators chose to remain anonymous, the decision was taken to defamiliarise all narrators.

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103 These comments are based on Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide*, 2nd ed (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 87.

104 Alessandro Portelli, *The Battle of Valle Giulia: The Art of Dialogue in Oral History* (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 162.

105 This procedure was reviewed and accepted by the Ethical Commission of Trinity College Dublin. The interview partners were informed in advance in writing of the topic of the PhD thesis and its institutional framework. The agreement on anonymity and the rights to the interviews were fixed in writing between narrators and interviewer.

As Portelli remarked 'Oral sources are *oral* sources' and can thus not be repeated.[106] At the same time the original conversation is considerably altered by the process of transcription. In other words: 'Tape and transcript are two types of records of the same interview. (…) Even the most slavishly verbatim transcript is just an interpretation of the tape.'[107] Transcription not only physically changes *what* the narration is but also how it will be analysed. It has the potential to enhance the understanding of what was said. It can disclose new aspects which, had only the original immediate hearing been relied on, might have passed unnoticed since in

> oral history much of the meaning is couched in how things are told as much as what is told (…) each comma is an act of interpretation, and I have used punctuation both to accompany the sentence structure as to suggest, when possible, the rhythm of speech.[108]

The German and Polish transcripts served as basis for the analysis of the memories, at times complemented by the original recordings of the interviews. However, the quotes selected for illustration have been translated into English for the sake of readability.

Both the transcripts of the interviews and the party reports are analysed according to the methods of historical discourse analysis. This decision is a reflection of the understanding that 'there is no possibility of getting behind the discourse.'[109] This study endorses an understanding of discursive history which is derived from the postulation that 'Once something is furnished with the status of being knowledge and reality, then it inevitably is furnished with effects of power.'[110] Following this, historical discourse analysis draws attention to superficialities and positivities and is interested in standard communication and the limits of what can be said in a given context. With regard to the analysis of the interviews, moments of uncertainty, faltering, backtracking and evasion can provide insights not only to the structure of the story but also the emotional involvement of the speaker with certain episodes. Their motivation for giving an oral history interview as

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106 Alessandro Portelli, 'What Makes Oral History Different', in *The Oral History Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 63–74., 63.

107 Ritchie, *Doing Oral History*, 66. Transcription, however, is not only a well of misinterpretation. At times, the insertion of pauses and breaks and the visual signifying of emotions – by using the exclamation mark – enhances the understanding of what was said.

108 Alessandro Portelli, *They Say in Harlan County: An Oral History* (New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 10.

109 Achim Landwehr, *Historische Diskursanalyse*, Historische Einführungen; Bd. 4 (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2008), 92.

110 Landwehr, 92. He further points out that 'It no longer seeks to get behind the phenomena in the way traditional hermeneutics did.'

well as information on their current conditions, including social and financial status, gender and age are also taken into account when appropriate.[111]

7. Structure of Thesis

The thesis is divided into three main sections. The first part establishes the theoretical framework. It provides definitions and literature reviews of the four core concepts underpinning the ensuing analysis: popular opinion, memory, oral history and micro-history. Further, it argues for the merit of combining these four concepts in a comparative and transnational research design. The second part is dedicated to the analysis of party and mood reports from the 1950s and 1960s in both regions. It covers both the representation of popular opinion in the Saxon and Lower Silesian countryside and examines specific instances in greater depth. The third part discusses the memories of collectivisation. During the interviews, collectivisation served as an umbrella topic from which a variety of aspects – such as familial migration, or the treatment of collectively owned goods, are derived. Finally, the conclusion recapitulates the findings of the case studies. It provides a comparison of these and closes with a final consideration and places this within the wider discourse on the modernity of peasants.

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111 Observing the verbal and non-verbal expression of emotion during the interaction with the interviewer can contextualise those episodes in the story where emotions feature less prominently. These remarks are based on Valerie Yow's caveats for interviewers, quoted in Thomson, 91.

Part I – Theoretical Framework and Methodology

1. Introduction

This PhD thesis has a diachronic and comparative orientation. The following chapter is dedicated to outlining the theoretical framework of this study. It introduces the four fields of academic research, including key concepts and practitioners, which underpin the following analysis – popular opinion, memory studies, oral history and micro-history. Furthermore, it presents an overview of the literature on popular opinion and memory studies and identifies problematic aspects in their practical application. Thirdly, popular opinion and memory are conceptualised before embarking on the analysis of the primary sources. The last part of this chapter contains the argument for the combination of popular opinion and memory with a micro-historical approach.

The following chapter is structured accordingly. The first two parts focus on popular opinion and memory studies respectively. They proceed from a literature review and the detailed discussion of some pertinent aspects to presenting a conceptualisation of both terms. In the third part, the methodological implications of researching memory are set in relation to the field of oral history. Following this, the merit of combining the investigation into popular opinion during state-socialism with the analysis of present-day memories is argued for. The last part of this section completes the theoretical framework by establishing the conceptual links between the study of popular opinion, memories and the qualitative orientation of micro-history. The thesis then proceeds to the second part: the analysis of contemporary representations of collectivisation in Saxony and Lower Silesia in the 1950s and early 1960s.

2. Popular Opinion

The initial motivation for research into popular opinion derived from the wish to refine representations of society in dictatorship as monolithic and passive.[112] Following the cultural turn in the 1980s and in a climate of methodological and theoretical reorientation

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[112] Comp. for example Lynne Viola, *Contending with Stalinism: Soviet Power and Popular Resistance in the 1930s* (Cornell University Press, 2002), pp. 1–16. Esp. Ian Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich: Bavaria 1933-1945*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), pp. 2–10. Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia: Terror, Propaganda, and Dissent, 1934-1941* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 4–9 and 184–187 esp. Also Paul Corner, 'Everyday Fascism in the 1930s: Centre and Periphery in the Decline of Mussolini's Dictatorship', *Contemporary European History*, 15.2 (2006), 195–222.; Jan Plamper, 'Beyond Binaries: Popular Opinion in Stalinism', in *Popular Opinion in Totalitarian Regimes: Fascism, Nazism, Communism* (Oxford: OUP, 2009), 64–80. Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley ; London: University of California Press, 1995), 3–5.

writing on popular opinion was seen as one way of addressing the plurality and agency of totalitarian societies in the sense that 'the issue of popular opinion in totalitarian regimes (…) relates to the fundamental workings of the regimes in question'.[113]

The field of popular opinion studies is at this stage a collection of case studies without a theoretical centre. These case studies approach popular opinion from quite distinct backgrounds, with a strong historical component, such as the history of everyday life, labour history as well as Soviet and Holocaust studies. The main overlap of these studies is their interest in the European dictatorships of the twentieth century as research objects.[114] With regards collectivisation, popular opinion has not yet been explicitly used as analytical term. However, a body of work has emerged which discusses the population's responses to the regimes' policies in the context of the German Democratic Republic and the Peoples' Republic of Poland.[115]

Until now, definitions of popular opinion have been offered to various extents and detail. Traditionally the exploration of consent and dissent, state-society relations, the function and the genesis of the opinion research of state-socialist regimes have featured

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113 Paul Corner, 'Introduction', in *Popular Opinion in Totaliatrian Regimes: Fascism, Nazism, Communism* (Oxford: OUP, 2009), pp. 1–15 (3).

114 The collection of articles edited by Paul Corner are most notable in this regard. Comp. Paul Corner ed., *Popular Opinion in Totalitarian Regimes: Fascism, Nazism, Communism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). Studies focusing particularly on popular opinion during Communism are Mark Allinson, *Politics and Popular Opinion in East Germany, 1945-1968* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000). Corey Ross, 'East Germans and the Berlin Wall: Popular Opinion and Social Change before and after the Border Closure of August 1961', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 39.1 (2004), 25–43. Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'Popular Opinion in Russia Under Pre-War Stalinism', in *Popular Opinion in Totalitarian Regimes: Fascism, Nazism, Communism* (Oxford: OUP, 2009), pp. 17–31. and Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalin's Peasants: Resistance and Survival in the Russian Village after Collectivization* (New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).David S. Mason, *Public Opinion and Political Change in Poland, 1980-1982*, Soviet and East European Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985). Prominent studies on National-socialism and Fascism include, among others, Ian Kershaw's work on popular opinion in Bavaria from 1933 to 1945 (see above); *Die Juden in Den Geheimen NS-Stimmungsberichten, 1933-1945*, ed. by Otto Dov Kulka, Eberhard Jäckel, and Anne Birkenhauer, Schriften Des Bundesarchivs, 62 (Düsseldorf: Droste, 2004). David. Bankier, *The Germans and the Final Solution : Public Opinion under Nazism* (Cambridge, Mass., USA: B. Blackwell, 1993).

115 For literature on collectivisation in the Polish People's Republic and popular responses to it see for example the articles of S. Stepka, F. Gryciuk, G. Majchrzak, B. Cimała and L. Kaminski in *Represje Wobec Wsi I Ruchu Ludowego (1944-1956)*, ed. by Janusz Gmitruk and Zbigniew Nawrocki (Warszawa: IPN, 2003), i. Also Marek Ordyłowski, *Wieś dolnośląska w latach 1945-1956: władza a społeczeństwo* (Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego we Wrocławiu, 1999). Kura.Concerning collectivisation in the GDR see Arnd Bauerkämper, 'Collectivization and Memory: Views of the Past and the Transformation of Rural Society in the GDR from 1952 to the Early 1960s', *German Studies Review*, 25.2 (2002), 213–25. Ulrich Kluge, *Agrarwirtschaft und ländliche Gesellschaft im 20. Jahrhundert* (München: Oldenbourg, 2005). Jens Schöne, *Das sozialistische Dorf: Bodenreform und Kollektivierung in der Sowjetzone und DDR* (Leipzig: Evang. Verl.-Anst., 2008).Beleites. For a comprehensive study on collectivisation in the Baltic states see David Feest, *Zwangskollektivierung Im Baltikum. Die Sowjetisierung Des Estnischen Dorfs 1944-1953. Mit Übersichten Im Text, Zahlr. Tabellen, Personen- U. Ortsverzeichnis Sowie Sachindex*, Beiträge Zur Geschichte Osteuropas (Köln: Böhlau, 2007), xl.

prominently. Comparative analyses as well as the incorporation of histories of social groups have been undertaken less frequently. The aim of the following section is to draw up a notion of popular opinion which is useful for the investigation of the social, political and economic aspects of the collectivisation of post-war East German and Polish villages. In doing so the next sections not only seek to define the notion of popular opinion but also to outline some recurring pitfalls of the practical application of the concept.

2.1. Public and Private Spheres

Studies of popular opinion, independent of the particular historical setting of their case studies, frequently differentiate between the concepts *popular* and *public* as a way of approaching their key concept.[116] Such a differentiation is indeed sensible when operating in the context of Soviet-(type) societies, although it is ultimately of limited definitional power. Jürgen Habermas' ideal of the bourgeois public sphere, laid out in his *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*[117] is a prominent approach to the analysis of non-private activities and spaces. His notion of the public – an area of action and speech opposite the private sphere of material reproduction – is frequently referenced for delineations of popular and public as described above. It has been argued that Habermas's idea of the (bourgeois) public is not a useful concept for the analysis of non-governmental spheres of opinion in state socialism, mainly because the term *public* in the Habermasian sense is incompatible with the specific conditions of Soviet(-type) societies.[118] Therefore, it is argued, a less normative term such as *popular* was better suited for the exploration of the societal reception and reflection of state socialism or its individual policies.

This definition *ex negativo* – popular opinion is what public opinion cannot be in the specific context of State socialism – opens up whether both terms could not be

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116 For example Fitzpatrick, 'Popular Opinion in Russia Under Pre-War Stalinism', p. 24. Similarly, Ian Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich: Bavaria 1933-1945*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002), 4.

117 See further Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel Der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen Zu Einer Kategorie Der Bürgerlichen Gesellschaft; Mit Einem Vorwort Zur Neuauflage 1990* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1993).

118 Gábor Tamás Rittersporn, Malte Rolf, and Jan C Behrends, 'Exploring Public Spheres in Regimes of the Soviet-Type: A Possible Approach (Introduction)', in *Sphären von Öffentlichkeit in Gesellschaften Sowjetischen Typs: Zwischen Partei-Staatlicher Selbstinszenierung Und Kirchlichen Gegenwelten = Public Spheres in Soviet-Type Societies : Between the Great Show of the Party-State and Religious Counter-Cultures* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2003), 8–22. Also Fitzpatrick, 'Popular Opinion in Russia Under Pre-war Stalinism', p. 24. Paul Corner, 'Introduction', 2. and similarly expressed with regard to the Third Reich, c. Kershaw, 4.

combined in order to discuss opinion in dictatorship. For this, however, the Habermasian approach is less useful as each of its three key characteristics – parity of discussants, topical and social openness[119] – is inapplicable to communicative practices taking place under the auspices of a continuously (self-)affirmed socio-political hegemony of the party-state apparatus. The Communist state's totalitarian claims on private and public spheres as well as the fundamental divergence of economic and political systems between Habermas' template, a bourgeois society, and state-socialism equally speak against the immediate application of this term.[120] The following section introduces an alternative notion of public spheres in order to work out a context-sensitive approach to popular opinion while bearing in mind the notion of public opinion as well.

Rittersporn, Rolf, and Behrends formulated their idea of public spheres as part of their exploration of publicity and social action in newly Sovietised societies, especially those Central-Eastern European ones which came under Soviet control after the Second World War. These regimes are sometimes referred to as 'second generation regimes' because they were modelled on the 'first generation' Russian/Soviet example. Within these societies 'any place where the authorities allowed people to come together (…) i.e. city squares as well as cinema theatres, bathhouses and shops'[121] constitutes a public sphere. Strategies of thought and action which were 'regarded as practical and necessary'[122] in these settings are placed within the framework of culturally and socially proliferated power relations and party-state agency.

What is of relevance here is the shift away from social stratification as analytic parameter – focusing on workers, peasants, nomenclature – or the individual, to the conditions and organisation of social interaction. This implies a broadening research basis as communication between individuals outside the boundaries of their social group is also considered. Similarly, instances of continuous, standardised and inconspicuous interaction of many people under direct regime control are identified as sources for new insights into the functioning of Soviet-type societies.[123] By inference this also calls to attention

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119 Comp. Jürgen Habermas, 'Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft ; mit einem Vorwort zur Neuauflage 1990' (Suhrkamp, 1993), 97ff.

120 In this thesis, the terms 'state-socialism' and 'Communism' are used interchangeably, with a preference for 'state-socialism' when referring to the ideological and material framework of central and eastern European governments after 1945. The non-capitalised version of 'communism' is employed when referring to ideological aspects beyond the Communist parties.

121 Rittersporn, Rolf, and Behrends, 'Exploring Public Spheres in Regimes of the Soviet-Type: A Possible Approach (Introduction)', 25.

122 Ibid, 26.

123 Comp. Ibid, 25.

representatives of the party-state such as cadres of the Communist parties and the bloc parties, members of the security forces or state-affiliated organisations as the *Farmers' Association for Mutual Self-Help* in the GDR or the *Association of Peasant Self-Help* in the PPR.[124] However, the understanding of the public on which Rittersporn, Rolf and Behrends base themselves is problematical when applied to the field of opinion and its communication. In their work, opinion is discussed only in conjunction with the public. Similarly, the contexts of where opinion was expressed are ascribed exclusively to discourses which were initiated or sanctioned by the party-state. From this point of view, the expression of opinion takes place solely within officially sanctioned discourse, which itself is understood to be one part of a fragmented public sphere.[125]

It is suggested here that the possible contexts of opinion expression be expanded to cover more than instances of officially generated discourse such as factory openings, published communication and party meetings. It is argued that formation and expression of opinion were not restricted to one area of social interaction but occurred where and whenever people came together, that is potentially in all public and private spheres. Communication in immediate party-state settings such as ceremonies, in mass media or vocational contexts, often generated and sustained the form, setting and content of opinion, but not exclusively so. Bearing this in mind, it is sensible to differentiate between S*oviet-type public opinion* as discussed above and *popular opinion in Soviet-type societies*.

The sphere of officially sanctioned public opinion generated a highly visible representation of state-party rule in which the 'creation of *the* and not just any public opinion (…) as reference point for elite discourse'[126] was key. The formative aspects of creating a definite public opinion is visible in the stylistic standardisation of written communication and the conscious attempts to integrate previously existing opinions.[127] In order to do so party-state agencies also resorted to 'a good deal of infantilization, babying and control'[128] of the audiences of official debates. This was accompanied by the

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124 In German *Vereinigung der gegenseitigen Bauernhilfe (VdgB)* and in Polish *Zwiazek Samopomocy Chłopskiej (ZSCh)*.

125 Official discourse in this context is understood by Rittersporn et.al. as a 'form of public sphere, the critical public opinion of a growing audience'.Gábor Tamás Rittersporn, Malte Rolf, and Jan C Behrends, 'Open Spaces and Public Realm: Thoughts on the Public SPhere in Soviet-Type Systems', in *Sphären von Öffentlichkeit in Gesellschaften Sowjetischen Typs: Zwischen Partei-Staatlicher Selbstinszenierung Und Kirchlichen Gegenwelten = Public Spheres in Soviet-Type Societies : Between the Great Show of the Party-State and Religious Counter-Cultures* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2003), pp. 389–421 (436).

126 Ibid, 438 (original emphasis).

127 Comp. Ibid, 440: 'the gap between both versions of public opinion, the existing – or purportedly existing – public opinion and the one that was to be created.'

128 Ibid, 439.

continuous enforcing of discursive boundaries and taboos as well as the repetition of the supposedly consensual party line.

Although the Party and other regime institutions figured prominently as reference points of popular opinion, mechanisms of influence and power operated much less openly and over longer periods of time. Popular opinion in Soviet-type societies was formulated and expressed as a part of social activity. In both private and public settings – including those explicitly managed by the party-state – individuals reflected, debated, criticised, affirmed and negotiated their positions in relation to (aspects of) the regime and in relation to their social environment. Exchanges about everyday life or more traditional political topics were both a result and condition for this (self-)positioning which was tied in with the processes of constructing meaning and identity. As will be discussed later, popular opinion was represented and transmitted in a variety of forms and means, both in writing and verbally.

With regard to the role of private spheres for the formation of popular opinion two aspects are fundamental. Firstly, the interplay of public and private spheres is characterised by its instability and continuous reshaping. This is due to the permeability of both the private and public which allows ideas to travel between both spheres.[129] Secondly, it is not intended to imply that privacy – frequently connoted with autonomy from the party-state and/or the public – in itself invites or sustains expressions of (critical) opinion more than activity in non-private contexts.[130] Similarly, the ascription of supposedly greater authenticity to expressions of opinion made in private contexts, based on the binary of reality/private and fiction/official is understood to be an inviting but ultimately self-confining representation.

This section began with a discussion of how the terms *popular* and *public* have been differentiated in the literature with regard to the expression of opinion in (communist) dictatorships. A notion of the public, as an alternative to the Habermasian original, was introduced and shown how – in the specific case of Soviet-type societies – popular opinion can be conceptualised by integrating public spheres. Popular opinion is constituted in both

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129 See for example Rittersporn, Rolf and Behrends, 'Open Spaces and Public Realm: Thoughts on the Public Sphere in Soviet-Type Systems', 446. On the mechanisms of self-expression of individuals and constructions of self-hood in the context of Soviet civilisation comp. Oleg Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices*, Studies on the History of Society and Culture, 32 (Berkeley, Calif. ; London: University of California Press, 1999).

130 Comp. Jochen Hellbeck, 'Fashioning the Stalinist Soul: The Diary of Stepan Podlubnyi (1931-1939)', *Jahrbücher Für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 44.3 (1996), 344–73.

public and private spheres. Subsequently, instances of individual expression of opinion can clarify the individual's position to/relation with the party-state apparatus and its social environment, regardless of the sphere (public or private) they take place in. In the context of collectivisation, for example, a person voicing her opinion on the party's aim to introduce collective farming also enacted her relationship to the neighbours and colleagues, local functionaries, friends and enemies, regardless of what she actually said. The place where this expression of opinion took place, be it at a village meeting called to discuss the founding of a collective, in the local pub on a Sunday afternoon or on the way home from the field, of course influenced the style and vocabulary used. However, the setting of discussions about collective farming did not alter the fact that the act of speaking itself always and already conveyed information on the social relation of the speakers and their audience. A farmer's wife openly supporting the introduction of collective farming not only would have signalled the Party representatives her loyalty and reliability to the cause of socialism, she also would have made her independence from her husband clear – especially if he stood firmly against collective farming – and also effected her position in the women's community of the village.[131]

This example poses the question why individuals spoke and acted as they did. Genuine conviction will have played a part but the individual's position within and outside the peer group will have figured as well, not to mention the presence of regime representatives at the meeting, personifying the regime's ability to reward and discipline its citizens depending on their willingness and ability to further the cause of the Party. What actually motivated individual behaviour is notoriously difficult to fathom retrospectively. For this reason the challenge of sounding the intentions of individuals has featured so prominently in studies on popular opinion and will be discussed in greater detail in the following section.

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131 The example is modelled on the case of a female activist in the collective farm of Lipienica, in the commune of Krzeszów (Lower Silesia). In 1951 she complained to the members of the PZPR's county committee that her husband, since she had joined the collective, often quarrelled with her because he did not agree with the collective farm being founded. APW KW PZPR 74/IX/26, p.58; Sprawozdanie z grupy towarzyszy tow. Klara Edmunda I Dziak Teresy ze spoldzielni prod. Lipienicy (30.08.1951, Wrocław). Unless stated otherwise, all quotes from the German and Polish primary sources were translated into English by the author of this thesis. The absence of diacritic letters in some primary documents from the State Archive in Wrocław is most likely due to the lack of Polish typewriters at the time so some reports were written on former German typewriters.

2.2. Between Intention and Agency

Investigating the intentions and opinions of other people crucially relies on them becoming active – either by speaking or writing down their opinions. These material left-overs can then be analysed, both immediately after or decades later. What complicates this analysis is that people do various things for various reasons. In other words agency on an individual level is multi-causal.[132]

As a part of social interaction, individual expressions of opinion serve more than one purpose and are motivated by more than one intention. The individual may be aware of these purposes and motivations but this is not always the case. That there exist more than one motivation behind an action implies that these motivations may conflict, compete and overlap with each other. It is this plurality of intention which complicates the analysis of individual agency. This is also relevant for the interpretation of popular opinion because, just as other collective phenomena, it is ultimately constituted by individual agency. The individual level of popular opinion cannot, therefore, be ignored and the issue of intention and agency needs to be discussed in more detail.

One way of doing so is by taking a look at how the concept of resistance – as equally elusive as that of popular opinion – has been delineated. Both concepts share an interest in interpreting world views and value systems by way of tracing and analysing behaviour. According to Einwohner and Hollander two contentious issues are recurrent in the literature on resistance.[133] Firstly, an activity needs to be recordable and analysable, for example by speaking, writing or walking. Secondly, both actor and audience must agree that an act of resistance has taken place.[134] In the case of popular opinion, this translates into the recognition that one facet of popular opinion has been voiced and heard. By itself, however, this recognition is not to be equated with fully understanding the full meaning of an individual's speech. In her delineation of resistance during the high-Stalinist period of Soviet history, Lynne Viola pointed out the difficulties in equating the intentions of an act of resistance with the act itself. She argued that an act which has come to be seen as

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132 This multi-causality is described in greater detail by Marcin Kula, 'Poland: The Silence of Those Deprived of Voice', in *Popular Opinion in Totalitarian Regimes: Fascism, Nazism, Communism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 149–67.

133 Jocelyn A. Hollander and Rachel L. Einwohner, 'Conceptualizing Resistance', *Sociological Forum*, 19.4 (2004), 533–54.

134 Comp. Hollander and Einwohner, 554.

resistant could have been brought on by a range of diverse political, economic and situational reasons.[135]

Following this, a first step into finding out whether single expressions of opinion reflect the views of a larger community would be by looking for signs of reflective activity as the subject speaks its mind.[136] Reference to one's membership to the working class, one's long-standing loyalty to the Party and the October Revolution can be read as indications that the subject is thinking about his own relation to what it is saying. Equally, reference to a group of supporters, for example in other factories or villages, can also indicate that the speaker is aware that he or she is making themselves visible – and thus potentially vulnerable – by offering an insight into their world view which in turn points to their awareness of the potential consequences of expressing opinion.

In her conceptualisation of resistance in Stalinist Russia, Lynne Viola set out to argue that the term, however difficult to delineate and apply, can act as a promising pathway into the 'semi-autonomous world of many layers, cultures and languages of existence, experience, and survival'[137] which continued to exist throughout dictatorial rule. In her valuable discussion on what she calls the *source lens* of research into popular attitudes, Viola points out two aspects which need to be taken into account when interpreting acts of (supposed) resistance. Relevant here are the 'internal politics' within peasant and worker societies[138] – such as economic competition and hierarchy, mechanisms of in/exclusion from social networks but also religious and traditional norms of behaviour – which were also acted out via party and work meetings. The 'local and localized'[139] nature of peasant revolt, meaning that the source and occasion for peasant resistance is rooted in the place and history of this place, is one instance of the repercussions national policies cause 'on the ground'. Also, the sphere of agency was usually rooted in the context of the village or region, so that peasants usually did not travel to the capital to stage a revolt there but remained in their everyday surroundings. When individuals were targeted by a group of peasants in revolt they would be individuals known to the community by

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135 Lynne Viola, 'Popular Resistance in the Stalinist 1930s. Soliloquy of a Devil's Advocate', in *Contending with Stalinism: Soviet Power & Popular Resistance in the 1930s* (Ithaca, N.Y. ; London: Cornell University Press, 2002), pp. 17–43 (25).

136 Based on Hollander and Einwohner, a first question when discussing an individual's opinion could be: 'must an actor be aware that he or she is positioning themselves socially and in relation to the state – and intending to do so – for an action to be an expression of [popular opinion]?' (Hollander and Einwohner, 542.

137 Viola, 'Introduction', 1.

138 Ibid, 5.

139 Viola, 'Popular Resistance in the Stalinist 1930s. Soliloquy of a Devil's Advocate'. 23.

name and history, as Terry McDonald pointed out in her study on the peasant rebellion in the Soviet Pitelinskii district in 1930[140].

I would argue that the localized motivation for peasant resistance should be taken into account when analysing the group and individual behaviour of peasants. Not only resistance but also affirmation, negotiation and apathy stem from the specific priorities of, and demands to the village community at a given time. In practice this does not diminish the interpretative challenge to the researcher. Rather, it calls to attention that the connection between agency and the internal, localised politics lies in the eye of the beholder, as Viola put it. Why did a collective farm fail to produce the amount of crops it was expected to? Was this the case because of the member's ineptitude in farming and accountancy? Did the quality of the soil play a role? Or were members engaged in resisting the implementation of the latest economic policies of the regime? Questions as this stress the necessity of including the material and social context into the interpretation, as well as the two distinct levels of village and national politics which blended into each other.

The relation between popular opinion – as abstract reservoir of attitudes and responses to the regime and/or its policies – and individual views is a dynamic and two-directional one. As indicated above, popular opinion consists of a multitude of (often conflicting) expressions of opinion, and is continuously constructed by those who refer to it in their own speech (and, of course, by the researcher attempting to analyse it). Popular opinion therefore also becomes visible in the effect it has on individuals expressing their attitudes on contemporary reality. For example, what was being said during a statutory meeting of a collective farm, be it criticism or affirmation, was influenced by the relationship between speaker and audience, their respective status within Party and village community, but also by what the speaker felt was expected by the audience. References to general developments and 'what the people think' would be a more direct invocation of popular opinion in a conversation or during a meeting.

References to a specific topic were also shaped by the sense that it was an issue for others as well, either because it had been discussed in public before, maybe by the Party itself – in magazines, newspapers or the radio – or by other people in less formal circumstances. In 1951 in Ożary, the farmers Czajkowska, Kanoczak, Kleinerowicz and Jopelle replied to the envoy of the regional Party office gathering information about the

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140 Tracy McDonald, 'A Peasant Rebellion in Stalin's Russia', in *Contending with Stalinism: Soviet Power and Popular Resistance in the 1930s* (Ithaca, NY; London: Cornell, 2002), pp. 84–108.

state of the collective farm, Beniamin Siacha, that if their land would also be signed over to the collective, they would leave their fields and go to work in the factory.[141] That they openly mentioned this option to a representative of the authorities (*władza)* is a sign that migration to the town – brought forward by these farmers as a fundamental criticism of collectivisation – was not uncommon. So if these farmers chose to leave for the town, they would do so as a part of a group of people who thought the same, a point which would have been understood by all present.

The wish to know how the population viewed the regime was shared by the party-state authorities who gathered, stored and processed reports and analysed the mood and opinion of their citizens. The regime itself had many reasons to study the intentions and attitudes of its citizens. Monitoring popular opinion could function as a source of knowledge to "steer propaganda more effectively"[142].

More importantly, it serves to measure the success of the regime's indoctrination efforts. The thirst for more knowledge about the thoughts and feelings of the population was a consequence of the regime's never-ceasing effort "to teach people what and how to think".[143] In the 1930s, for example, cadres of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union were primarily concerned with the thoughts of their fellow Party members. During ritualised *kritika/samokritika*sessions where 'sins' were revealed, the 'sinners' admonished and penalised accordingly.[144] Among the worst failings were counter-revolutionary deeds (this especially in the early 1930s) and mental dissent with the Party, which turned individuals into objective enemies due to their *subjective* thinking. The reasoning behind such condemnations illustrates the communist concern with the successful creation of a new, revolutionary self which was wholly honest and faithful. The debates held in the

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141 APW KW PZPR 74/IX/11, p.270. 30.08.1951. The Polish original reads as follows: 'Chłopi w wyniku tego nie robią podrywek mówiąc że i tak spółdzielnie zabiera pole, wypowiadają się też w ten sposób, że gdy im zabiorą pole to pójdą pracować do fabryki a do spółdzielni nie pójdą.'

142 Kershaw, 2002, 4. On the discourse of legitimacy of the communist party-states in Poland and East Germany respectively c.f. Marcin Zaremba and Instytut Studiów Politycznych (Polska Akademia Nauk), *Komunizm, Legitymizacja, Nacjonalizm: Nacjonalistyczna Legitymizacja Władzy Komunistycznej W Polsce*, W Krainie PRL, Wyd. 2 (Warszawa: Trio : Instytut Studiów Politycznych Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2005). Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk, *Legitimation eines neuen Staates: Parteiarbeiter an der historischen Front ; Geschichtswissenschaft in der SBZ/DDR 1945 bis 1961* (Berlin: Links, 1997).

143 Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley ; London: University of California Press, 1995), 226.

144 For a discussion of the Soviet model of ritualised sessions of criticism and self-criticism within the party c.f. J. Arch Getty, 'Samokritika Rituals in the Stalinist Central Committee, 1933-38', *Russian Review*, 58.1 (1999), 49–70.Comp.also Alexej Kojevnikov, 'Games of Stalinist Democracy: Ideological Discussions in Soviet Sciences 1947-52', in *Stalinism: New Directions* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 142–76.Riegel provides an earlier study of public admissions of guilt and atonement within the Chinese and Soviet Russian parties, c.f. Klaus-Georg Riegel, *Konfessionsrituale Im Marxismus-Leninismus* (Graz: Styria, 1985).

1950s by Polish and German communists on collectivisation are not to be equated with the ritualised party purges in the Soviet Union in the 1930s. However, the above mentioned concern and attention paid to the successful *fashioning of the soul* were also acted out by German and Polish cadres.[145] Self-expression in front of the Party's public was essential to this, as it provided the deeds and emotions which the parties harnessed in the processes of Communist identity formation.[146]

The organisation of work, education, leisure and even the army, was central to such self-fashioning as they provided the setting for the 'intertwining of the practices of the *kollektiv*'s formation and collective self-examination, and (…) the individual's practices of self-recognition and of working on one's self.'[147] The structuring of people's lives in collectives was essential to the communist project because it facilitated identity formation, and through this the formation of attitudes and opinions not only about the world but more importantly, of the individual's role and place in it. Kharkhordin argues that the communist project allowed the majority of the Russian population for the first time to think about the self and how to further its development.

This of course cannot be said of the German and Polish population which by 1945 possessed their own genealogies of thinking about the self, both in political and religious terms. If the communist conception of identity and self therefore did not take place in virgin minds, it nevertheless offered a coherent and compelling template for writing one's life story. The fact that the Party's efforts to create Communist personalities competed with previous ideologies, heightened the necessity for thorough and omni-present vigilance on the side of the regime. It also amplified the effort and attention devoted on self-fashioning by the citizens.

The means and methods of finding out what the population did, thought and wanted changed with time and arguably became more challenging as citizens, with increasing

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145 The concern for the innermost feelings and thoughts of Party members goes back to the Romantic strand in Marxist ideology which seeks to overcome the subject's fragmented self to form a homogeneous and balanced individual. Comp. Igal Halfin and Jochen Hellbeck, 'Rethinking the Stalinist Subject: Stephen Kotkin's "Magnetic Mountain" and the State of Soviet Historical Studies', *Jahrbücher Für Geschichte Osteuropas*, 44.3 (1996), 456–63. The phrase *fashioning of the soul* is taken from the title of Hellbeck's article on Stepan Podlubnyi's constant re-writing of his Soviet identity during the 1930s. C.f. Hellbeck, 'Fashioning the Stalinist Soul'. In the 1970s, in his anti-totalitarian critique of the French Revolution, Francois Furet, described the October Revolution as a 'system (…) of meticulous constraint over men's bodies and minds'. Michael Scott Christofferson, 'An Antitotalitarian History of the French Revolution: François Furet's "Penser La Révolution Française" in the Intellectual Politics of the Late 1970's', *French Historical Studies*, 22 (1999), 557–611 (594).

146 Hellbeck, 'Fashioning the Stalinist Soul', 163.

147 Kharkhordin, 279.

experience, formed and tested linguistic and behavioural strategies to serve their interests when dealing with the authorities.[148] The emergence of different styles of speaking has been noted in Soviet studies and also in relation to the second-generation regimes.[149] This includes differentiations in tenor, mood and topic, depending on the situational context and relationship between language users. When writing about the integration of people's lives into the revolutionary project via *speaking Bolshevik*[150] Kotkin described the linguistic awareness exhibited by the workers in Magnitogorsk as the development of 'a sense of the dangerousness of [confusion]'.[151] Confusion means mixing up the demands of the situation, for instance an informal chat with a fellow worker during a break, a dinner-table conversation with one's spouse, or a speech during a Party cell meeting, with what could actually be said. Incorrect speech – using out-dated terminology or inappropriately referring to a policy or person – opened up the room for criticism, the outcome of which was unpredictable.

On the other hand, the correct usage of Communist speech, and thereby communist thought, as Kotkin pointed out, could bear witness to the speaker's identity being successfully transformed along the lines of the Party. As a result of the increased expertise in tailoring speech to fit the situation, 'the political stance of citizens became increasingly difficult to ascertain merely on the basis of their declarations and even on the basis of their membership to the ruling party'.[152]

Analysing the regime's attempts at gauging opinion can also shed light on the perceived strength and spread of the regime's world view. Reflecting on the difficulties of analysing popular opinion by looking at (open) consent only, Corner introduced the question of how popular opinion – regardless of its content – was actually reacted to, and which responses were expected from the regime:

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148 Thomas Lindenberger, 'Tacit Minimal Consensus: The Always Precarious East German Dictatorship', in *Popular Opinion in Totalitarian Regimes: Fascism, Nazism, Communism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 208–22.

149 On this point see further Mathieu Denis, 'Reading East German Bureaucrats: The Rhetoric of the GDR Trade Union Reports', *Social History*, 37.2 (2012), 142–65. Also, Lüdtke and Becker's publication on the genres of written communication between citizens and state organs in the GDR: Peter Becker, *Akten, Eingaben, Schaufenster / die DDR und ihre Texte ; Erkundungen zu Herrschaft und Alltag*, ed. by Alf Lüdtke (Berlin: Akademie-Verl., 1997).

150 For Kotkin on speaking Bolshevik comp. *Magnetic Mountain*, 225-237.

151 Kotkin, 229.

152 Rittersporn, Rolf, and Behrends, 'Exploring Public Spheres in Regimes of the Soviet-Type: A Possible Approach (Introduction)', 28. Ina Merkel made a similar point in analysis of citizen letters to the GDR television in the 1980s. C.f. Ina Merkel, '"...in Hoyerswerda Leben Jedenfalls Keine so Kleinen Viereckigen Menschen." Briefe an Das Fernsehen Der DDR', in *Akten.Eingaben.Schaufenster. Erkundungen Zu Herrschaft Und Alltag* (Berlin: Akad. Verlag, 1997), 279–309.

> For a great many people who adhered to the movement at its
> beginning, Fascism had been a heady cocktail of interest and ideology.
> The impression given by the documents cited above is that, as the years
> passed, the element of interest came to dominate. Ordinary people
> reacted against this and did not distinguish in their reaction between an
> abstract ideal of Fascism, and the day-do-day reality. They did not
> make the distinction, it must be assumed, largely because the hold of
> Fascist ideology – of the 'political religion' – was in itself insufficiently
> strong to have the better of the everyday considerations of corruption,
> nepotism and other forms of arbitrary use of power. Such a conclusion
> does have important implications for our *assessment of the relative
> strengths of interest and ideology in the Fascist mentality; it suggests
> that it is important to look at actions and not only at words*. To get the
> full picture, we need to insert the squalid realities of provincial Fascism
> into any appraisal of what motivated Fascists, to look at what so many
> Fascists did when in power and not just at what they said.[153]

Naturally, the conclusions drawn here are not to be transferred single-handedly onto East German and Polish societies after the Second World War (or other dictatorial systems) but Corner nevertheless makes a valuable point: linking everyday experiences of totalitarian rule with an explicitly local context is a promising approach to shedding light on the relationships and everyday necessities which informed people's actions. The analysis of continuous, inconspicuous activity, such as a conversation between a functionary and a citizen over an administrative issue taking place in a unremarkable provincial office, can be just as informative as the analysis of the proceedings of a national Party congress taking place in the country's capital.

The constructive efforts of research on popular opinion hinge on the fact that 'thinking is done by individuals, not groups or classes'.[154] It therefore remains fundamentally inaccessible in its entirety, especially in circumstances where the consequences of one's speech are continuously evaluated and where language is shaped considerably by propaganda. For the researcher it is tempting to imagine herself as crossing the 'border that divides the obvious public reality from its "more real" private counterpart'[155] by accessing the internal – and therefore most private – world of an individual with the help of the sources available. In order to avoid such a fallacy, the following study is limited to analysing only the representations of popular opinion in the context of collectivised farming.

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153 Paul Corner, 'Everyday Fascism in the 1930s', 221. (My emphasis). Comp. also Paul Corner, 'Italian Fascism: Whatever Happened to Dictatorship?', *The Journal of Modern History*, 74.2 (2002), 325–51 (329f. and 350).

154 Fitzpatrick, 'Popular Opinion in Russia Under Pre-War Stalinism', 27.

155 Peter Apor, 'The Joy of Everyday Life: Microhistory and the History of Everyday Life in the Socialist Dictatorships', 200.

Research into the expression and recording of popular opinion always includes the retrospective construction and interpretation of the past. It cannot be the discovery of *real* popular opinion. The interpretive process is bound to oscillate between the two poles of intention and agency. Their mutual conditionality (g*egenseitige Bedingtheit/ wzajemny uwarunkowanie)* – intention as primary assessment of activity and agency as the expression of the carrier's mind – cannot be resolved in a single stroke. At this stage the concept of discourse – 'all that can be said, and the set of rules which determines what can be said in which manner'[156] – can act as an intermediary between intention and agency. It accounts for both the subjective aspect – motivations, processes of identity formation, world views, memories – and the surroundings which determine the individual's possibilities of action. Bearing in mind the heightened influence and indicative power of discursive processes in phases of radical change[157] – such as the complete and rapid transformation of ownership during collectivisation – discourse analysis offers itself as a way of accounting for both the subjective dimension of the individual and the normative setting which influences how and what they think and do.

The two points discussed above – mutual conditionality of agency and intent as well as the social dimension of popular opinion – represent the initial delineation of elements generally appertaining to popular opinion. This is the case with regards to the second-generation regimes after the Second World War and arguably also with regard to other European dictatorships of the 20th century. The following section identifies some problematic aspects in the practice of popular opinion research before arriving at a conceptualisation of popular opinion tailored to the orientation and aim of this thesis.

2.3. Beyond Binary Categories

As this section will show, the question how to deal with the issue of categorising the content of popular opinion, that is how people judged the regime, has surfaced in many studies on popular opinion.[158] More recent works have moved beyond the dichotomous

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156 Jörg Baberowski, *Der Sinn Der Geschichte: Geschichtstheorien von Hegel Bis Foucault* (München: C.H.Beck, 2013), 196f.

157 C.f. Karin Wullenweber, 'Slavistische Linguistik Als Kulturwissenschaft - Thesen Und Forschungsansätze', in *Kulturwissenschaftliche Linguistik/ Beispiele Aus Der Slavistik* (Bochum: Brockmeyer, 2002), pp. 269–98 (288).

158 This includes debates on how the terminology is employed. Paul Corner has addressed the vagueness of the term 'consent', due to its implication of choice where there was none, on his essay on Italian fascism, comp. Paul Corner, 'Italian Fascism', 327ff. Kula rightly pointed out that 'very often it is not appropriate to ask the Manichean question whether people were "for" or "against" the solutions provided by the

representation of *for* and *against*, agreeing on ambivalence and heterogeneity as explanatory terms, also with regard to the individual.[159] Nevertheless the presence/absence of affirmation/criticism poses interpretive and organisational challenges. Correspondingly, this section examines how consent and dissent have been applied and conceptualised in a number of prominent case studies. It concludes with some remarks on how the issue is adressed here, before moving to the definition of popular opinion as it is understood in the context of this thesis.

In his study of popular opinion during the early decades of the GDR, Mark Allison concentrates on the absence of continuing open protest. Key to understanding this absence, so Allison, is the link between the regime's popularity – in his words the 'overwhelming active or passive support' – and its stability and longevity.[160] The main argument, somewhat iconoclastic in the late 1990s, is that the GDR was a stable state generating sufficient support and popularity and thus overriding personal inclinations of the citizens. Based on a case study of mood-reports from Thuringia, Allison explores a dichotomous state-society relationship – society reacts either 'badly' or 'well'[161] to SED policies – and comes to the conclusion that the regime succeeded to convince 'some that its cause was right, and to co-opt many others in support'.[162] In Cory Ross's study of popular opinion in the context of the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961 the reverse angle is taken. His argument proceeds from the point of view that the state-socialism in Eastern Germany was an *Untergang auf Raten* – a decline in instalments.[163] Subsequently, Ross's interest lies with positive responses to the Wall and more generally how the Wall stabilised state-society relations, thus slowing down the disintegration of the system.[164]

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regime. Where an alternative was absent the formation of opinion was much more complex.' Kula, 150.

159 Sarah Davies, *Popular Opinion in Stalin's Russia: Terror, Propaganda, and Dissent 1934-1941* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 6. For an overview of earlier American studies on public opinion in Soviet Russia which were based on the binary of support and dissent comp. Fitzpatrick, 'Popular Opinion in Russia Under Pre-war Stalinism', 17-20.

160 Mark Allinson, *Politics and Popular Opinion in East Germany, 1945-1968* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 3.

161 Ibid, 6.

162 Ibid, 5.

163 The *decline in instalments* argument refers to the GDR as being in slow, for a long time imperceptible, disintegration as a result of structural and especially economic faults which the authorities managed to mask until 1989. Adherents to this view debate when this decline supposedly set in; events such as the 1953 uprising or the closure of the Berlin Wall 1961 have been linked to it. Generally, the argument is based on the conviction that the GDR as 'Kunstprodukt des kalten Krieges' (an artificial product of the Cold War) was not viable from the onset. In re-united Germany, the phrase 'decline in instalments' was popularised by Mitter and Wolle. Armin Mitter and Stefan Wolle, *Untergang Auf Raten: Unbekannte Kapitel Der DDR-Geschichte* (München: Bertelsman, 1993).

164 Comp. Ross, 'East Germans and the Berlin Wall: Popular Opinion and Social Change before and after the Border Closure of August 1961', 26 and 42.

From the vast corpus of literature on the GDR, two characterisations of the SED dictatorship are of interest here. Firstly, the view of the GDR as a *dictatorship of consensus* was presented by Martin Sabrow[165] while Thomas Lindenberger modified Sabrow's reasoning to an understanding of the GDR as a *dictatorship based on tacit minimal consensus*. For Lindenberger the continuous production of consent 'became a core element of communist self-legitimation' and an effective 'practice of domination'[166]. Although arriving at different conclusions, Lindenberger and Sabrow share a similar point of departure: the concept of *Eigen-Sinn*, introduced by Alf Lüdtke as a way of addressing the difficulties of classifying behaviour in dictatorship.[167] The concept of *Eigen-Sinn* describes the way an individual assigns meaning to the material surroundings and ideas vis-a-vis the regime's production of ideology and its rule-oriented practices. The emphasis on individual processes of appropriation and interpretation of externally and asymmetrically produced sense (*Sinn*) is based on the distinction between the intention of rule and the exercise of power, and the social realisation of this rule.[168] Equally pertinent to *Eigen-Sinn* is another central dictum of *Alltagsgeschichte*, namely the simultaneity of individuals as subjects and objects in social history.[169] Resulting from a strong impetus away from the centre, attention focuses on 'the mediation but also disjunction between images, interpretations and rules of action, which can be applied in the respective context'.[170]

The practice inspired by *Eigen-Sinn* is distinct from other interpretations of state-society relations in the GDR based on the political sciences.[171] Nevertheless it has been criticised for presenting power primarily as the outward realisation of state authority and therefore as not being present and effective in social action.[172] The term is reminiscent of

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165 Sabrow based this dictum on the case study of historiography in the GDR. C.f. Martin Sabrow, *Das Diktat Des Konsenses. Geschichtswissenschaft in Der DDR 1949-1969* (München: Oldenbourg, 2001).For an English version of this argument comp. Martin Sabrow, 'Consent in the GDR or How to Intepret Lion Feuchtwanger's Blindness in Moscow 1937', in *Popular Opinion in Totalitarian Regimes: Fascism, Nazism, Communism* (Oxford: OUP, 2009), pp. 68–82.

166 Lindenberger, 'Tacit Minimal Consensus: The Always Precarious East German Dictatorship', 205.

167 Possible translations into English could be *own-mindedness* or *self will*. The term was first conceptualised by Lüdtke in 1989.Alf Lüdtke, *Alltagsgeschichte. Zur Rekonstruktion Historischer Erfahrungen Und Lebensweisen* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1989).

168 For a detailed discussion of the term comp. Thomas Lindenberger, 'Die Diktatur Der Grenzen. Zur Einleitung', in *Herrschaft Und Eigensinn in Der Diktatur. Studien Zur Gesellschaftsgeschichte Der DDR* (Köln/Weimar: Böhlau, 1999), pp. 13–41 (22–25).

169 Comp. Lüdtke, 12.

170 Ibid, 20 (original emphasis, my translation).

171 For a ten-level classification of resistance from the field of political science see for example Erhard Neubert, *Geschichte Der Opposition in Der DDR 1949 - 1989* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1998).

172 Comp. Peter Apor, 'The Joy of Everyday Life: Microhistory and the Histroy of Everyday Life in the Socialist Dictatorships', *East Central Europe (ECE)*, 34–35.1–2, 185–218 (203).

Scott's *hidden transcript*[173] in the sense that it includes connotations of spontaneity and individuality. It also suggests that the additional meaning hidden in a statement can be identified and analysed only by the initiated.[174] At the same time *Eigen-Sinn* does lack the sensitivity for material and cultural class relations as portrayed by Scott which has the potential of illuminating the web of relations and conditions in the background.[175] It has also been argued that the main idea behind *Alltagsgeschichte* – ordinary life in opposition to politics – transfers present-day notions of privacy and politics without historicising 'the conceptual underpinnings of life, its definition and purpose, in a specific period'.[176]

Lynne Violas writings on resistance in the Stalin era could be seen as laying out a similar dichotomous picture of societal relations, if it weren't for her conceptualisation of resistance as one social strategy of many commanded by the Stalinist subject.[177] In this vein, Jan Plamper argues that the ordering of representations of social reality in the Soviet Union along such dichotomous lines – relying on categories such as consent/dissent which are conceptualised as being mutually exclusive – is the main reason for the theoretical stasis which took hold of Soviet studies after the totalitarian/revisionist debate in the late 1990s.[178] In order to overcome the 'interpretive standstill'[179] triggered by binary representations during the *totalitarian/revisionist* (and later *plural modernity/neo-revisionist*) debate, the notion of a hetero-glossic and multifaceted individual was just as necessary as source criticism, argues Plamper.[180]

Bearing this in mind, a re-focusing on *how* and *where* people spoke about politics appears advisable. Concentrating on the social and material context of debates means that the analysis of popular opinion is no longer focused on proving that farmers were *really* for collectivisation or not. Apart from bringing other actors than farmers into the framework, the primary interest of research into popular opinion, and also of this project, lies not with

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173 Comp. James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).

174 This point has been made somewhat differently by Peter Apor as 'outwitting the powerful'. (Apor, 'The Joy of Everyday Life: Microhistory and the Histroy of Everyday Life in the Socialist Dictatorhips', 213.

175 Comp.James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven ; London: Yale University Press, 1985).

176 Jochen Hellbeck, 'Liberation from Autonomy: Mapping Self-Understanding in Stalin's Time', in *Popular Opinion in Totaliarian Regimes: Fascism, Nazism, Communism* (Oxford: OUP, 2009), pp. 49–62 (54).

177 Comp. Viola, 'Introduction', 1 and 13ff.

178 For an overview over the debate see Fitzpatrick's introduction in comp. Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Stalinism: New Directions, Rewriting Histories* (London: Routledge, 2000), esp. 4-8. Plamper also noted that the representations of social reality along dichotomous terms was replaced by more ambiguous and multidimensional portrayals. Plamper, 'Beyond Binaries: Popular Opinion in Stalinism', 75.

179 Plamper, 69.

180 Comp. Ibid, 73f.

identifying consent or dissent, their extent and distribution. Instead, focus should rest on the complex, and contradicting, nature of motivation, as well as the physical consequences of speaking and thinking. The constitution of a new, collectivised order in rural communities is sought to be traced by analysing the discourse on collectivisation, especially its impact on the discursive practices of the villagers.

2.4. Mood Plus Attitude Equals Opinion?

During the founding years of the second generation Soviet-type regimes in central and eastern Europe, it was by no means clear that contemporary affairs tended to provoke expression of opinion more than systemic issues. Both the East German and Polish Communist parties extensively gathered and compiled statements from their populations in order to find out which aspects of their rule elicited resistance or affirmation. Since the decline of these Communist regimes, the interrelation between a discursive element, its history and contemporary meaning has become an object of study. Since the opening of the archives of the central and eastern European party-states researchers have reflected on the challenges of analysing these sources and of conducting a thorough source criticism, and of adequately interpreting them.

It is argued here that both spontaneous expressions of *mood*, enticed by policies and specific events, and those based on *attitudes,* that is relating to long-term and general issues, appertain to opinion circulating in a population. Both terms refer only to the temporal dimension of behaviour or speech, but give no information on their content. The distinction 'between *fundamental opposition* and spheres of *partial conflict*'[181] – or fundamental affirmation and partial support – can only be maintained on the basis of a thorough contextualisation of the statements analysed. The dynamics between and within the components of the triangle of *occasion for the communication* of opinion, the *situational setting* in which it takes place, and the *recording* of this opinion also needs to be considered. The same applies to the language used. The structure and modi of the recorded opinion – written or spoken, published or private – similarly needs to be taken into account. The likelihood of a statement being recorded and classified, for example in the s*vodki* of the CPSU or the *Stimmungsberichte* during National-Socialist dictatorship,

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181 Kershaw, xii (original emphasis).

increased significantly when a functionary was familiar with the references and topics he noted.

Furthermore, the question is still open as to how far evaluative aspects of popular opinion are determined by their transmission, e.g. their being edited, proof-read (and occasionally published) within the bureaucratic channels of the Communist parties. Elements of popular opinion could surface in public discourse and propaganda. One example for this is the recurring column in the agricultural newspaper *Gromada* where criticism of the running of co-operative farms or local Party cells was discussed and followed with an explanation how the situation had been remedied in the meantime.[182]

The public use of statements reflecting popular opinion by the party-state was aimed at endorsing the regime's self-presentation of it being approachable, adaptable and continuously advancing. In relation to the policy of collectivisation it is not yet clear, however, which strands of popular opinion lent themselves to being incorporated into the public sphere. Their content also remains to be analysed. The dynamics between public and popular opinion, as well as their transmission and transformation in different public and private spheres therefore constitutes one research interest of this thesis.

2.5. Popular Opinion in Soviet-type Societies – Definition

Popular opinion in soviet-type societies was formed, negotiated and expressed in a plurality of spaces and hierarchical levels, both within and outside spaces controlled by the state or the party. Regardless of the forms and occasions of expression, an interpretation of popular opinion needs to take into account the internal dynamics of the social environment, in which it occurred – including the (explicit or implicit) presence of the regime and its representatives. Analyses of popular opinion have traditionally focused on elements of criticism and affirmation. However, it is considered advisable to concentrate on the discursive framework and social/local conditions of opinion formation and expression. Bearing in mind the fluidity of categories of *us* and *them* in Soviet-style regimes, local communities constitute the object of study, instead of groups of social stratification.[183],

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182 In the context of the Soviet Union, the letter writing departments of large newspapers have already proven to contain valid source material. Sheila Fitzpatrick, 'Supplicants and Citizens: Public Letter-Writing in Soviet Russia in the 1930s', *Slavic Review*, 55.1 (1996), 78–105. On the cultural background of letters sent to the leadership of the Soviet union see also Magnúsdóttir's case study. Rósa Magnúsdóttir, '"Be Careful in America, Premier Khrushchev!": Soviet Perceptions of Peaceful Coexistence with the United States in 1959', *Cahiers Du Monde Russe*, 47.1/2 (2006), 109–30.

183 On the shifting, context-bound designations of *Us* and *Them* in the Polish Peoples' Republic see Marcin Kula's informative discussion. Kula, 150.

The notion of popular opinion in this project covers both mood and attitude and is thus able to reflect the full range from spontaneous to premeditated, verbal to written, clandestine to visible expressions of opinion on collectivisation. The research question here is how the evaluative elements in popular opinion interacted with the temporal framework in which they were uttered. In the context of this study, the term *popular opinion* henceforth denotes the verbal realisation of debates appertaining to a given community. It is constructed both at the time and retrospectively. Therefore, it is also traceable in the effect (*Wirkung/działanie*) its invocation had on the course and outcome of debates on contemporary matters.[184]

The previous literature review has shown how the analysis of popular opinion is one pathway into better understanding how individuals made sense of the socio-political transformations of their everyday life in Soviet-type regimes. Analysing the party-state's sources on the attitudes of ordinary people is fundamentally concerned with the relationship between the collective and the individual and its expression in a specific historical setting.

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184 Comp. Plamper, 73.

3. Memory Studies

Jestem złą publicznością dla swojej pamięci.

Chce, żebym bezustannie słuchała jej głosu,
a ja się wierce, chrząkam,
słucham i nie słucham
wzchodzę, wracam i znowu wzchodzę.[185]

I'm a poor audience for my
memory.
She wants me to attend her voice
               non stop
but I fidget, fuss
listen and don't
step out, come back, then leave
               again.[186]

These lines are taken from Wisława Szymborska's poem *Hard Life with Memory*, published three years before her death in 2012. The poem centres on the speaker's daily negotiations with her own memory, which 'wants me to live only for her and with her'[187]. During this internal dialogue – memory acts as a personified *she* – the speaker behaves in a manner which would be described as impolite and rude, were it directed at another person and not, as in this case, a facet of self. Here, memory speaks, or tries to speak, to a reluctant audience whose attention wavers, leaving the room only to return a little while later. Walking away and not listening is of course hardly possible when the voice speaking is one's own and the poem traces this realisation until the speaker concedes that a separation from her memory 'would be the end of me too'.[188]

The issues which inform *Hard Life with Memory* – dialogue, evasion, recognition, and reworking – are central concerns of both oral history and memory studies. The field of memory studies is interested in the presence of the past in contemporary life. Its practitioners are drawn to the cultural acts of a society or group remembering its history. They study the processes of selection, omission, highlighting and falsification while also tracing how these acts express and shape the socio-economic relations between those who agree on a shared past. By comparison, an oral history interview can be understood as a doubled dialogue: one taking place internally between different selves of the person remembering, and the other taking place between the speaker and the interviewer who records, transcribes, and later analyses what has been said.

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185 Wisława Syzmborska, 'Trudne życie z pamięcią', in *Tutaj* (Kraków: Znak, 2009), 13.

186 Wisława Szymborska, translated from the Polish by Clare Cavanagh and Stanisław Barańczak, 'Hard Life with Memory', *The New York Review of Books*, 8 March 2012 <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2012/mar/08/hard-life-memory/> [accessed 18 November 2013].

187 Ibid.

188 Ibid.

The ensuing section aims to provide a comprehensive, broad and academically grounded overview of the second tier of the theoretical framework. An extensive literature review and in depth discussion of problematic aspects of the memory studies is undertaken in order to arrive at a conceptualisation of memory which is pertinent to this thesis. Following this, conceptual links between memory studies and oral history are briefly laid down.

As a object of modern academic interest and activity, memory surfaced first at the beginning of the twentieth century. Maurice Halbwachs, Marc Bloch, Emile Durkheim, and Aby Warburg, are usually mentioned as its founding fathers.[189] From this French sociological background, studies in memory, especially of its social dimension, have come forth from diverse disciplines such as history, cultural studies, international relations, psychology, and media studies. Since the early 1980s the topic has enjoyed immense public attention, even preoccupation, both in the academic and popular realm, and – some argue – has lost some of its analytical value and relevance due to excessive usage.[190] The second arrival of memory has, naturally enough, generated a vast and diverse body of literature on theoretical and methodological issues.[191]

To this Pierre Nora, Jacques Le Goff, Andreas Huyssen, Aleida Assmann, and Jeffrey Olick have made strong contributions.[192] Their work has emerged as signposts in a field which is increasingly characterised by the seemingly unlimited incorporation of topics and terminology. Some research fashions may be identified: memory of the Holocaust and trauma, memory and media, global/cosmopolitan/transnational memory, politics of memory, art and memory. The flip-side of such variety sees the field frequently criticised for its dispersal, lack of conceptual centre and neglect of conceptual evaluation and

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189 Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory, The Heritage of Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). Marc Léoplod Bloch, *La Société Féodale* (Paris: A. Michel, 1968). Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (Oxford: OUP, 2008). Aby Warburg, *Werke in Einem Band* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2010).

190 Comp. Jeffrey Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniela Levy, 'Introduction', in *The Collective Memory Reader* (Oxford: OUP, 2011), pp. 2–62. and Wulf Kansteiner, 'Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies', *History and Theory*, 41.2 (2002), pp. 179–97 (179–80).

191 For a concise summary of the history of memory studies since Halbwachs see Astrid Erll, 'Cultural Memory Studies: An Introduction', in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies* (Berlin ; New York: De Gruyter, 2008), pp. 1–19. Also Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi and Levy.

192 For an introduction to their respective work comp. Aleida Assmann, *Geschichte Im Gedächtnis: Von Der Individuellen Erfahrung Zur Öffentlichen Inszenierung*, Krupp-Vorlesungen Zu Politik Und Geschichte Am Kulturwissenschaftlichen Institut Im Wissenschaftszentrum Nordrhein-Westfalen, Bd. 6 (München: C.H. Beck, 2007). Pierre Nora, *Rethinking France. Les Lieux de Mémoire* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010). Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory, Cultural Memory in the Present* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003). Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

development.[193] Arguably, the abundance of easily appropriated concepts and metaphors has had a negative impact on the practice of memory studies. The current state of affairs in the field risks the obfuscation of concepts due to their inflationary use.[194]

Bearing all this in mind, this part is laid out as follows: the hegemonic concept of collective memory is discussed in view of the literature. In a second step scholarly criticism of this approach is discussed. In the course of this, the central characteristics of memory for this thesis and their theoretical background are presented. Reflecting the outcomes of this part, an outline of the conceptual basis of memory for this research is provided. After a summary, the text turns to the practical relationship between oral history and memory studies.

3.1. Literature Review of Collective Memory Studies

The French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs conceptualises memory as primarily social, generated by the interaction of individuals in a group, and therefore one facet of 'collective thought'[195]. Usually clandestinely formed, social memory is thought to be more readily recalled than its individual counterpart, thanks to a greater presence in everyday life. Halbwachs employs the metaphor of 'sheltered pathways'[196] along which information could be easily transmitted through time, in opposition to the isolated and open individual perspective. In this conception the individual, although necessary for the existence of any social phenomenon, is portrayed as the consumer of memory and dependant on the reference group for orientation in matters of the past. The subjective qualities of memory are presented as being merely an accessory to collective memory. Instead, the viability of any social memory depends on 'its base in a coherent body of people'.[197] Within this group memories are seen as being 'mutually supportive and common to all'.[198] There seems to be very little room for dissenting voices of individuals – even actively engaged individuals – in this alleged natural equilibrium of one joint opinion.

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193 Pieter Vermeulen, Stef Craps, and Richard Crownshaw, 'Dispersal and Redemption. The Future Dynamics of Memory Studies - A Roundtable', *Memory Studies*, 5.2 (2012), 223–39.

194 This also emphasises the impossibility of providing a complete review of academic writing on memory, be it individual or collective.

195 Jeffrey Olick, 'Collective Memory: The Two Cultures', *Sociological Theory*, 17 (1999), 333–83 (335).

196 Maurice Halbwachs, 'From The Collective Memory', in *The Collective Memory Reader*, ed. by Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Veroussi, and Daniel Levy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 139–49 (141).

197 Ibid, 142.

198 Ibid.

In her further development of Halbwachs's writings, Mieke Bal argues that collective memory is engaged in a constant process of revision and adaptation precisely because of this social dimension. To retain its relevance to a group, any presentation of the past was bound to strive for the greatest possible match with the actual, present experiences of its members.[199]

In 2007 Aleida Assmann broke collective memory down to the 'common denominator of knowledge currently shared and anchored in general discourse'.[200] As a result, so Assmann, memory is intuitively ascribed authenticity by the individual, regardless of its (re-)modelled content.[201] Together with Jan Assmann, Aleida Assmann further expanded memory theory which distinguishes between the private and popular sphere. Communicative, cultural, and political aspects of collective memory are delineated in a second step. These different types of memory can be differentiated by the time span they cover, their impact on identity formation as well as the modes of their transmission, for example by archivisation and canonisation.[202] Aleida Assmann has also observed the rise of cultural memory (usually regarded as synonymous with collective memory) since the early 1990s to paradigmatic status within the humanities.[203] Surely, this is also due to the conceptual strength of cultural memory when compared to other ideas in the field.[204]

Allan Megill and Jeffrey Olick are representatives of an approach to memory which emphasises its interrelation with identity formation, highlighting the possibilities of political and psychological utilisation. Megill, in tracing the trajectories of the history-memory-identity triangle, makes comments similar to Aleida Assmann on the current memory craze. He attributes this trend to a contemporary insecurity about identity.[205] Megill argues against the Halbwachsian view that memory is generated by a coherent and established group identity. Instead, he suggests a process during which both memory and identity play off each other, continuously facilitating and channelling their generation. In this, Megill's writings are based on Jeffrey Olick's sociologically informed work.[206]

199 Mieke Bal, 'Introduction', in *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present* (University Press of New England, 1999), pp. 1–33.
200 Aleida Assmann, 2. (My translation).
201 Ibid, 9.
202 Jan Assmann, 'Communicative and Cultural Memory', in *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies* (Berlin ; New York: De Gruyter, 2010), pp. 109–19.
203 Aleida Assmann, 21.
204 Kansteiner, 182.
205 Alan Megill, 'From "History, Memory, Identity"', in *The Collective Memory Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 193–97 (194).
206 Apart from being interested in aspects of identity in memory, Olick responds to the tension between individual and collective memory by introducing his own terminology of *collected* and *collective*

In an attempt to offer a consolidating account of memory studies, Astrid Erll defines collective memory as 'the interplay of present and past in socio-cultural contexts'.[207] It is a more inclusive view on the matter, allowing for the allocation of a variety of practices and studies under the umbrella of memory. For her, the cognitive and the social/mediated are engaged in perpetual interaction and therefore memory studies – by virtue of being interested in both aspects – are a prime example of interdisciplinary practice.[208]

The popularity and widespread application of the concept of collective memory over the past thirty years has, predictably, elicited manifold reflections from practitioners in the field. These span from philosophical remarks on the relationship of past and present to in-depth methodological criticism. J.C. Goldfarb, writing on rapid societal change and its effects on forgetting and remembering, pointed out that the application of collective memory (politics) often subscribed to the notion that 'to remember was to set one free'.[209] Addressing memory – by successfully analysing it – ascribed it the role of a necessary ingredient which allowed for progressive action henceforth.[210]

Andreas Huyssen has called for caution when analysing the intersection of past and present, not least because of memory's 'notorious unreliability'.[211] There was, he

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memory. Collected memory subsumes the 'aggregated individual memories of members of a group'which are to a degree socially influenced, e.g. by different levels of recognition and appreciation by other group members, but overall emphasis rests on the individual perspective. (Olick, 338) Olick presents the analysis of individual memory as a primarily psychological undertaking and for this reason as being also of limited use for answering questions dealing with wider societal and cultural phenomena.

Based on this, Olick positions the idea of collective memory as such, arguing that some 'patterns of societation are not reducible to individual psychological processes' and that symbols, as well as discourses, styles, and ideas evolve autonomously from their users. As groups generate patterns of meaning-inscription on which individuals rely for orientation, such as myths, traditions, fashions, it is necessary to acknowledge non-personal aspects of their conception. (Olick, 342). From this standpoint, the excessive emphasis of the individual in memory ultimately risks of slipping back to a constructivist view of reality. In insisting on the *social* nature of memory, Olick and others, also contend that memory and identity are but two aspects of the same thing. The question remains, however, whether the psychological is the only justifiable approach to personal memory.

207 Erll, 2.

208 Ibid, 5.

209 J. C. Goldfarb, 'Resistance and Creativity in Social Interaction: For and Against Memory in Poland, Israel-Palestine, and the United States', *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 22.2 (2009), 143–48 (144).

210 This stance is reminiscent of Tsvetan Todorov and his observation that remembering is often seen as one way of (albeit retrospectively) resisting the claim at omnipotence by authoritarian regimes. Therefore, 'it is easy to understand why memory has acquired an aura of prestige among enemies of totalitarianism, why even the humblest act of recollection has been assimilated to anti-totalitarian resistance'. (Tsvetan Todorov, *Hope and Memory. Reflections on the Twentieth Century* (London: Atlantic Books, 2005), p. 118., 118.) This implies the possibility for academics to join ranks with the suppressed in their writing and so share the positive moral associations evoked by the subaltern status. Herein might lie one reason of the remarkable popularity of memory among scholars.

211 Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*, Cultural Memory in the Present (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 2003)., 6.

advocated, the danger of merely replacing 'the twentieth century's obsessions with the future with our newly found obsessions with the past'.[212] In the face of this possibility a more solid spatial and temporal anchoring of analysis becomes even more important. Subsequently, memory studies are criticised, especially those dedicated to Holocaust memory and personal traumatic memory. The popularity of both topic and theoretical approach risks collapsing the distinction between the personal and the public, and the arrival at a dead end where past issues rule over present demands.[213] Concerning the current state of affairs in memory studies, Huyssen sees a necessity of expanding topical interest to cover more than 'past injuries'[214] and moving beyond the almost exclusive application of collective memory – especially when combined with a traumatic or national outlook – to include a variety of methodological and disciplinary approaches.

Alon Confino's writings on collective memory resonate with Goldfarb's criticism of the enlightenment presumption in memory analysis. Starting out from the observation that studies on the politics of memory have become very popular among researchers, he sketches out the problems arising when memory is discussed only through the political: 'By sanctifying the political while underplaying the social, and by sacrificing the cultural to the political, we transform memory into a "natural" corollary of political development and interests'.[215] In addition to this the reduction of any historical interaction to an expression of political power relations extends the depiction of history through the top-bottom metaphor. Secondly, the precise nature of the interaction of representation and experience remains underdeveloped.[216]

Just as other authors discussed here, Confino points out the excessive reference to memory in the cultural sphere. In addition, he criticised the considerable lack of grounded theoretical reflection, of sufficient methodological evaluation, and a lamentable drive towards fashionable catchphrases instead of a more steady expansion.[217] The lack of a centred development, as well as a meaningful connection between research strands is

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212 Ibid.
213 Comp. Ibid, 8. In the end, the application of this notion of collective memory, so Huyssen, was problematic because it facilitates the (re-)introduction of master narratives to historical discourse, a point which he shares with Goldfarb.
214 Vermeulen, Craps, and Crownshaw, 227.
215 Alon Confino, 'Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method', *The American Historical Review*, 102 (1997), 1386–1403 (1394).
216 Comp. Ibid, 1388.
217 Comp. Ibid, 1387.

viewed by Confino as an increase of the field's predictability and randomness: 'everything is a memory case; memory is everywhere'.[218]

Wulf Kansteiner's critique of the current state of memory studies – via a methodological discussion of collective memory – includes three main points.[219] Firstly, he contends that collective memory continues to be insufficiently theorised in spite of its excessive use. Secondly, problems of its reception and adaptation in a variety of contexts remains inadequately expounded. Thirdly, a media studies approach should feature more prominently in contemporary studies of memory as one way of alleviating the previously stated dearth of theoretical focussing. The prospects of such a suggestion is to be doubted, however, as its topical specificities limit its unifying scope. Overall, Kansteiner argues for his peers to engage in more careful reflection on the adequacy of the metaphors and procedures of research into collective memories.

A further point of criticism concerns the field's 'terminological diversity' and 'fake interdisciplinarity'[220], going back to the afore mentioned contention between individualistic and collectivist notions of memory. The allegedly off-hand attribution of psychological language to explanations of social processes in Kansteiner's eyes furthers terminological confusion, most notably in relation to memory of trauma.[221] By way of defining collective memory Kansteiner argues that it originated in 'shared communications about the meaning of the past that are anchored in the life-worlds of individuals who partake in the communal life of the respective collective'.[222] These collectives can range from the private – such as families – to the public, including national and ethnic entities.

Two points should be noted before concluding this – hardly exhaustive – literature review. Firstly, the concept of collective memory has enjoyed much popularity in relation to national questions. In this context, a number of studies argue that collective memory has taken precedence over dissenting voices in national discourse as it directed scholarly attention towards coherence.[223] To some this effectively enforces existing cultural power relations and modes of topical dissemination. It also results in an overly simplified

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218 Ibid.
219 Comp. Kansteiner.
220 Ibid, 182.
221 Comp. Ibid, 185.
222 Ibid, 188.
223 Lorraine Ryan, 'Memory, Power and Resistance: The Anatomy of a Tripartite Relationship', *Memory Studies*, 4.2 (2010), 154–69. Nancy Wood, *Vectors of Memory: Legacies of Trauma in Postwar Europe* (Oxford: Berg, 1999). Christof Dejung, 'Dissonant Memories: National Identity, Political Power, and the Commemoration of World War Two in Switzerland', *Oral History*, 35.2 (2007), 57–66.

presentation of internal group relations, both in terms of explanation and experience.[224] The parallel existence of plural mnemonic communities – as well as the variety of individual responses to memory topics – has only recently been stressed in the literature. One way of avoiding this fallacy is to reflect on the possibility of a plurality of individual aspects of memory (and its practices) which interact with a plurality of mnemonic collectives (and their practices).

The fundamental difference between a person's own experience and collective ideas and representative necessities – no matter if speaking about past or present – has also been discussed by Christof Dejung in relation to Swiss memories of the Second World War period.[225] Dejung shows how subjective versions of the past which conflict with the commonly agreed story are relegated to the (semi-)private sphere by a variety of public and discursive actions.[226] When publicly voiced, they are readily 'usurped by the historical view framed by the social group predominant in a certain nation'.[227]

Secondly, when proceeding with the analysis of purely national contexts of memory – especially in relation to its political use – one risks subscribing to *solitarism* which, in the words of Amartya Sen, 'sees human beings as members of exactly one group', be it national, ethnic, class or religious.[228] Such limiting of identity to one group *only* (re-)introduces the motive of inevitability – or fate – to social interaction as choice of identity and thus memory is negated. In order to avoid resorting to imprecise terminology the following section introduces five characteristics of memory which are seen as relevant to this thesis.

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224 This can be traced back to what has been previously said about the dichotomy of individual and collective in memory. From ascribing individuals a passive – or consuming – role in social memory it is not far to overlooking the subjective processes of (dis-)associating between individuals as such.

225 Christof Dejung, 'A Past That Refuses to Pass: The Commemoration of the Second World War and the Holocaust', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 43.4 (2008), 701–10.

226 For example through absence in mass media and normative social interaction.

227 Dejung, 'Dissonant Memories', 64. From such discrimination of personal memory by contrary political utilisation Dejung moves to a critique of the (pre-)supposition of homogeneity in social collectives as well as presenting a two-tiered communicative memory theory. In short, memories supportive of the current cultural narrative are located in public discussion, whereas less reliable memories are confined to the private. Again, the question poses itself if the binary character of this set-up would not better be replaced by a multifaceted version which incorporates ambiguity, both in terms of the sphere of memory expression and its affirmative/dissenting content.

228 Amartya Sen, *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny* (London: Penguin, 2007), xii.

3.2. Five Conceptual Considerations

Based on the introduction to the field of memory studies above, five key aspects of memory and their practical implications are subsequently discussed. Firstly, for any memory to acquire the guise of authenticity and relevance it is vital that it be continuously generated by social interaction – or evoke the impression of having been so generated. Todorov has argued 'the ultimate contention of unveiled truthfulness is intersubjective, not referential'.[229] Furthermore Mieke Bal has pointed out that this very inter-subjectivity has memory constantly engaged in a process of revision both in personal and public settings.[230] The mnemonic socialisation of an individual – that is 'the process by which individuals learn to conventionalise, structure and narrate their memories in accordance with the dominant social mores'[231] – is by no means a one way street. The processual nature of memory – its constant revision, discovery, and expansion – is shaped by current social or political expediency but also by the demands of everyday experience and internal group relations. By inference, this implies the value of a comparative analysis of mnemonic reasoning and practice as it proceeds to change over time, promising to provide insights on wider societal developments while acknowledging subjective experience as well.

The interactive aspects of memory have been rightfully stressed by Assmann's communicative memory concept. The main point here is that the process of remembering happens in the face of an external counterpart – such as another person, a memorial, a newspaper article, or a book – initiating the memory process, either ubiquitously or openly. In a social setting the dynamics and roles are not static or pre-determined, as each side assumes the initialising position while at the same time rejecting, deliberating or approving mnemonic selection and interpretation. It is obvious that memory negotiation through interaction is heavily influenced by the wider cultural situation – including (socio-)linguistic characteristics, cultural code, topics and physical setting. The interaction between speakers and listeners similarly affects the processes of remembering.[232]

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229 Todorov, 23.

230 Bal, xiii.

231 Ryan, 156.

232 In their psychologically framed study on memory in conversation, Koppel and Hirst observed that conversations on memory turn more often to issues which the majority is familiar with. In addition, the conversational dynamics influence memory creation and enforcement. The presence of a dominant speaker limits the expression of congruent memories as dominant speakers are more likely to introduce new information which first needs to be processed by each listener. Their term *induced forgetting* covers the erasure or non-formation of memories as a result of the social setting which effectively deflects or overrides a person's prior attention and identification. Also, they noted that *social contagion* concerned the valourisation of mnemonic topics through group interaction and the incorporation of new (not necessarily true) information 'as group members' memories converge around the same information'. Jonathan Koppel and William Hirst, 'The Role of Conversation in Shaping Individual and Collective

In this vein, the aspects of social cohesion in collective memory as outlined above should be balanced against an appreciation of memory's subjective and pluralist qualities. Studies in the field often tend to favour large-scale, collective topics – usually in combination with a reference to the national – at the expense of local/regional/personal as well as underprivileged and dissenting mnemonic topics and practices. This is also the case for analysing the how and why of conflicting individual and collective memories. As Lanzarro observed, 'individual memories do not always accord with collective' in her study on the suppressed personal memories of the Civil War in Francoist Spain, .[233] Furthermore, the impact of the competition of individuals' social identities on the collective should be attended to. Although sometimes conflating terminology, Lanzarro's writings are valuable for their topical focus on *memory from below* and outside official frameworks. Similarly the incorporation of the issue of competing and overlapping personal and collective memories should be noted.

In many respects a forerunner to Dejung, Lanzarro and others, Nancy Wood also discussed how the dissemination of individual memory as such was proportional to its compatibility with the debates of current socio-political matter. As a result, any kind of personal memory was constantly engaged in a process of accommodation with the cultural canon surrounding it.[234] Therefore, changes in memory (content and structure) are indicative also of changes in collective attitudes and world-view. One example of this relationship would be the adjustments made to (all aspects of) memory after revolutionary events and transitions such as the French Revolution, the defeat of Napoleon, or the fall of Communism.

These are general thoughts on the relationship between the individual and the collective. There is one strand in the field which is of special interest here, as it specifically addresses issues of subjectivity, hegemony, and resistance in memory.

Lorraine Ryan's starting point is the binary of public and individual perspectives. While asserting the value of the collective memory concept – as a useful descriptive term for social phenomena and providing individuals with an 'interpretative code' to structure memory – she embarks on a concise literature review on individual responses to

Memory, Attitudes and Behaviour', in *Memory and the Future: Transnational Politics, Ethics and Society* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 89–104 (92–100).

233 Angela Lanzarro Lagunas, 'Memory Beyond the Public Sphere: The Francoist Repression Remembered in Aragon', *History and Memory*, 14 (2002), 165–88 (178).

234 Wood, 9f.

hegemonic public and official narratives of the past.[235] One result of this undertaking is her identification of three reactions by individuals when becoming aware of a discrepancy between their own story and the widely circulated alternative: submission to the hegemonic claims, negotiation, or opposition by ways of adhering (and enforcing) the personal view.[236] Each of these is influenced by both personal experience and mnemonic socialisation. As this scheme indicates, a space wherein individuals can shape, enforce, or negotiate their own mnemonic narratives. In my understanding this includes the parallel adherence to assenting and conflicting mnemonic reasoning in relation to the collective memory canon. The subjective autonomy described above is supported by the simplification of narratives by the elites in order to increase their social dissemination, therefore 'it is clear that although collective memory exerts an enormous influence on the individual memory, this does not negate or diminish the power of the individual or the repressed group'.[237]

Since the advent of globalisation and its recognition by academic practitioners, methodological frameworks of national reference have been increasingly criticised. This criticism was followed by the emergence of models of memory which focus on *transnational*, *global* or *cosmopolitan* aspects. This non-national outlook is based on two strands of argument which address the problems of a unitary approach to memory. Firstly, the focus on the national sphere is seen to enforce a *top-down* depiction of reality and legitimising undue simplification, generalisation, and existing cultural power relations.[238] Secondly, the national level can no longer claim to be an adequate metaphor of reality, as reality itself is no longer primarily defined by national interaction – if indeed it ever had been.[239] The regional and at the same time trans-national design of this PhD thesis implements this departure from the national paradigm.

For the field of memory studies the implications of this are manifold. As Assmann and Conrad have noted, local memory practices are becoming more and more global, both in terms of transmission and the people involved, such as international audiences, memory

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235 Ryan, 156.
236 Ibid, 159f.
237 Ibid, 164.
238 This line of thought has been mirrored in sociology, political science, and history where social history, *Alltagsgeschichte* and Oral History have emerged as viable research interests. Studies on Soviet and National-socialist dictatorships which scrutinised the view of a passive, victimised society trailing in the wake of an all-powerful and hegemonic state have been partly motivated by this argument. Comp. Fitzpatrick, 'Popular Opinion in Russia Under Pre-War Stalinism', 18–21.
239 Among the suggested reasons for this have been processes of globalisation, European integration, as well as increasing digitalisation.

workers, and actors.[240] They also claim that memories as such have become 'more mobile, ephemeral, and fluid, undergoing constant transformations'.[241] This, however, is to be doubted if one bears in mind the tendency of memory to adapt to demands of the present, its transportation via social interaction and – more importantly – its inherent characteristics of abstraction, in-tangibility, and elusiveness.

Andreas Huyssen diagnosed an 'impasse in memory studies at the present'[242] and has called for an expansion of the field to cover more than 'past injuries'[243], collective memory, trauma and Holocaust memory. To remain relevant and increase the field's impact, he suggests a stronger interdisciplinary and transnational outlook in combination with the incorporation of the Human Rights discourse. Huyssen argues that to overcome the past's excessive claim on current reality (and interpretations of it) a substantial grounding of academic work in the historical context is necessary, thus escaping the 'voiding of time and the collapsing of spatial boundaries'.[244]

The change of dynamics in memory informed by the increasing global perspective has also been noted by Elżbieta Hałas.[245] The traditional *mono-vision* of a group or an individual recalling the past – that is the pre-eminence of (linear) temporal relations in a defined, constant spatial setting – has been replaced by memories which are embedded in synchronic, global contexts and interact with other memories, practitioners, and audiences. In a similar vein, Katzenstein stressed regional aspects of memory, its ability to overlap and contest existing economic blocs.[246]

The developments outlined here have motivated scholars to newly conceptualise *global transnational-cosmopolitan* aspects, each emphasising different strands in memory studies. Some representatives of the *global* and *transnational* approach have already been

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240 Yifat Gutman, Adam Brown, and Amy Sodaro, 'Introduction: Memory and the Future. Why a Change of Focus Is Necessary', in *Memory and the Future: Transnational Politics, Ethics and Society* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 1–13 (5).

241 Ibid, 2.

242 Vermeulen, Craps, and Crownshaw, 227.

243 Ibid.

244 Huyssen, *Present Pasts*, 6. His invocation of trans-nationality and increased awareness of spatial and temporal contexts and limitations may appear to be paradoxical at first. However, they are to be read more as his two-tiered attempt at overcoming current memory fatigue. Also, the commodification of memory in the wake of hegemonic Holocaust memory by increasing the scope of memory studies while emphasising its specificities such as background, context, and cultural code. Comp. Ibid, p. 1-3.

245 Elzbieta Hałas, 'Issues of Social Memory and Their Challenges in the Global Age', *Time & Society*, 17.1 (2008), 103–18.

246 Peter J. Katzenstein, *A World of Regions: Asia and Europe in the American Imperium*, Cornell Studies in Political Economy (Ithaca, N.Y. ; London: Cornell University Press, 2005).

introduced above.[247] The *cosmopolitan* perspective to current memory matter is a sociologically informed activist stance and was first presented by Ulrich Beck, Nathan Sznaider, and Daniel Levy.[248] At its centre stands the attempt to overcome 'methodological nationalism' which is understood as a 'standpoint of social scientific observers who implicitly or explicitly undertake research using concepts and categories associated with the nation'[249]. In opposition to this, cosmopolitanism is offered as an 'alternative to neoliberal and post-modernist responses to globalisation'[250]. However, Beck's model has also been criticised because it 'effectively disguises conflicts, inequalities and injustices in world society and harmonizes contradictions with a well meant but benign and optimistic view of international relations'.[251] The terminological haziness around the triangle of *cross-trans-inter-national* is also to be criticised.

The willingness to methodologically and topically expand memory studies to acknowledge new global(-ised) political and cultural realities is reminiscent also of Sen's opposition to *solitarism.* The whole undertaking of global memory, however, is grappling with an inherent paradox as Jan Assmann pointed out. This lies in memory's auxiliary role in the formation of identity which itself aims at creating a coherent set of characteristics allowing for distinction from others. Globalisation, on the other hand, is concerned with the blurring – not only of national – boundaries as a diffusive movement.[252]

Apart from those characteristics discussed above, the other problematic aspects of memory will be discussed before attempting a preliminary definition of memory for this study. Memory morphs constantly to adapt to the imminent social context. Thus, people will remember the same event differently, and will differently verbalise their memories. These constant efforts of construction are but one complicating factor. The intangibility and subjective nature of memory are another. Not only is memory abstract and therefore impossible to localise. Its scope, depth and shape elude delineation, although some inroads have been made by psychological and cognitive research. If what memory *is* cannot be fully answered this is also because it remains – ultimately – not clear what constitutes a

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247 Gutman, Brown, and Sodaro, 7.

248 Jeffrey Olick, Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Levy.

249 Ulrich Beck, 'The Cosmopolitan State: Redefining Power in the Global Age', *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society*, 18.3/4 (2005), 143–59. and Ulrich Beck, 'Cosmopolitan Sociology: The Outline of an Argument', *Ulrich Beck Online. The Online Presence of Prof. Dr. Ulrich Beck* <http://www.ulrichbeck.net-build.net/index.php?page=cosmopolitan> [accessed 11 February 2013].

250 Luke Martell, 'Global Inequality, Human Rights and Power: A Critique of Ulrich Beck's Cosmopolitanism', *Critical Sociology*, 35 (2009), 253–72 (253).

251 Ibid, 254.

252 Jan Assman, 'Globalisation, Universalism, and the Erosion of Cultural Memory', in *Memory in a Global Age: Discourses, Practices and Trajectories* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2010), pp. 121–28 (127).

person. For Assmann, memory and identity are both *open systems*, and mapping their interaction brings with it the challenge of localising if and where an advance of knowledge is possible. To observe that 'memory is valorized where identity is problematised' is only a first step in an undertaking which must incorporate local and social contexts to be successful.[253]

The problematic nature of memory – both for the individual remembering and the individual analysing it – can best be appreciated by recalling the fluid crossroads at which it is situated: between the individual and social groups, consciousness and verbalisation, consciousness and identity, reality and experience, as well as reality and interpretation – not to mention past and present. In addition to this there is almost always a moral component present which – implicitly or explicitly – demands its own due, especially from external observers. For these reasons (academic) engagement with memory should strive – more than ever – to avoid ready-made generalisations and over-confidence in the viability and correctness of its interpretations. The following section proceeds to delineate the intricate relationship between the study of collective memory and the methodology of oral history.

3.3. Memory as Research Object – Definition

The conceptualisation of memory for this study is based on a discussion of the emergence and critique of collective memory. The definition is based on a number of points which emerged from the literature review. Memory is created by social interaction, and derives much of its cohesive powers from its being rooted in inter-personal communication. As part of this, memory is constantly revised – both in its form and content – to meet the changing social, political and situational demands of the individuals involved in memory creation. This is the case especially after revolutionary or fundamental changes to the living conditions, such as the onset of a new political order, changes in the economic system, natural catastrophes and also war.

Memory occupies an intermediate position between the individual and her sphere, and the collective she belongs to. Due to its inter-personal genesis, memory is highly subjective and pluralist. It can therefore stand in (partial) opposition to the narration of

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253 Kansteiner, 184.

memory which is undertaken by the majority or leadership of a collective. The relationship between individual and collective memory is by no means homogeneous or stable, as the plurality of individual memory engenders a plurality of responses to the various strands of collective memory, ranging from endorsement to negation and apathy. At the same time, the hegemonic effect of collective memory can be discerned in the silencing effect it has on dissenting or competing personal memories. Following this, a redirection away from national analyses towards regional and comparative research designs is argued for. This is especially relevant when investigating an historical event which transcended the purely national context while it took place as was the case with the collectivisation in central and eastern Europe after the Second World War.

Having pointed out this, it should be borne in mind that it is impossible to chart memory in its totality and to record all its variations over time. Interviews and diaries provide fragmentary and subjective insights, which are themselves altered by the intervention of the historian. At best, these allow for a cautious reconstruction of an historical event. Thus, contextualisation and the incorporation of other source types are key to avoid brush-stroke interpretations of a past reality. One way of doing this is to look closely at how the primary sources of memory studies – the recollections of individuals – are gathered and how this process shapes and limits the validity of the sources. In other words, a thorough source criticism in the context of memory studies must include a discussion of the relationship between the methodological procedure, inspired by oral history, and the wider academic field of researching the memories of a society or group.

4. Connecting Memory to Oral History

Initially, historians focusing on oral sources were motivated by the wish to capture personal experience of the past which until then had been neglected. Apart from opening new avenues of historical knowledge and broadening the source basis, practitioners sought to radicalise history as a discipline.[254] The political impetus of oral history included aspects of advocacy and community work. Speaking and listening to life stories was framed as an emancipatory activity for both the person remembering and the historian. At the present

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254 For spatial reasons the historiography of oral history is not discussed here. For a comprehensive overview please see Donald A. Ritchie, 'Introduction: The Evolution of Oral History', in *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 3–19. Also Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, 'Critical Developments: Introduction', in *The Oral History Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 1–8.

stage, the label of oral history covers a considerable body of literature of case studies, theoretical meditations as well as methodological guidelines. The interview process has emerged as the central component to all three stands.

In early texts on oral history, it was commonly noted how autobiographical narration relies fundamentally on individual memory. First seen in a sceptical light, the simultaneity of orality and memory in the interview situation has come to be espoused to a degree that it has been argued that 'Memory is the core of oral history, from which meaning can be extracted and preserved.'[255] The epistemological interest of both research strands is directed at neighbouring but nevertheless distinct objects: the process of remembering and meaning-making (memory studies) and the historical event itself (oral history). As relevant factual and subjective information is passed on through long-term memory, some analytical concepts and terminology of memory studies have come to be incorporated into the analysis of oral interviews.[256]

The interview process ideally illustrates how the past event continues to reverberate in the present, and how historical meaning is constructed by an individual. Most importantly for a thesis concerned with the conditioning and expression of opinion on collectivisation, oral history allows the researcher to incorporate the subjective dimension of historical experience. Alistair Thomson has described the position of memory in oral history as paradoxical. On the one hand the durability of memory – enhanced by repeated narration – turns oral history interviews into such abundant reservoirs for factual information. On the other hand, the very narration of the past includes its reworking to fit the demands of the present situation. To historians this changeability translates as unreliability.[257] As a way of responding to this, some oral historians have combined traditional historical research of an event with analyses of individual memories.[258]

This PhD thesis is structured along the lines of such a diachronic impetus. The history of collectivisation in Lower Silesia and Saxony is approached through the study of contemporary archival documents and present-day oral history interviews. The interviews

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255 Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide*, 2nd ed (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 19.

256 Ritchie, 'Introduction: The Evolution of Oral History', 12.

257 Thomson, 90f.

258 Thomson called this a 'double-take' on memory. Successful examples of this double take are Eric Rodrigo Meringer, 'The Local Politics of Indigenous Self-Representation: Intraethnic Political Division among Nicaragua's Miskito People during the Sandinista Era', *Oral History*, 37.1 (2010), 1–17. Also Mai Lan Gustaffson, '"Freedom. Money. Fun. Love.": The Warlore of Vietnamese Bargirls', *Oral History Review*, 38.2 (2011), 308–30. Hilary Young, 'Hard Man, New Man: Re/Composing Masculinities in Glasgow, C.1950-2000', *Oral History*, 35.1 (2007), 71–81.

form the source basis for analysing how this period is remembered individually and in the village communities. A comparison of archival documents from the period with personal memories makes it possible to identify those areas in the memories which have transformed since the event.

The main, defining connection between memory studies and the practice of oral history lies in the fact that both are concerned with narration. It has been argued that as a text oral history interviews are constructed and function just as 'a conventional narrative'.[259] The hooks along which a tale is pitched are all present during the interviews: a speaker, one (or many) plot line(s), an audience, as well as a linguistic and stylistic form which structures the procedure of the narration. The main difference to tales written down for an audience lies in the immediate presence of the interviewer, whose presence actively influences the process and draws attention to the aspect of social relationship in narration. To approach the interview by way of its form as a text suggests the incorporation of procedures originally appertaining to literature studies, such as plot structure and temporal framework.

The configuration of narrated and narrative time is crucial to understanding the structure of a story. Narrative time – the physical timespan the author takes to tell and the reader requires to read the story – is always a modified, usually contracted, version of the narrative time, that is the psychological timespan of the story told.[260] As storytelling is the envisioning of events which are not tangible for the reader, the selection and ordering of time is 'nothing additional or arbitrary, but a vital characteristic of the work's form'[261] – and as such essential to the reader's comprehension.[262] The issue of narrativity is often referred to when oral history is delineated from other source types. Indeed, what distinguishes oral accounts from documents preserved in archives or material artefacts is that oral sources present the historical content already in an ordered way and that this is *visible*.

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259 Ronald J Grele, 'Oral History as Evidence', in *Handbook of Oral History* (Lanham, MD: Altamira Press, 2006), pp. 43–101 (44).

260 Günther Müller, *Morphologische Poetik: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1968), 273.

261 Günther Müller, 275. (My translation).

262 The ordering of narrative time is based on a number of literary devices such as ellipsis, analepsis, prolepsis or anachronism, but also pauses and ruptures in the plot. Linguistic variation is a further aspect to be borne in mind. Speakers often use both standard language and dialect. To note at which times the dialect is used, if certain issues prompt the change of register, in conjunction with other phenomena such as change in time, point of view or speed, can point to the speaker's emotional involvement. In all this, moving between the oral, recorded version and the typed text ensures the orality of the narration is not relegated to the background of the transcript. Speed, volume, and pauses are highly relevant structuring devices while telling a story, and often contain meaning not readily transferred to the written text. These comments are based on Alessandro Portelli, 'What Makes Oral History Different', in *The Oral History Reader* (London; New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 63–74 (67f).

In turn, cultural artefacts reflecting the collective memory of a society or group are often the material realisation of grand-narratives (often bolstered by similarly inclined historiography) whose internal logic, plot lines, motives and temporal structures are comparable to individual memories with regards to their narrative aspects. At the same time, both memory studies and oral history are fundamentally concerned with the relationship between the subjective and the objective when reflecting, explaining and interpreting the past.[263]

In her influential article on work ideology during Italian fascism, Luisa Passerini laid the corner stone by arguing 'that oral sources refer to and derive from a sphere which I have chosen to call subjectivity'[264]. She claims that oral history is based on sources which make the inner landscapes of historical actors visible, and thus allow for an extension of knowledge which might be derived from biased, elitist or oblivious history.

For the world views of historical actors to be incorporated into the epistemological agenda of historians, a reconsideration of what constitutes a relevant object of historical study was necessary. The outcome of this process has been subsumed by Portelli as 'Subjectivity is as much the business of history as are the more visible "facts". What informants believe is indeed a historical fact (that is the fact that they believe it), as much as what really happened.'[265] Subsequently, the material sought out by oral historians is 'not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, and what they now think they did.'[266] Again memory is an issue, as is the challenge of creating a relationship and awareness between speaker and listener which allows for the expression of all this.

However, if the interview process is successful and conducted often enough to provide a broad and varied source basis, not only the world views of the speakers emerge but also those of a social group, a village community or a family. A research design which seeks to form a collection of personal stories relating to the self *and* the discursive

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263 Here, the aim is less to work out what subjectivity is, but rather to infer categories and remarks from the secondary literature which are useful for this project.

264 Luisa Passerini, 'Work Ideology and Consensus under Italian Fascism', in *The Oral History Reader* (London; New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 53–104 (54). See also Portelli, p. 67: 'But the unique and precious element which oral sources force upon the historian and which no other sources possess in equal measure is the speaker's subjectivity.'

265 Portelli, 'What Makes Oral History Different', 67.

266 Ibid.

environment is reminiscent of the undertaking of micro-history in its aim to give a multidimensional and comprehensive picture of a past culture or event.[267]

Subjectivity as an avenue to explore a culture is perhaps not such an unusual channel considering that oral narratives not only speak of day-to-day business, personal relations and factual events but also of the 'dimension of memory, ideology and subconscious desires'.[268] These are collective phenomena, shaped by discourse and reinforced socially. Ideology especially distinguishes and is used to distinguish one culture – be it that of a village, a region, a family or a nation – from its surroundings and, at the same time, structures and illustrates identity construction within it.

The mutual presence of individual perspective and discursive setting has been formulated somewhat differently by Portelli: 'telling the facts is in most cases the desire to formulate a philosophy'.[269] Oral narrative therefore recounts as well as constitutes a culture. For Portelli the ability to philosophise is intricately linked with the act of story-telling. Oral history does not provide pure data and its analysis cannot proceed with self-proclaimed objectivity as sometimes is the case when documents are dealt with. Oral testimonies should not be regarded as raw material whose interpretation rests solely with the researcher but as forms which already articulate interpretation.[270] The desire to formulate philosophy is also the desire to show that one can *see* history just as clearly as the historian.

As mentioned above, individual acts of discourse mean that 'oral sources seek to be taken as forms of culture and testimonies of its changes over time.'[271] In other words, by studying how experience, memory, and history become combined in and digested by people who are the bearers of their own history and that of their culture, oral history opens up a powerful perspective, it encourages us to stand somewhat outside of cultural forms in order to observe their workings. It permits us to track the elusive beats of consciousness and culture in a way impossible to do within.[272]

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267 The extent of what is aimed at by micro-history is evident in the title of Ginzburg's study on Menocchio, the 16th century miller who portrayed such independence of mind in religious questions. Comp. Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).Levi wrote about this aim that 'the true problem for historians is to succeed in expressing the complexity of reality, even if this involves using descriptive techniques and forms of reasoning which are more intrinsically self-questioning and less assertive than any used before.' Giovanni Levi, 'On Microhistory', in *New Perspectives on Historical Writing* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), pp. 97–119 (114).

268 Passerini, 53.

269 Portelli, *The Battle of Valle Giulia*, 80.

270 Portelli, *The Battle of Valle Giulia*, 79f.

271 Ibid, 55.

272 Michael Frisch, 'Oral History and Hard Times: A Review Essay', in *The Oral History Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), pp. 29–36 (36).

While oral storytelling has the potential to chart these 'elusive beats of consciousness[273], it should be noted that the accounts by virtue of being narrated – brought to the audience in an ordered form – speak of past experiences and attitudes but never duplicate them.[274] The same can be said of memory studies. In the course of this chapter, oral history and memory studies have emerged as distinct, yet intricately linked fields of inquiry. It has been shown how practical aspects of oral history are interrelated with the theoretical basis of this thesis. The social, pluralist, and conflict-ridden aspects of memory are comparable to and often emerge from the process of gathering primary memories during interviews.

At the same time, the decision to expand the interviews to include more than male farmers was taken. This was based on the outcome of the literature review and the definition of memory outlined above. This represents an original approach to the memories of collectivisation for two reasons. Firstly, recording male and female voices and including peasants and non-peasants in the context of collectivisation has not been undertaken before. Secondly, a comparison of East German and Polish memories of collectivisation based on oral history interviews is similarly undertaken for the first time in the course of this thesis.

5. Research Design I : For a Combination of Popular Opinion and Memory

One aim of this chapter was to conceptualise popular opinion and memory for this study. Based on a discussion of previous literature and taking into account the historical context of this study, key characteristics of popular opinion and memory have been delineated. Popular opinion denotes the non-official realisation of debates appertaining to the community. Its genesis can be located in plurality of spaces and hierarchical levels in and outside direct party-state influence. It can be motivated by both mood and attitude. It reflects a range of spontaneous to premeditated, verbal to written, clandestine to visible communication of opinion. Memory is approached through the aspect of its social embedding. As a result of this, individual memory is both subjective and pluralist. In form and content it stands in a variety of relations with collective narratives of memory, such as

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273 Ibid.

274 Thomson, 90. It has also been noted that narrators are often capable of differentiating their current attitudes and emotions from bygone ones, especially when they are no longer congruent to each other. Comp. Portelli, *The Battle of Valle Giulia*, 60.

conflict, conformity or expansion. Based on these two definitions, it is argued that a combination of both concepts is promising in terms of the theoretical and methodological outlook of this study.

Firstly, both concepts are defined by their social setting. Thinking and speaking on memory/popular opinion usually takes place as part of inter-personal communication, for example by two people in conversation or one person addressing a group. The situational context is relevant for the analysis, especially the relation of the speakers to each other, the time and place, as well as the language used. As a result of their social formation popular opinion and memory are highly processual, that is they are continuously constructed and adjusted to the current social and political demands of the speakers. At the same time, popular opinion and memory are produced by and reproduce the hierarchical and normative coordinates of the society within which they take place[275] Furthermore, it is argued that not only the social processes which form both concepts but also the spheres where they were expressed are similar, if not identical. This is the case as inter-personal communication – all the more in a village – is not restricted to one sphere of activity, for example the kitchen or the church, but actually did take place wherever members of the village met each other or people who were not part of the immediate community.

Secondly, speaking about one's views of the past and present is essentially an individual activity. Popular opinion and memory are therefore fundamentally defined by their genesis in the individual. Depending on situation and interlocutor, but also on topic and biography, the individual mind produces conflicting and congruent views of (historical) reality. In other words, utterances of opinion and memory are pluralist and subjective, within themselves and in relation to the collective's version. At the same time, the content of popular opinion and memory is fluid and continuously revised as the individual negotiates its identity and position within the group. As the motivations which prompt people to express their views are rarely ever fathomable, the analysis of both popular opinion and memory remains problematic for researchers. The unreliable, changing sources and plurality of motivations highlight again the demand for extensive source criticism.

Thirdly, both concepts share an inherently comparative inclination. Memory recounts experiences in light of the present, just as popular opinion on contemporary

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275 These hierarchical and normative elements are particularly informative in times of upheaval, but also when the process of consolidation of the current order has already set in.

events often refers to historical precedents. For example, the introduction of collective farming after the Second World War was accompanied by invocations of the (pre-)war situation and the conditions in neighbouring countries such as Soviet Russia and Ukraine. Highlighting what he saw as the negative effects of changes brought on by outside interference, a German farmer in Angermünde/Brandenburg compared the SED's drive towards collectivisation to the Third Reich's quest for *Lebensraum im Osten*, which included the settlement of German farmers in Ukrainian, Polish and Russian territories.[276] Similarly, Polish farmers questioned the Polish Communists' agitation for collective farms by invoking what they had been told by Red Army soldiers about collectivisation in Soviet Russia.[277]

Based on the three points made above, especially bearing in mind the frequent simultaneous expression of popular opinion and memory, the relationship of these two concepts can be characterised as being complementary and intersecting. They can be differentiated by pointing to their respective temporal context: memory can be regarded as the retrospective realisation of popular opinion. At the same time, references to memory often constitute one part of popular opinion. Both can be read as activities of meaning making and identity construction by the same 'multi-dimensional subject'.[278] Each are

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276 A core concept of the National-Socialist ideology, *Lebensraum im Osten* can be translated as living space in the East. The farmer said 'It is just as it used to be, when the *Ortsbauernführer* came and said: "join the Party, sell your farm, and you take over a state farm in Ukraine. I did not do it, he who did was imprisoned, and I am free: now it is like this again.' Quoted from Bauerkämper, 'Collectivization and Memory: Views of the Past and the Transformation of Rural Society in the GDR from 1952 to the Early 1960s', 217. (My translation). The term *Ortsbauernführer* (OBF) refers to the local representative of the *Reichsnährstand* (the National-socialist food regulation authority).

277 They asked 'If co-operatives are as good as you say, how can we explain the sorrow and tears of Russian soldiers (in 1944-45) who deplored the poverty of Russian *kolkhozes* and so envied the prosperity of peasants in Poland?', in A. Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism: A Cold War History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 21. A further instance where the simultaneity of memory and popular opinion can be observed are the travel accounts of Germans expellees travelling to the Polish People's Republic (PPR) to visit their old homes in the former German territories. Such accounts have been subsumed under the heading of *Heimattourismus* (tourism to the homeland) or *Heimatbücher* (books of the homeland). These travel reports, apart from describing the conditions of buildings and German-speaking communities, also compare what they see with the pre-war and Federal German reality. Arguably they represent the literary reworking of discourses of collective memory and popular opinion within the *Vertriebenen* community in the Federal Republic. For a detailed analysis of *Heimatbücher* as genre comp. Ulrike Frede, *Unvergessene Heimat Schlesien: Eine Exemplarische Untersuchung Des Ostdeutschen Heimatbuches Als Medium Und Quelle Spezifischer Erinnerungskultur*, Schriftenreihe Der Kommission Für Deutsche Und Osteuropäische Volkskunde in Der Deutschen Gesellschaft Für Volkskunde e.V. ; 88 (Marburg: Elwert, 2004). Also Jutta Faehndrich, *Eine endliche Geschichte: die Heimatbücher der deutschen Vertriebenen* (Köln: Böhlau, 2011). On literary travel accounts to Poland by Germans without a background of expulsion, see Sebastian Jabłoński, *Die Polenreise in Der Deutschsprachigen Literatur Des 20. Jahrhunderts Und an Der Schwelle Des 21. Jahrhunderts (Anhand Der Reiseberichte von Adolf Döblin, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Reto Hänny, Matthias Kneip Sowie Wolfgang Büscher): Praca Magisterska* (Olsztyn: Selbstverlag, 2005).

278 Plamper, 'Beyond Binaries: Popular Opinion in Stalinism', 73.

manifestations of what people think happens and happened to them. The combination of both approaches within a comparative framework represents a promising and original research design.

6. Research Design II: Micro-history, Popular Opinion and Memory

In the preceding sections, the decision to conduct qualitative interviews within one Saxon and one Lower Silesian village has been based in the theory of oral history and collective memory. The same applies to the decisions taken to favour repeated, in-depth interviews with a smaller group of interview partners. On a more general level, this study is composed as a comparative reading of regional case studies rather than attempting to discuss aspects of collectivisation on a national level in the GDR and the PPR. In both cases, the reduction of scale has emerged not only out of practical considerations. It also reflects a belief in the intrinsic merits of in-depth and context sensitive research on a micro-historical level. The following section traces these strands of thought from the field of micro-history which underpin the argument for a reduction of scale when studying the everyday history during state-socialism and memories of this period.

A study focusing on popular attitudes towards collectivisation in Saxony and Lower Silesia sooner or later touches upon a variety of issues such as everyday rural life, German-Polish relations (including the aftermath of territorial resettlements), processes of modernisation and industrialisation of agricultural production, the implementation and manifestation of Communist political hegemony, the life of women and children in village society, as well as the integration of the Western territories into the Polish state and their cultural polonisation.[279]

Examining this array of topics is only possible with a reduction in scale and focus. This is all the more called for when looking at the cultural history and discourses around a given event in the past. An investigation into the subjective meaning of past events cannot take place in relation to the national level. The individual – and his or her immediate social environment – are essential for interpreting and understanding the subjective meanings and

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[279] Regained territories, later usually referred to as *ziemy zachodnie* (Western territories), the regions (including the city of Danzig) which became Polish as part of the westward shift of Poland following the conferences in Tehran (1943) and Yalta (1945).

social consequences of historical events, in this case the state-socialist practice of collectivisation.

Furthermore, a local perspective is sensible in view of small-hoders acting in 'local and localized' frameworks.[280] To analyse peasant statements without its anchorage in the local would result in taking the events out of their historical context and frame of reference, thereby crucially reducing their expressiveness.[281] The historical practice of micro-history avoids precisely this, by reducing the scale of observation in combination with in-depth analysis of archival materials.[282] The effect of the reduction of scale is comparable to that of a magnifying glass, as it brings the details of a structure to the foreground. The metaphor of *fabric* has been frequently used to describe this re-scaling of focus on a society's strucutre.[283] By bringing out the details micro-history also works out the 'rich complexity of social and cultural relationships, (…) [by] situating particular historical events in their actual historical-anthropological contexts.'[284]

Arguably, micro-history is predisposed to give a multidimensional picture of the individual as well as his or her socio-economic context. Ultimately, the social dissemination of hierarchy and power can be traced by observing its effects on one person or group. In this vein a prominent practitioner, Carlo Ginzburg, has argued that 'it is on this reduced scale, and probably only on this scale, that we can understand, *without deterministic reduction*, the relationship between systems of belief values and representations on one side, and social affiliation on another.'[285] Following this, two aspects of the theory of micro-history which have a relevance to the present study, will be touched upon.

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280 Viola, 'Popular Resistance in the Stalinist 1930s.Soliloquy of a Devil's Advocate', 23.

281 Based on this, two research directions offer themselves for the general orientation of the study: micro-history and *Alltagsgeschichte*, the history of everyday life. The overlaps and differences of the relationship of both practices have been discussed elsewhere with great erudition (comp. Levi, Apor, Bradley). Perhaps the main differences lie in the diverging epistemological interests (*Erkenntnisinteresse*) of *Alltagsgeschichte* and micro-history. Peter Apor argues that the dichotomy of the private/authentic and the official/ideological on which the history of everyday life rests. As a result of *Alltagsgeschichte*'s ostensible notion of politics, and its search for a politically useful past, argues Apor, leads not 'to the micro-history of the social, but writes an alternative history of the political.' Peter Apor, 'The Joy of Everyday Life: Microhistory and the History of Everyday Life in the Socialist Dictatorships', 184.

282 Levi, 99.

283 Carlo Ginzburg, John Tedeschi, and Anne C. Tedeschi, 'Microhistory: Two or Three Things That I Know about It', *Critical Inquiry*, 20.1 (1993), 10–35 (33). Also István Szijártó, 'Four Arguments for Microhistory', *Rethinking History*, 6.2 (2002), 209–15 (211).

284 Peter Apor, 'The Joy of Everyday Life: Microhistory and the History of Everyday Life in the Socialist Dictatorships', 186.

285 Ginzburg, Tedeschi, and Tedeschi, 22. (My emphasis)

Representativity and Typicality

Questioning the legitimacy of the micro-historical undertaking surfaces sooner or later in most theoretical examinations of this field. Key to the arguments defending the virtues of micro-history is the validity of the research objects chosen. It has been argued that the choice for a local and temporal restriction does not lessen micro-history's potential to generate new insights into a historical period or development. In this context, the argument for the representativity or typicality of the research objects is central.

In an early example of historical research on the micro-level – a local history of a Mexican village with a strong qualitative orientation by Luis González – the selection of the village San José de Gracia is justified by the fact that it is similar to thousands of villages in Mexico, and therefore representative.[286] Fernand Braudel, when differentiating the history of events[287] from that of the *longue durée[288]*, assigns to the event the characteristics of the repetitive, regular and multiple.[289] Its analysis, argues Braudel, would also have bearings on the old dialogue of 'the unique and the recurring'.[290] Jill Lepore, when delineating micro-history from biography, points out that 'however singular a person's life might be, the value of examining it lies not in its uniqueness, but in its exemplariness, in how that individual's life serves as an allegory for broader issues affecting culture as a whole.' [291]

Thanks to the limitation in scale, micro-history is capable of illuminating the relationships between the multiple, the repetitive, and the collective with the singular, the unique, and the individual. In all this, the results of such studies should always read against

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286 Luis González, *San José de Gracia: Mexican Village in Transition*, Texas Pan-American Series (Austin ; London: University of Texas Press, 1974), pp. 1–3. Originally published as Luis González, *Pueblo En Vilo. Microhistoria de San José de Gracia* (México: Taurus, 2008). Comp. also Ginzburg, Tedeschi, and Tedeschi, 12.

287 *Histoire événementielle*, his term for micro-history. The history of the *longue dureé* is essentially structural history as undertaken by the *Annales* school. Braudel inserts between the two a further level, that of the history of conjecture. For a detailed discussion, compare Braudel, 73-75.

288 Essentially structural history as undertaken by the *Annales* school.

289 Fernand Braudel, *On History* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980), 74.

290 Ibid.

291 Jill Lepore, 'Historians Who Love Too Much: Reflections on Microhistory and Biography', The Journal of American History, 88 (2001), 129–144 <doi:10.2307/2674921>, 133. This last reference points to the heart of debates on the usefulness of micro-historical research. The field's relevance is linked to its potential of deepening our understanding and knowledge of a historical period. ('The unifying principle of all micro-historic research is the belief that microscopic observation will reveal factors previously unobserved.' Levi, p.10.) On a more philosophical level, this is linked to the question of what makes events, locations, and people representative, and therefore capable of disclosing knowledge relevant beyond their immediate context.

knowledge derived from macro-history and history of ideas in order to identify further research avenues and review the validity of the insights gained.

Regardless of the different vocabulary used, such meditations on the virtue of micro-history are preoccupied with what, or rather which sources, makes historical research as such worthwhile.[292] However, instead of arguing for micro-history from a general point of view, I would rather point out the usefulness of a micro-historical orientation for the present study by turning to two other programmatic elements: context and depth.

Context and Depth

Micro-history is interested in relationships – the web or fabric – between people, events, objects, and circumstances. It has been likened to Tolstoy's attempt at reconstructing what 'linked Napoleon's head cold before the battle of Borodino, the disposition of the troops, and the lives of all the participants in the battle, including the most humble soldier.'[293] The insistence on relationships, and with that context, is based on the belief that any social structure is created by individuals interacting, which is made visible only by the close-up look.[294] In this vein, Giovanni Levi has pointed out the connections between the individual act of buying a loaf of bread and international grain markets.[295]

'A battle, strictly speaking, is invisible'[296], wrote Carlo Ginzburg in his mediations on the emergence of micro-history and its genealogy in literature. He was referring not to Tolstoy's narration of the battle of Borodino, but the first self-declared micro-historical study, Stewart's *Pickett's Charge.*[297] The decisive moment of the battle of Gettysburg is approached from many angles and made visible through material artefacts. In this minuscule scale, it could be attempted to bring the setting, the action and the individual stories all together and draw up the relationships between them. In other words, a thorough

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292 A justification for the selection of regional case studies can also be found in Kershaw. He argues for the significance of his study on political dissent in Bavaria after 1933 not from the basis of Bavarian typicality but the regional specificities of its history in the Third Reich. Comp. Kershaw, 10.

293 Ginzburg, Tedeschi and Tedeschi, 24. Comp. also Brad S. Gregory, 'Is Small Beautiful? Microhistory and the History of Everyday Life', *History and Theory,* 38.1 (1999), 100–110., 104.

294 Comp. Ginzburg, Tedeschi and Tedeschi, 33.

295 Levi, 100.

296 Ginzburg, Tedeschi, and Tedeschi, 26.

297 George R Stewart, *Pickett's Charge: A Microhistory of the Final Attack at Gettysburg, July 3, 1863* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1991).

contextualisation renders the event more-dimensional by giving it a texture, its participants names, a location, a map, and most importantly, a history.[298]

7. Summary

The aim of this chapter was to outline the theoretical framework of this PhD thesis. It provided an overview of the four central academic fields on which the subsequent analysis of the primary sources is based: popular opinion, memory studies, oral history and micro-history.

In the first part the evolution of research into popular opinion in the context of 20th century European dictatorships was discussed. In addition to this, key aspects in the discussion of popular opinion have been identified and discussed in view of the academic literature from the field. In the course of this, the differentiation between *Soviet-type public opinion* and *popular opinion in Soviet-type regimes* has been argued for. The necessity to move away from binary categorisations of popular opinion, the distinction between mood and attitude, as well as the problematic relationship between intention and agency have each been traced in the work of prominent case studies on the subject.

The second part introduced the field of memory studies and within this the hegemonic concept of collective memory. Based on an extensive literature review, conceptual aspects of memory which are of special relevance to this thesis have been presented. The social, trans-national, pluralist, and constructive nature of memory, especially of personal memories were outlined and summarised in a definition of memory as applied in the context of this thesis.

Following this, the link between the theoretical underpinnings of memory studies and the practice of conducting oral history interviews has been shown. The practice of oral history gives space to the social dimension and pluralist experiences of state-socialism, both aspects which characterise the concept of memory as outlined above. The methodological underpinnings of the interview process were set in relation to body of

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298 The extent of what is aimed at by micro-history is hinted at in the title of Ginzburg's study on Menocchio, the 16th century miller who portrayed such independence of mind in religious questions, and the *cosmos* in which he lived. For Ginzburg and his fellow practitioners, the reconstruction of a historical cosmos in the end results in an 'inquiry into the extent and nature of free will within the general structure of human society. In this type of inquiry the historian is not simply concerned with the interpretation of meanings but rather with defining the ambiguities of the symbolic world, the plurality of possible interpretations of it and the struggle which takes place over symbolic as much as over material resources.' (Levi, 99.)

interviews which constitute the primary sources for the analysis of present-day memories of collectivisation. The novelty of including female and non-peasant voices into the source basis of case studies on collectivisation has been pointed out. Similarly, a comparative research into East German and Polish memories of collectivisation has emerged as an original contribution to the area of studying second-generation Soviet regimes in central and eastern Europe.

The last two sections focused on the merit of combining the study of popular opinion and memory/oral history with regard to the topic of this thesis. Interviews with eye-witnesses can counter-balance archival sources which – as has been discussed at length in the context of Communist party reports – are inherently biased, at times unreliable, and notoriously problematic to interpret.[299] It is less a matter of the documents possessing crucially less of the subjective voice, but that their multi-dimensional grounding in reality has become indiscernible from a present day standpoint.[300] For this reason, the combined consideration of case studies into popular opinion and memories has emerged as a suitable and original approach to analysing representations of collectivisation.

Lastly, the reduction of scale and the delineation of the source body has been justified from a micro-historical point of view. The theoretical contingencies have been pointed out between micro-history, an approach to popular opinion sensible to socio-economic context, and the understanding of memory as pluralist and socially generated. Based on these theoretical outcomes, the thesis now turns to the analysis of representations of popular opinion in the party reports on collective farming in the early 1950s and 1960s.

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299 A source criticism of the *svodki* in Soviet Russia is conducted thoroughly in Lynne Viola, 'Introduction', in Contending with Stalinism: Soviet power & popular resistance in the 1930s (Ithaca ; London: Cornell University Press, 2002), pp. 1–16.

300 The reasons for this are manifold, however, the collapse of state communist practice in 1989 and the following fundamental reconfiguration of discourse on Communist ideology surely play a significant part.

PART II – Popular Opinion in Lower Silesia and Saxony

1. Introduction

In the second generation socialist regimes, the gathering, compiling and interpreting of information about attitudes towards the regime was one branch of the stream of hyper-bureaucracy which accompanied public life.[301] Written by affiliated agents with their own multiple agendas, reports on local affairs, meetings and discussions are problematic sources, not least because of their formalism and repetitive ideological phrasing. At this stage it is to be borne in mind that both the ideological basis and 'the process of gathering information about the popular mood produced a distorted picture of citizens' overall political views.'[302] From a present-day point of view, the ideological language of the time is often perceived as obfuscating. It could be suspected that reality only occasionally breaks through the crust of meaningless Communist-speak – for example when ordinary people are quoted. However, both in the context of their creation and their content, 'administrative reports (…) are meaningful because their rhetoric is ideologically constructed.'[303] Less a matter of reality being smothered by formalism, internal party reports exemplify the filtering reality through an ideological matrix which enabled authors and readers alike to better understand the society they strove to transform.

The mood reports were steeped in the language of the time – a language used within and outside the party. The reality/ideology gap which postulates that in state-socialism 'ideology and everyday reality were radically different', especially in mundane spheres such as work, school or shopping fails to acknowledge the ubiquity of Communist language.[304] The following discussion is based on the understanding that Communist ideology and language were the dominant modes by which reality – in this case agriculture and rural life – was made sense of and altered in spheres controlled by the party and the state.

In light of this, an analysis of representations of popular opinion relating to collectivisation must incorporate a focus on the genre and ideological conditions of reporting within the East German and Polish bloc parties. As Peter Apor has rightly pointed out, the 'communist parties (…) successfully reproduced political elites and the respective

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301 Kligman and Verdery use the term of 'graphomanical bureaucracy'. Comp. Gail Kligman and Katherine Verdery, *Peasants under Siege: The Collectivization of Romanian Agriculture, 1949-1962* (Princeton University Press, 2011), 159f.

302 Balázs Apor, *The 'Invisible Shining': The Cult of Mátyás Rákosi in Stalinist Hungary, 1945–1956* (Budapest; New York: CEU Press, 2017), 165. [Forthcoming].

303 Denis, 144.

304 Peter Apor has used this tendency as a starting point to work out the differences between writing micro-history and writing the history of everyday life. Peter Apor, 'The Joy of Everyday Life: Microhistory and the History of Everyday Life in the Socialist Dictatorships', 191.

political classes and managed to reconstruct the frames of exercising power in the communist mode.'[305] In addition, local functionaries – by employing a range of strategies – managed and stabilised the socialist transformation on a day-to-day level. Instead of searching for the alleged *real* history behind declarations of complete collectivisation and the shiny new world of farming, the following chapter attempts an investigation into the party-state's 'capacity for reproduction' of sense and power in the context of collectivisation.[306] In other words, how did regime representatives reproduce and manage power in the everyday interaction with the rural population? How did they elicit assent, acquiescence and how did they react to criticism and conflict? How did they make sense of their actions and of popular opinion in their reports to the superiors ? How did villagers interact with local functionaries and visiting instructors? Which topics were recurrent and when did people evoke the past when dealing with the authorities?

The first part of this chapter is concerned with representations of popular opinion in the mood reports of the East Saxon DBD. The second part focuses on the Lower Silesian case study of reports from the Polish United Workers' Party PZPR. The findings from both sections are brought together in a comparative summary before moving on to the analysis of memories of collectivisation.

2. Representations of Popular Opinion in Saxony

The following analysis of mood reports appertaining to Eastern Saxony is structured chronologically and follows the organisational transmission of these reports through the bureaucratic levels: reports on local debates and farmers' meetings, compilations of regional news sent to Dresden, mood reports on Saxony sent to Berlin, and national mood reports. In order to move away from short-term political agendas, debates relating to the collectivisation drives are discussed alongside those from apparently 'quieter' times before and between the crisis-like political transformation of the village. The early period – in this case before the declaration of the *construction of socialism* in 1952 – is particularly considered. Bauerkämper rightly observed that 'collectivisation was shaped by the past'.[307] As will be shown, this is true not only for the German background of war,

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305 Peter Apor, 'The Joy of Everyday Life: Microhistory and the History of Everyday Life in the Socialist Dictatorships', 186.

306 Ibid.

307 Bauerkämper, 'Collectivization and Memory: Views of the Past and the Transformation of Rural Society in the GDR from 1952 to the Early 1960's', 213.

occupation and National-Socialist agricultural policy but also the period of Soviet occupation and founding years of the SED state.

The period between the foundation of the GDR in 1949 and the declaration of the *Construction of Socialism* at the second Party Conference in 1952 was defined by the expansion and consolidation of the SED as the hegemonic agent, especially in the political and economic realm. This included the successive abolition of private property in the industrial and agricultural sector, the 1952 reordering of state structures (like the dissolution of the traditional *Länder* and the introduction of fourteen *Bezirke* (districts), the marginalisation and repression of competing institutions like the churches as well as the foundation of institutions of social control and repression like the Ministry for State Security (MfS/*Stasi*) in 1950 and the Soviet Control Commission in 1949. These processes went hand in hand with the Stalinisation of the SED, including party purges which dramatically and continuously changed the social composition of the party.

The instructor's reports which will be discussed in the first part of the following chapter are of significance for investigating in how far this tense period across the organisational levels of the party-state spread into local interactions between functionaries and their local surroundings. The reports represent the point of intersection between the party-state apparatus in upheaval and local communities for whom the purges and redirections of party lines were arguably had only mediate bearings. The same is the case for the minutes of party cell meetings in collective farms.

2.1. 'To Use All Our Power' - Local Reporting in Löbau County

In August 1950 Gerhard Götze, an instructor in *Kreis* Löbau, wrote his regular report for the agricultural ministry in Dresden. Having received the latest list of 'shortcomings' and 'weaknesses' in this *Kreis* from his superiors, he laid out in which cases he had successfully overcome past problems. There had been trouble with the dispensation of fertiliser for a while; during a stoppage 'people unnecessarily discussed a lot'. After his intervention, he claimed, the farmers not only had ceased complaining but even 'understood how necessary it was that the GDR deployed instructors' in the region. Similarly, he had organised a series of meetings with the National Front in order to explain the composition and duties of the peoples' s police.[308] Again, 'all kinds of discussion' were

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308 HStAD 11464/23/48; Betr.: Schreiben vom 1.7.1950, Instrukteursbericht aus dem Kreis Löbau / Sa., 14.7.1950. The National Front (*Nationale Front der DDR*), was an amalgamation of mass organisations and bloc parties which legitimised and organised the elections to the People's Chamber (Volkskammer).

reported to have taken place after the number of billeted police had risen; yet the meetings were credited with having the desired effect of 'eliminating obscurities and, apart from this, greatly stabilising the trust in the peoples' police'.

His portrayal of the local political mood proceeded without details; it did not include direct quotes or names but emphasised an overall positive outlook. The report's time line is structured accordingly: difficulties are allocated to the past, his intervention marks the point of change. Difficulties are overcome after a moment of heightened understanding – brought on by rigorous self-criticism or the intervention from the party – and proper communication with the farmers. The successful identification of past mistakes and the successful explanation of policy changes was a central concern of this type of reports. The reordering of arguments went hand in hand with Götze exhibiting his perception of 'the farmer':

> All in all, we need to state that our educational work in the countryside is very necessary because the farmer – because he owns land and sometimes is very egotistic, conservative and reserved towards anything new – is not easily convinced of the rightness of our measures and decrees. His first thought is always: What can I gain from this? However, we have made it our aim to use all our power so that we in *Kreis* Löbau as well have done our part to achieving a breakthrough in the democratisation in the countryside (…).

In 1950, the slogan of the 'democratisation of the countryside' was usually linked to the introduction of the economic plans for each village (*Dorfwirtschaftspläne*), the latest episode in the progressive implementation of central planning. After the Two-Year Plan from 1948 until 1950, the first Five-Year Plan was passed with the aim of providing the 'technical means of organising an entire industrial economy, a political idea of the total governance of society, and a road map towards a qualitatively different world.'[309] Most villages around Löbau had yet to be included in the new system one year after the national plan had been declared. To remedy this Götze organised an 'exchange of experience' in May 1950 during which all present 'discussed the topic very positively' and declared 'that it would have been their duty to draw up local economic plans as soon as the national plan had been declared in February.' The last sentence again seeks to demonstrate that an increase of understanding and commitment to the new system was continuously taking place. The plan itself demanded loyalty 'because the idea of the plan justified its very

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309 Peter C. Caldwell, *Dictatorship, State Planning and Social Theory in the German Democratic Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 2.

existence'[310]: it was both the pathway and the immediate realisation of a better, socialist society.

The plan, or rather the plans, nevertheless caused trouble each year as the local quotas were set down, adapted and communicated to individual and collective farmers alike.[311] The bureaucratic effort caused delays on each administrative level while the figures were often described as arbitrary: farmers often presented themselves as close to incapacitated because of the administrative deadlocks. Three years later, their ongoing complaints were registered not only by local instructors but also by the peoples' police. Throughout Saxony dispatches noted complaints to mayors 'because of the missing crop plan which should have been ready in early June. The farmers don't know what to do about the coming crop rotation.'[312]

Reports and dispatches by local functionaries – instructors but also mayors, party cell leaders, or chairmen of collectives – were key to the accumulation of knowledge and interpretation in the agricultural ministry and the SED. On the lowest level, the author's individuality remained present in the reports – individual stylistic quirks went hand in hand with personal observations. Local functionaries *actively* wrote towards the centre. With each report, they navigated between their perception of events, the demands of their superiors and their estimation of what was desirable news. The functionary judging the attitudes of farmers was in turn evaluated by his readership and both sides were eager to dissipate anxieties of failed understanding, reliability and loyalty. There was a strong pedagogical aspect to this relation which was enacted through 'the discipline of regular reporting, attendance at Party meetings, and public application of various sanctions'[313]. In other words, both author and content of local reports fed into the accumulation of *Herrschaftswissen* of the regime.[314]

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310 Caldwell, 134.

311 In late December 1950, plans had been worked out for only 22 villages in the county. The declared aim was to integrate each village into the planning process by the 31.01.1951. By mid-January the number had risen to 114 and the department head for agriculture in the county council's administration in Niesky assured the ministry in Dresden that the plans would be ready in the end. Comp. HStAD 11394/808; Bericht über die Aktion zur Erstellung der Dorfwirtschaftspläne im Kreis Niesky O.L.; Niesky O.L. 18.1.1951.

312 HStAD 11464/23/48 (p.31); Bericht VPKA Pirna 12.7. bis 13.7. 1953: Betr.: Werktätige Bauern.

313 Kligman and Verdery, 156.

314 The term is taken from Lindenberger's informative study on the role and organisational history of the people's police during collectivisation. It translates as knowledge of power or the necessary power to rule. Thomas Lindenberger, 'Der ABV Als Landwirt', in *Herrschaft Und Eigen-Sinn in Der Diktatur. Studien Zur Gesellschaftsgeschichte Der DDR.* (Köln: Böhlau, 1999), pp. 167–203.

In the midst of debates about the new plans and quotas, the leadership of the Saxon branch of the DBD felt it did not know enough, especially about the area around Löbau. The party's headquarters in Dresden noted that in 'the past weeks' the quality of reports on the overall political mood from the various counties had not been satisfactory.[315] To remedy this, the DBD's regional training department laid down guidelines for the county cells. Henceforth, the training department set the agenda of the reports and their composition was standardised in order to ensure more comparability between the counties. For example, the names, dates and places of every quote were now to be included. Although some space was reserved for personal assessments of the local situation, the national political calendar now dictated most of the topics to be included and ordered their respective importance.[316]

Most importantly, the guidelines demanded that both positive and negative voices were to be quoted for each point of the report. The need for care and uniformity in the administrative basis of rural transformation were stressed:

> I request that in future more importance be directed towards the compilation of the reports, as these reports must provide a truthful reflection of the political and economic situation in all counties and because the whole party and government leadership can control and improve their work by means of the mood report.[317]

The detailed structure of the new reports covered sixteen points of order relating to a variety of events and institutions. The first group included political and economic affairs in the villages with the aim to provide a general overview of the state infrastructure on site. The institutions listed here were not specific to the countryside or agriculture but could have been employed for urban contexts as well.[318] Other points focused on rural policies and organisations, for example the support programme for new farmers, the Peasants Mutual Aid Organisation, and the machine depots. The peasant party's liaison with the Socialist Unity Party (SED) was another point of interest, just as the work of party instructors deployed to the villages, and the police forces. The remainder was dedicated to

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315 Comp. BArch DY 60/4679; Rundschreiben Nr. 15/50 An alle Kreisverbände der DBD-Funktionäre, 06.09.1950. For the guidelines see BArch DY 60/4679; Richtlinien für die Abfassung der monatlichen Stimmungsberichte, no date. Until stated otherwise the following quotes in this section refer to the latter document.

316 Similar guidelines for the compilation of mood reports were issued by other parties and regime organisations, including the people's police.

317 BArch DY 60/4679; Richtlinien.

318 The opening part is concerned with the elections in October 1950.The work of the National Front and the peace committees is to be reflected upon separately. In terms of economics, the five-year plan and the village plan for the current year are to be discussed., as well as local cooperatives, the *Konsum* and the *Handelsorganisation* (HO). The next section focuses on the county council and the Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry

a mixture of current affairs and international events – such as opinions on the Korean War, relations with the Soviet Union and Poland. Lastly, the mood among small, medium and large scale farmers each should be evaluated before moving to issues which did not fit in with any of the previous categories or were purely local.

The need to condense information increased with each hierarchical level and so did the process of selection. Although the list of points to be covered was extensive, it was nevertheless clear that examples must be included in order to convey the general mood in a region. Selection being a generic feature of mood reports, the aim was not to collect everything said about a topic but rather to highlight what was meaningful and representative. This distinction lay exclusively in the hands of local members of the regime's apparatus.[319] At the same time, authors and readers continuously evaluated the act of reporting itself. The reports provided an opportunity to consider how the party cell or collective had fared since the last report and to present a favourable picture of their own activities. This aspect of internal communication might not have altered the recording of the examples but shaped the overall tone of the presentation.

2.2. Differentiation – Local Debates and National Interpretations

Land reform aside, the compulsory delivery of produce to local collection points was the most prominent area of peasant and state interaction before collectivisation. The size of the quotas, the timing of their publication, and local mistakes in their calculation were a dominant and recurring element in peasant discourse since the end of the war. The quota system had been a fixture in the agricultural market already during National-Socialism, the Soviet military occupation authority (SMAD) and the nascent SED reinstated the system soon after the end of the war and adapted it to their political ends.[320] The gradual expansion of state control over the amount and quality of crops was institutionalised with the Two-Year Plan (1949-1950) and the first Five-Year Plan (1951-

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319 Social groups, age cohorts and gender do not feature as categories as the guidelines were tailored to the systemic role of the DBD. How women, youth, or SED members 'stood' on a topic was recorded by other organisations.

320 On the reintroduction of the quotas by the SMAD and the legal basis for this comp. Erhard Runnwerth, *Entwicklung der bäuerlichen Landwirtschaft in der DDR bis zur Vollkollektivierung im sozialistischen Frühling 1960* (BoD – Books on Demand, 2010), pp. 19–23. The SMAD had taken the first decisions towards a comprehensive registration and control in 1946. The introduction of a state-centered delivery system was perceived as the relatively seamless continuation of the National-socialist control over the development of prices and the marketing of the harvest which had been established in the early 1930s, and as such not generally seen in a critical light by the peasants.

1955). As part of this, the national plan figures for agricultural production were translated into regional, county-wide, communal and finally individual numbers. The process was referred to as *differentiation:* the SED declared it would provide the just basis of the quotas since it would take a farm's 'size, soil quality and other factors into account.[321]

The introduction of differentiation was an early experience with nation-wide, centrally steered and highly complex planning of a whole economic sector.[322] The prices for free *peaks*, especially for animal products, had remained more or less stable until 1949, allowing for a cautious accumulation among middle and large-scale farmers.[323] In that year the basis for calculation of the quotas changed from the amount of tilled hectares to the overall farm size. In a second step, farms were classified according to this size and quota figures set down for each class. Differentiation became the administrative expression of the SED's Stalinist understanding of rural class war which gathered momentum despite definitional uncertainties.[324] The division into 'working peasants' who farmed small and medium holdings, usually up to 20 hectares, and large farmers who owned anything from 20, or 50 hectares upwards was not only reminiscent of earlier Soviet distinctions into poor peasants and *kulaks*. It also formed the ideological bedrock for economically constructing new political classes of peasants.[325] The combination of a changed calculation basis and the

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[321] The breaking down of the plan was undertaken by regional, county and local commissions. It quickly became clear that the composition of these commissions was crucial as they controlled the crucial height of the quotas, and with it the margin of (financial) success of each farm. On local differentiation commissions see also Bauerkämper, *Ländliche Gesellschaft in Der Kommunistischen Diktatur*, 124–27.

[322] See Scherstjanoi, 193.

[323] Free peaks, in German *freie Spitzen*, denoted the crop surplus a farmer could sell for higher prices after having met his quota obligations. For many families it constituted a welcome and often necessary additional monetary income. For the height of the free peaks in 1950 and 1951, comp. Runnwerth, 24.

[324] Despite being 'the central instrument of agricultural politics', differentiation was 'managed without clear definitions and rested on legal provisions depending on the area under cultivation.' (Scherstjanoi, 254.) In 1951 the new classification grouped farms smaller than 2 hectares, between two and five hectares, five to ten, ten and 15, 15 to 20, 20 to 35, 35 to 50 and larger than 50 hectares. (Ibid, 241.) How this classification corresponded with the ideological definition of small/working, medium and capitalist/large farmers was a matter of debate within the SED and the SMAD. The borders between medium and large farms, and the lower limit of small farms – in other words the question what constituted a farm as such – remained unsolved. The reason for this, so Scherstjanoi, were the SED's priorities at the time: 'In the centre of attention stood the absolute yield increase. The efforts of the state party were not informed by attempts to figure out the diversity of existing profiles of farms and production conditions which had either grown historically or were a result of the post-war scarcity. The same was the case for the agrarian experts in the SMAD.' (Ibid, 253.)

[325] This was not the first instance when the SED changed its course towards the peasantry. Changing from the broad inclusion of the peasantry as a friendly social class, Ulbricht in 1949 had refined the Communist stance towards the peasantry by introducing the classification of farmers as such. From then on 'working farmers' (*werktätige Bauern*) were distinguished from large farmers which were henceforth dubbed 'capitalist entrepreneurs' (*kapitalistische Unternehmer*). In the late 1940s, farmers owning more than 20 ha of land were included in the latter group (comp. Runnwerth, 20.) As mentioned, this initial distinction was subject to further debates in the following decade. On the construction of political classes of peasants see also Bauerkämper, *Ländliche Gesellschaft in Der Kommunistischen Diktatur*, 159.

(arbitrary) classification was the basis for increasing the economic pressure on larger farmers simultaneously to their political definition as class enemies.[326] In this context, differentiation was significant not only because it provided the regime with a detailed overview over every village's economic structure but because it settled that direct state intervention extended beyond purely financial-economic aspects to the political organisation of rural society. Just as collectivisation in its day, differentiation was regarded as a means to further the political and economic homogenisation of rural society.[327] In true Marxist fashion, changes to the farmer's income were to result in shifting political allegiances while also spurring a rural class war which would identify the latent 'enemies' of the transformation. For the peasants it became the key factor in deciding a farm's success or failure.

The political and ideological history of the establishment of central planning in the GDR, the role of the Soviet Control Commission (SKK) in this, and the SED's decision making have already been studied in some detail.[328] Less is known about peasant perceptions of differentiation and the representation of these by regime agents.The following section also covers the question how farmers publicly expressed their views on differentiation. The aim is to provide a discussion of popular opinion on a key agricultural policy before collectivisation and to trace how the regime processed representations of the population's mood on this topic.

2.2.1. Differentiation in Regional and National Mood Reports

For the German democratic peasants' party, the area south of Bautzen and Görlitz was problematic in a number of ways. In Löbau county there were 'whole villages where

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326 One indication for this is the increased use of the term 'class war' in the SED documents leading up to spring 1952. See further Scherstjanoi, 352.

327 Langenhahn contends that differentiation had in the fact a contrary effect as it lead to the further division of village communities into those who managed in the new system and those whose economic situation became increasingly more precarious. Comp. Dagmar Langenhahn, '"Halte Dich Fern von Den Kommunisten, Die Wollen Nicht Arbeiten". Kollektivierung Der Landwirtschaft Und Bäuerlicher Eigensinn Am Beispiel Niederlausitzer Dörfer (1952 Bis Mitte Sechziger Jahre)', in *Herrschaft Und Eigen-Sinn in Der Diktatur. Studien Zur Herrschaftsgeschichte Der DDR* (Köln: Böhlau, 1999), pp. 119–65 (136).

328 Elke Scherstjanoi's exhaustive study of East German agrarian politics as an area of tension between the SED and the Soviet occupation, and André Steiners economic history of the GDR are but two publications that deserve to be mentioned here. Dierk Hoffmann's case study of the allocation of labour in the early GDR is similarly informative of the emergence of the planned economy. C.f Dierk Hoffmann, *Aufbau Und Krise Der Planwirtschaft. Die Arbeitskräftelenkung in Der SBZ/DDR 1945 Bis 1963* (München: Oldenbourg, 2002). See also Jennifer Schevardo, *Vom Wert des Notwendigen: Preispolitik und Lebensstandard in der DDR der fünfziger Jahre* (Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006).

the peasants with almost no exception had been members of the NSDAP'[329] and would not even show up to any kind of political debate, regardless if the SED or the DBD convened it. Some people preferred dealing with the Soviet occupiers of whom it was said that they were more neutral than the new German authorities: 'Regardless of what you do for the reconstruction, if you were in the [National-Socialist] party or with some other function, it does not matter how positive your attitude towards the reconstruction is, (…) you will always be at a disadvantage.'[330] The other two bloc parties, the LDPD and the CDU were 'strong' in the region, also among the peasantry. In many local councils both CDU and LDP would 'openly position themselves' against the DBD, preventing the election of DBD representatives into committees, sometimes aided by the SED.[331]

Throughout 1950, the rumour that the DBD's leadership consisted of (former) communists was widespread.[332] Many peasants kept a distance to the BDB and SED during public meetings and party members suspected that this was a reaction to the new classification of farms and the persistent allocation of plan figures. Furthermore, most farmers refused to 'understand that the classification has political and not only economic reasons.'[333] Peasants contended that between 5 and 10 hectares 'every road was open and financial and economic help would be given, but those from 10 to 20 hectares were treated differently and for the larger farms there was almost no economic help.'[334] When the figures for 1950 were announced, across the GDR 'farmers from 10 to 20 hectares and of course those larger than 20 think that this hike in quotas was a political measure taken to ruin them.'[335] Nationally, and in Eastern Saxony, the amount and conditions of the *free peaks*

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329 BArch DY 60/2819; DBD Informationsbericht Landesverband Sachsen, Dresden 27.10.1949/ eingegangen Berlin 08.11.1949.

330 Ibid.

331 Within the party the lack of cadres, for example of county secretaries, and the somewhat erratic opinions of the local party representatives were another cause of worry. Some were challenged by their colleagues for being too lenient with large farmers and for being too 'reactionary' when it came to political transformation: 'There are no reactionary farmers. Imperialists are reactionary. At most, farmers are conservative.' Replies like this would have done little to instill confidence in Dresden. At the same time, the eastern Saxon DBD instructors worried that 'some farmers are put out by the current economic situation and say that the DBD is just like the other' parties. Many DBD reporters were indignant against the LDPD (the Liberal-Democratic Party of Germany) and CDU (the Christian Democratic Union of Germany), their impression being that they were 'poaching' in their political territory because many farmers would rather side with these two than the DBD. This topic continued to be mentioned throughout 1950 and often special compilations from mood reports would be sent to Berlin to show the 'lacking cooperation between the SED and LDP'.

332 BArch DY 60/2819; Informationsbericht 27.10.1949.

333 Ibid.

334 Ibid.

335 This quote from a DBD functionary is taken from Theresia Bauer, *Blockpartei und Agrarrevolution von oben: die demokratische Bauernpartei Deutschlands, 1948-1963* (Oldenbourg Verlag, 2003), 327.

always aroused 'sharp' debates.[336] Around Niesky virtually every farmer claimed that 'differentiation had been too high' this year and it was noted that 'farmers in the northern part have no grain left after having paid the old arrears' from last year.[337]

This was not the only problematic issue which reached the party's leadership in Berlin. The numbers of new farmers leaving their holdings remained high and it now became clear that 'no new farmers could be found for the vacated holdings' as 'a better selection of worthy applicants' had not been possible.[338] In most cases, it was argued, no one wanted to take over the holdings because their previous owners 'had been forced to abandon them because of a hitherto faulty implementation of differentiation' which had deprived the farms of their economical basis.[339] In line with this, the opinion of the large farmers remained 'negative' throughout 1950. The small and medium sized farmers were portrayed as not being entirely hopeless but easily influenced by local rumors and conditions. The depiction of the mood amongst these groups of farmers was of course congruent with their ideological role assigned by the SED and the DBD. Rumours of collectivisation which had first appeared with land reform were regularly noted in the reports. They were seen to have been fueled by differentiation and by the forward behaviour of some SED functionaries who had openly spoken 'in a most clumsy manner of the elimination of the borders between farms'.[340]

The basic structure of mood reports of a positive opening and a subsequent discussion of the difficulties was retained in the DBD's reports. The beginning of each report would stress the positive aspects, for example that in April 1950 the 'average mood amongst the working peasants of our republic, in line with their economic situation, can be described as positive.'[341] While 'trust was strengthened' in the state, 'hope and confidence' annually accompanied the introduction of the new quotas and the farmers increasingly became reconciled with the machine-tractor stations.[342]

The following list of problems following this was often longer than the glowing opening, and at times directly contradicted it. In late spring and early summer, many

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336 BArch DY 60/2819, Informationsbericht 27.10.1949.

337 Ibid.

338 BArch DY 60/2819; DBD Nationaler Stimmungsbericht, Berlin 20.04.1950. The term new farmers (Neubauern) denoted the recipients of land distributed during the land reform, often expellees or former landless labourers.

339 Ibid.

340 Ibid.

341 Ibid.

342 Ibid.

farmers expressed 'fatigue of meetings' and attendance rates fell. 'Indignation' at quotas was recorded again and again. 'In Saxony the attitude of the peasants towards all political questions is governed by their economic position'. In line with the SED's view of the agricultural sector, small and medium-sized farmers were portrayed as having a positive attitude towards the regime. Larger farmers, it was reported each month, were 'negative' in their attitude towards the socialist order.[343]

What can be safely ascertained is that differentiation was a highly unpopular administrative tool among the farmers. This and the mistakes made in the tallying of local yields, which in places resulted in a hike in the quotas of more than 60% in 1950, were both depicted in the reports.[344] The DBD's dilemma since its foundation was the need to balance its *raison d'etre*, the political and economic transformation of the countryside, with its closeness to the peasants and an apparently genuine willingness to remedy some of their hardships. In this context, the mood reports were a way of doing politics. The extensive coverage of negative opinions amongst larger farmers served as the basis for arguing for changes in the differentiation of farms larger than 20 ha. During the first months of 1950, the DBD had consistently lobbied for lower figures with the SKK and the SED.[345]

During all this, the behaviour of other stakeholders remained an unceasing concern. When a clerk dealing with the delivery quotas for Löbau remarked that 'farms larger than 10 hectares interested him a great deal less' than the smaller farms, the local DBD could do all but protest, fearing that their work would be hampered by this.[346] At a heated debate in Trebus a former councillor had told the farmers that 'We shit on your grain. You can only produce it for 9 DM whereas the SU will deliver it for 4,50 DM.'[347] It was agreed that even months later such statements 'prevent people from increasing their yields, especially since the peasants in *Kreis* Niesky are still waiting for the papers confirming their deliveries.'[348]

In the course of 1950 the topos of differentiation was somewhat relegated to the background for the sake of more acute issues. It continued to be implemented across the republic but the national political agenda took precedence so that differentiation as such

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343 BArch DY 60/2819; Politischer Stimmungsbericht April 1950 [no date/place].

344 Bauer, 327.

345 Comp. Bauer, 327. The SKK was the Soviet Control Commission (*Sowjetische Kontrollkommission*) which succeeded the SMAD in 1949 as the main supervising organ of the Soviet Union in the GDR and acted as its main channel of political influence until 1953.

346 BArch DY 60/2819; Auszügen aus den Stimmungsberichten der Landesverbände vom Monat April und Mai 1950 über mangelhafte Zusammenarbeit einiger SED-Funktionäre mit unserer Partei, Berlin [no date].

347 BArch DY 60/2819, Stimmungsbericht Juni 1950, Berlin 29.96.1950.

348 Ibid.

was less monitored in the mood reports.[349] The early summer months were dominated by the run up and signing of the Treaty of Görlitz which ratified the Oder-Neiße line as the new German-Polish border. During June and July, local attitudes were quoted at length in the national reports, for example when one farmer in Niesky refused to lend his cart for the gathering of firewood on the Day of German-Polish Friendship. On the same day another argued that 'You have sold off the territories east of Oder and Neiße, in my eyes you are bandits.'[350]

Reporting on the upcoming national elections on 15 October was similar. Not only was the atmosphere 'specifically positive' in September, the report argued that this was the case in spite of 'continuous attempts of disruption.'[351] In many cases quotes from the regional mood reports were copied as a whole into the national report. Bearing in mind the controversial mood and the persistence with which the farmers had expressed their unhappiness with basically everything and that the DBD had noted this extensively, the many examples picked to convey the positive atmosphere before the election appear to be somewhat stilted: 'The farmers in my village will all vote on 15 October. No one will exclude himself when the preservation of peace is at stake. Already now I can say that 85% of my village will vote with all their heart on 15th October.'[352]

With the anniversary of the GDR's foundation approaching, the general picture drawn of the peasants had to be optimistic. In spite of the ongoing issues on the new farms, the latest set of instruments designed for their support (including money for new farms and the possibility of debt relief) had created a 'another pleasing upturn' amongst this group.[353] Overall, the reports strove to confirm that 'amongst the working peasants the idea of a

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349 As Humm argued, 'the system of delivery requirements for all agricultural producers, which had been established in the Soviet occupation zone and in the Western zones to overcome the precarious food situation, in the SOZ/GDR quickly developed into a long-term instrument to steer agricultural production.' (Humm, 82.

350 BArch DY 60/2819; DBD Stimmungsbericht Juli 1950, Berlin [no date]. Jan Behrends has identified two dominant discursive figures in the self-representation of the GDR. The *great friendship of the people* and the GDR's *friendship to the Soviet Union* were essential to 'the attempt of the Communist dictatorships to create a representative public which at the same time served the staging of affirmation'. The agreement on the new German-Polish border marked the beginning and most poignant symbol of the renewal of German-Polish relations under the banner of socialist friendship, and was therefore monitored accordingly. (Jan C. Behrends, *Die Erfundene Freundschaft: Propaganda Für Die Sowjetunion in Polen Und in Der DDR*, Zeithistorische Studien, Bd. 32 (Köln: Böhlau, 2006), 11.)

351 Other sections of rural society were covered in more detail than before. For example, the Lusatian villages came to be represented as a stronghold of the Jehova's Witnesses. Less than a month before the elections, some Witnesses publicly agitated against voting while others were imprisoned for spreading subversive leaflets. Comp. BArch DY 60/2819; DBD LV Sachsen, Stimmungsbericht für Monat September, Dresden 3.10.1950)

352 Ibid. The identity of the speaker was given as 'farmer Claus from Straßgräbschn near Kamenz', in Löbau county.

353 BArch DY 60/2819, DBD Stimmungsbericht September 1950, Berlin [no date].

planned economy has made a breakthrough, also because of the early fulfillment of the two-year plan and the visible successes of the two-year plan in industry and agriculture.'[354] Things stood even better than this since 'the great mass of the working peasants has become convinced of the rightness and necessity of the planned steering and division of labour in agriculture.'[355]

2.2.2. Public Criticism of Differentiation in 1951

In late October 1951, a public meeting took place in Zodel, a small village next to the Neiße north of Görlitz. The main topics of the meeting were the 1952 employment contracts of the local machine station and the election of the local commission for differentiation. The atmosphere was strained, bordering on the aggressive. During the general discussion on the statement of accounts of the machine station for 1951 the 'economically strong farmers' questioned the MAS as such and 'were of the opinion more should be done so that every farmer could buy their own tractor.'[356] They were not the only ones with a grievance. When the new contracts came up, *Beirat* Michel joined the chorus of the recalcitrant.[357] He rejected the new contracts for being impossible to implement and generally, so the mayor thought, 'greatly impeded the work of the director of the MAS' by his statements.[358] As the meeting went on, the tone became more acidic:

> The working class itself was attacked when Michel said that the workers did a damn more than the peasants and if the peasants did more than the workers this was because of their intelligence. In a roundabout manner and supported by other functionaries of the DBD [...] and the local councillor [...], he rejected everything: the eight-hour work day, the methods of the Soviet heroes of work, the plans, everything was cow dung (*Mist*), only the free market could save them from downfall.[359]

Little changed when the agenda moved to electing the local commission on differentiation. A 'handful of shouters' and more 'characters too well known'[360] embarked on a similarly fundamental route of critique: 'They said it wasn't necessary to found a commission because the orders from above would just be implemented so that in the end they couldn't

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354 Ibid.
355 Ibid.
356 HAStA DD 11423/362; Kreistag/Kreisrat Niesky, Bericht über den Verlauf der Bauernversammlung in Zodel am 26.10.1951, Zodel 30.10.1951. The assessment of the atmosphere during the assembly was made by the mayor who compiled the report for the benefit of the county council in Niesky. The abbreviation *MAS* stands for *Maschinen-Ausleih-Station,* a local machine-tactor station.
357 Michel was a member of the advisory council of the machine tractor station.
358 Ibid.
359 Ibid.
360 Ibid.

do how they thought the best anyway.'[361] Just as many farmers before them, they saw differentiation as a facade to mark their dis-empowerment from fundamental decisions a farmer could take: the decision how much of which crop to sow and how to market it.

The peasant's meeting in Zodel took place when the introduction of an 'encompassing network of regulatory measures'[362] in East German agriculture was almost concluded. The registration of agricultural production, control over the market, and the legal framework of agricultural policy had expanded continuously since 1948; differentiation was but one aspect of this development. Complaints about the allocated figures, especially from larger farms, were continuously recorded by the agricultural ministries in all districts and had been noted on a national level throughout the years 1950 and 1951.[363] Similarly, the education department of the Saxon DBD had concluded in May 1950 that during the past weeks the mood amongst the farmers in eastern Saxony had been dominated by the publication of next year's figures.

In Zodel, the president of the local DBD publicly challenged the continuous pressure on farmers to fulfill the plan's figures despite them being so contentious. To his mind, 'all the talk and appeal to peace in relation to the delivery of the quotas and the rise in productivity becomes a scourge for the peasants so that they lost the will to work and cooperate.'[364] Previous appeals to the peasants to deliver their quotas before the deadline had been frequent, deeply moral and absolute. The president implicitly referred to an appeal from the area, published in August 1950, which argued that early delivery proved 'you are serious about the better provision of the people with food and that you – thanks to your contribution – are true patriots in the fight for German unity and in the struggle for peace.'[365] For all his clarity, the DBD's president formulated his criticism sufficiently ambiguous. It could still be interpreted as a form of loyal criticism: the intention behind early deliveries was not wrong *per se*. Rather, its execution was to be improved as it had a counter effect on its recipients because it was too far removed from their reality, too frequent and unrealistic.

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361 Ibid.

362 Bauerkämper, *Ländliche Gesellschaft in Der Kommunistischen Diktatur*, 128.

363 BArch, DY 60/4679; Protokoll über die Sitzung der Landeswirtschaftskommission am 24.1.1951 in Dresden. Representatives from all seven districts attended the meeting of the agricultural commission. 'General complaints were voiced about the distribution of sugar and clothing vouchers. Furthermore, it occurred that 100% of the 1950 quotas were added to the updated figures for this year so that people could not receive a slaughtering allowance because they still had arrears from 1950.'

364 HStAD 11423/362; Bauernversammlung in Zodel.

365 HStAD 11432/8; Kreistag/Kreisrat Niesky, Aufruf des Kreistages und des Kreisrates Niesky; Niesky 12.08 1950.

At the time, the political assessment of contentious issues like differentiation was more often than not limited to organisational aspects. As in other regions, obstacles like 'the length of the access route' to the Eastern Saxon delivery points were discussed at length'.[366] They usually emerged from specific local circumstances which could be improved without compromising the system as such. The manner in which the mayor composed his report of the Zodel peasant's meeting also points in this direction. For him, capturing the local mood came down to recording the expressed criticism in as much detail as possible. The tone of the meeting is captured; individual terms like *Dreck, Mist, Untergang* are quoted verbatim and whole sentences appear to have been changed into indirect voice while retaining the original word order.[367] Although the report is about a peasants' meeting, only functionaries are referred to by name. As he reported back to the SED county leadership and the department of state-controlled economy in Dresden, it is feasible that he knew that his readers had a special interest in the attitude of other functionaries like DBD councillors and tailored his report accordingly.[368]

A number of points can be inferred from the above. One function of monitoring popular opinion was to provide the party's leadership with sufficient examples and quotes to match their current agenda. Compilations were used as reservoirs of 'real' voices during processes of decision making and during deliberations on policies. Subsequently, the administrative tone which characterised many local reports receded in favour of political utilisation the higher up they were written. Also, reporting from the countryside was deeply concerned with relationships – between the ordinary citizen and the party-state, between a local DBD members and cadres and their head office in Dresden, and as emerges from the above, also with the relationship between local cadres and the leadership of the GDR's government.

Thus, the act of reporting as such was simultaneously constricting and illuminating for authors and readers alike. Only those elements of popular opinion which were suitable and ideologically relevant were written down and later selected for transmission. While all kinds of criticism might be recorded locally, their onward political interpretation was much more dependent on the possibility of integrating them into the current ideological course. The parameters for this decision were based on the dichotomous world-view which underpinned the Communist project itself. It found expression in 'the binary labeling of all

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366 HStAD 11394/765; Instrukteursbericht aus dem Kreis Löbau /Sa., Löbau 14.07.1950.
367 These terms translate into English as *dirt*, *dung* and *downfall*.
368 In the agricultural ministry. A note at the bottom of the document states that the copy had not yet been received by the SED county leadership.

opinions in the mood reports as either positive or negative. This approach excluded the possibility of recording and reporting complex or ambivalent attitudes, even if such views were articulated in public.'[369] In Jan Behrend's words, the 'inside' – the regime's perception of an issue – was identical with the 'outside', the manner in which people spoke about the same issue.[370] The representation of reality through repetitive phrases went hand in hand with the ideological bias.

This interpretive paradox accompanied the persistent construction of social categories. As already mentioned, the peasantry was divided into production classes, political attribution included. Although criticism was admitted, the fact that 'large parts of the peasantry, demonstrably in Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt, (…) did not follow the ideological motivated segregation of the large farmers' was not reflected upon.[371]. In other words, the authors of the reports could depict dissenting attitudes and statements but were limited to the act of recording as any different approach would have toppled the intention and function of the reporting itself.

2.3. The Negotiation of Discipline and Support

Since the second SED conference in July 1952 collectivisation had been continuously pursued by the party-state, albeit with varying degrees of intensity and at times overshadowed by internal and external crises.[372] By early 1959, collective farms had replaced debates about differentiation and economic stratification as the most contentious issue in agriculture throughout Saxony. From the moment of their foundation the LPG became the focal point of projections, from their economic (in)efficiency to the symbolic meanings of membership and non-membership.

In the official discourse the collective farm was a hybrid being: it was (to be) the continuation and culmination of rural transformation, an expression of revolutionary intent and the 'first true liberation of peasants in the history of our people'.[373] Likewise it embodied the plan and the convictions underpinning it as a controlled and rational policy

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369 Balázs Apor, 165.

370 Behrends elaborates on this metaphor in Behrends, *Die Erfundene Freundschaft*, 238–40.

371 Bauer, 315.

372 The first collectivisation drive was temporarily halted after July 1953. As discussed in more detail in the introduction to this thesis, the vigour with which new collective farms were agitated depended very much on the politics of the day, e.g. the pressure eased considerably in the aftermath of the Polish and Hungarian crises of 1956.

373 This quotation of the secretary of the SED's central committee Grüneberg in April 1960 is taken from Bauerkämper, *Ländliche Gesellschaft in Der Kommunistischen Diktatur*, 190.

which was the 'lawful result of the social progress of the German Democratic Republic'.[374] Faced with the apparent need to mobilise large sections of the GDR's institutions – from the propaganda and education departments to planning commissions and bloc party cadres to the secret and visible police – the elements of control within the regime and in the villages became more and more important. By early 1960, the establishment and maintenance of the LPGs had become 'an impressive feat of administration but neither the political not the practical argument'[375] had been won unanimously. Uncertainties about the future of the LPG system, and the parameters of the LPG's activities were widespread and remained so after complete success had been declared. These uncertainties found their outlet in public debates, individual acts of defiance and submission in the LPG, impassive silence and in the form of rumors.

Many LPG were unsteady collections of individuals, often brought together by a mixture of economic deliberation, political necessity, and at times conviction. Some collectives existed only on paper, some disbanded and re-formed while others continued despite financial failure and personal conflicts, others again throve modestly. In the face of such disparate performances, discipline and the political education of the LPG members were essential to the stabilisation of individual farms and the system as such (apart from tax incentives, favourable credit conditions and organisational support). It was thought similarly important to monitor and shape the political mood around the LPGs, both by public displays of affirmation and public examples of the persecution of 'enemy agents'.

From this melange of party-state interests and 'really existing' collectives a number of questions emerge with regard to the landscape of popular attitudes in Eastern Saxony. How were conflicts within LPGs dealt with? Also, which rumors circulated in Eastern Saxony at the time? What can these rumors tell us about the popular opinion in the area, going beyond description of state-controlled agriculture as conflict-ridden? How was state power discursively upheld in the face of a population which strove to maintain a limited sense of autonomy. In turn, how did the state uphold its positive version as conflicts around the LPG system continued after 1960?

In order to address these questions the following section discusses three case studies. Firstly, the internal handling of a chairman who had fallen foul of the local SED

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374 Walter Ulbricht in a governmental statement on 24.04.1960, quoted in Bauerkämper, *Ländliche Gesellschaft in Der Kommunistischen Diktatur*, 190.

375 George Last, *After the 'Socialist Spring'. Collectivisation and Economic Transformation in the GDR* (Oxford; New York: Berghahn, 2009), 22.

cadres in his running of an LPG is analysed. The second section focuses on rumors collected in the same area during and immediately after the final drive towards complete collectivisation in early 1960. Lastly, the public coming to terms with a regional 'resignation wave' from collectives one year later is discussed.

2.3.1. The Case of Chairman Exner

In November 1954 a *SED* cell of a collective farm in Ludwigsdorf near Görlitz met. On this evening they were joined by county councillor Wagner. Officially the meeting had been called to discuss that year's potato harvest. The councillor quickly turned to the matter at hand. A county inspection in October had shown that 200 centner of potatoes had not yet been harvested. When the collective's chairman Exner was asked whether 'he knew if potatoes were still in the ground', his reply had been negative.[376] Only after 'insistent questioning did he concede that a small, wet area still had to be harvested.' Wagner and the local cell secretary Fiedler must have had trouble accepting Exner's version of events. Wagner's suggestive manner of speaking created the impression that Exner had been caught red handed while embezzling potatoes. They had convened the meeting for this reason, rather than a general discussion about potatoes as such.

Over the course of the meeting the *internal politics* of Ludwigsdorf's collective farm played themselves out as if on a stage. Lynne Viola first drew attention to this concept in her analysis of resistance in the Stalinist Soviet Union. The internal politics of peasant (and working class) groups, she argued, were 'embedded in the everyday life of village and factory, feeding into the place of hierarchies of gender, generation, and local authority structures.'[377] In Ludwigsdorf, the negotiation of personal friendships, rivalries, long-standing grievances and above all the organisation of the everyday work flow disrupted the straightforward political discussion of 'Exner's case' which councillor and secretary must have had in mind.

At first, the discussion proceeded smoothly for them. A general round of opinion on Exner's character as chairman was opened by secretary Fiedler, setting the tone of what was to follow: 'the co-operation [between both men] cannot be described as good.' He claimed to have taken 'great pains within the LPG, but usually he was alone with the work' because only a handful of people would attend party meetings. For both he blamed Exner

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376 RAG 1805, Protokoll über die Mitgliederversammlung der Parteiorganisation der LPG Ludwigsdorf am 28. November 1954, um 20 Uhr in der LPG [Görlitz, 1.12.1954].
377 Viola, *Contending with Stalinism*, 5.

who 'for things economic' sought the advice of other people, not his although he was cell secretary. Otto, a regular member of the collective, remarked that 'Exner is a good worker but he is not up to the job as collective chairman. Sometimes he acts much too independently and also he is at times lightheaded.' The others agreed with this. For Wagner and Fiedler, 'Exner's case' was about power and knowledge: asserting the power of the SED's local representatives by making sure they were the first to be informed when problems arose in the day-to-day running of the farm. Exner's 'independence' lay in speaking first with his friend Ehrhardt, a fellow member of the collective. The meeting was a sounding board for the extent and nature of his correction.

This sounding was interrupted for the first time when comrade Grambo, a female member spoke. Instead of commenting on Exner, she turned to the chaotic work flow: 'sometimes we go out to the fields at 7 am and don't know what we have to do. Sometimes hours pass like this.' She brought up the uneven distribution of the heavy work load among female workers, convinced 'that if every female comrade got their hands dirty, the LPG would look differently.' She 'firmly rejected' previous charges that she and others had dragged their feet when the slurry pits had been closed. This sparked a 'fierce discussion' – not recorded in detail – in which other women agreed with her. Fiedler intervened and Grambo changed track, now criticising Exner for feeding his private cattle first and questioning why his wife had not joined the collective farm.

At this stage, councillor Wagner reminded everyone of the need to reign in the chairman. Again, this was affirmed by those who took the floor. Once more, however, the discussion veered off as the matter of female work resurfaced. The men in the LPG were roundly challenged for leaving the heavy work to the women. Secretary Fiedler intervened again, spelling out 'that the party is not the leading power in this collective farm'. Finally, Exner was called to explain his actions during the potato harvest. He described how the harvest was delayed because the heavy machines had broken down on the wet patch of land. His friend Ehrhardt supported this version and stressed how he had 'ignored all friendship with Exner when Exner had made a mistake. He told him his opinion and helped him on the right way. In this way you all should have dealt with him but instead you all joined in.' The meeting concluded with all present, including Exner, agreeing to open party proceedings against the chairman. Details on the charges of his party proceedings were not included in the report.

The meeting in Ludwigsdorf shared a number of characteristics with the *kritika/samokritika* rituals which had shaped the CPSU and other Communist parties.[378] Just as the *samokritika* rituals, SED party cell meetings were quintessentially set up to enforce discipline throughout the rank and file. Both scenes 'followed mutually understood rules, forms, and genres of speech, although the outcome could be unpredictable.'[379] During *samokritika* sessions those 'present were […] empowered to criticize or even denounce their leaders who then were expected to admit their errors.'[380] In this latter point, party cell meetings in collective farms and factories differed from their model. In Ludwigsdorf there was space for spontaneous, apparently authentic opinion although Fiedler and Wagner did their best to control the proceedings. Grambo and other women insistently and repeatedly criticised the work organisation instead of parroting the men who had previously spoken. Comrade Ehrhardt had chosen to censor the group as such while formally speaking against the chairman. They all contravened the tacit agreement concerning the topics which could be discussed. As a result of this, their issues were also not taken further as their representation did not conform to the stylistic and political demands of the setting.

Fiedler and Wagner had worked towards the moment of submission which was crucial to the enforcing of discipline on the farm. Just as in *kritika/samo-kritika* sessions this took the form of an apology affirming the mistake as well as pronouncing 'lesson to others below not to make the same mistake, and to recognis[ing] the status and rights of the party receiving the apology.'[381] In this case, party and state in the shape of Fiedler and Wagner heard Exner's submission that 'he would rather show with deeds than with words that he can do better.'[382] In contrast to 'pure' criticism/self-criticism rituals, Exner was not expected to 'reiterat[e] the critique in the context of self-criticism'.[383] The session on Exner here was not as ritualised as the CPSU's and SED's sessions were. Nevertheless, the basic way of correcting deviation had clearly trickled down through the SED's hierarchies to this collective as well.

In collective farms, as in other state socialist contexts, 'the very fact of holding a discussion already had a political meaning prior to what its particular outcome would be.'[384]

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378 Criticism and self-criticism rituals were called for a number of reasons – mostly party discipline and changes to the party line – and had shaped the relation between a Communist party member and the party (leadership) since the high Stalinist times.

379 J. Arch Getty, 'Samokritika Rituals in the Stalinist Central Committee, 1933-38', *Russian Review*, 58.1 (1999), 49–70 (52).

380 Ibid.

381 Ibid.

382 RAG 1805, Protokoll Mitgliederversammlung 28.11.1954.

383 Getty, 'Samokritika Rituals in the Stalinist Central Committee, 1933-38', 53.

384 Kojevnikov, 144.

In the case above, it was not clear from the beginning whether Exner would be relegated, sacked, or merely rebuked.[385] At the same time, the political meaning of the meeting – the affirmation of the SED's primacy in the everyday running of the LPG – must have been obvious to all involved as soon as the agenda of the cell meeting was made public. Most people knew what to expect from previous meetings and began to acquire a fine sensor for what could and could not be said. Wagner's and Fiedler's role in prompting support and sidelining other opinions was accepted as part of this constellation.

The narrow focus on Exner's alleged mistakes deserves to be contextualised in view of the repeated and heated mentioning of problems in the organisation of the farm work by Grambo and others. In light of continuous structural problems in the state agricultural sector, farm chairmen and board members had been frequent recipients of criticism both as a group and individually. This had usually been formulated as a lack of 'internal democracy' since the first collectivisation drive 1952/53.[386] Comparable processes of individualisation of guilt and responsibility have been observed in other state socialist contexts, most commonly in relation to Stalinist rituals in the Soviet Union. The 'narrow, personalised approach to problems [that] emerged from the unreflected voluntarism of the regime' in the GDR stands in a historical continuity of public mechanisms of processing course changes.[387]

From the mid-1950s onwards, the criminalisation of economic behaviour – for example delayed quota delivery – resulted in an even more pronounced focus on the accused person and his or her biography.[388] In the face of 'obvious structural problems, an

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385 Party proceedings had merely been 'suggested', not decreed. The need for at least formal agreement by the cell opened up the space for an alternate course of events.

386 Comp. Bauerkämper, *Ländliche Gesellschaft in Der Kommunistischen Diktatur*, 340.

387 From early on scapegoating was an integral element in party discussions and self-criticism/criticism sessions in the Soviet Union. During the late 1930s public scapegoating emerged as a characteristic process of the Stalinist terror, as Sheila Fitzpatrick has shown: 'This took place at meetings at the workplace whose function was to "draw conclusions" from some signal from above (…). There would be a report explaining the significance of the signal, followed by a collective discussion on the conclusions that should be drawn. This was a well-established Soviet practice, but in the context of the terror it acquired a new purpose: "drawing conclusions" came to mean pointing the finger at hidden enemies within the institution.' (Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford, New York: OUP, 1999), 199.) William Chase's study of the scapegoating of L. Magyar and G. Alikhanov during the terror highlights the *politics of the moment* which inform acts of scapegoating and provides an interpretation of it as a social, but not exclusively Soviet phenomenon. William Chase, 'Scapegoating One's Comrades in the USSR, 1934-1937', *Russian History*, 38.1 (2011), 23–41.

388 As Lindenberger pointed out, the biography of an accused decided on the extent of the punishment from 1955 onwards. Most of the offences which were persecuted concerned activities within the state-controlled sector, both on collective and state farms. In turn, all activity outside the state sector was considered to be implicitly criminal – Lindenberger uses the term of the *dark field of criminality*. On the legal framework of this understanding and on the role of the peoples' police in the transformation of the countryside comp. esp. Lindenberger, 'Der ABV Als Landwirt', 181.

inadequately trained staff and material lack in the collective farms the local SED leadership propagated the development of 'socialist character traits' as the way to improving the organisation of work.'[389] The failure to improve production rates and work flows, no matter how unrealistic in these circumstances, would therefore concentrate on the negative character traits of those in charge locally.

In April 1956, the department of investigation of the central office of the people's police in Berlin queried the Dresden district for more precise information on deviant chairmen and book-keepers of collective farms. The increase of 'offences against collectively owned goods and laws governing the economic sector' during the first half of 1956 was commonplace and arguably a result of the expansion of the state agricultural sector itself.[390] In light of this, the central office demanded swift reporting on exactly how many chairmen had been 'uncovered' as criminals. More importantly, Berlin also required to know in which way county and SED representatives had been integrated into local police proceedings and how many full meetings of collective farms had taken place to discuss the issue. The discussion of Exner's case took place at the beginning of this development but already bore signs of the subsequent trends outlined above.

Just as reports by local instructors, minutes of collective farm meetings – and more importantly their *meaning* – could be understood in their entirety only by those present at the moment of their inception. Details of mundane events such as the feeding of cattle were pivotal in their immediate surroundings. In Ludwigsdorf, issues like the time when the chairman fed his cows, why his wife had not joined or how and by whom the pits had been covered sparked highly controversial debates. The necessary knowledge to solve such issues was also quintessentially local.

The quality and variety of differing opinion which could and would be expressed at collective farm meetings was enabled by the political genre of discussion and the local context. Depending on the social landscape of those present, various degrees of criticism and problem solving could be brought up parallel to and within discussions steered by

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389 Bauerkämper, *Ländliche Gesellschaft in Der Kommunistischen Diktatur*, 339. The social constellations of the Ludwigsdorf party cell in November 1954 had its own pre-histories. Not all the friendships, rivalries and relations between the party members (themselves only a section of the overall LPG members) surfaced in the transcript. Some constellations, however, do emerge. Comrade Ehrhardt, for example, thread a fine line between supporting his friend Exner and subordinating himself to the demands of Fiedler and Wagner. Grambo's diatribes were supported by other women, being also directed against Exner's wife. Gender was introduced as a category of differentiation by the female workers themselves who identified as beneficiaries of their work load the very people who were unwilling to pursue the matter further: the men at the meeting all tacitly agreed to let the matter rest.

390 HStAD 11646/004.101, p. 351; Bezirksbehörde der Deutschen Volkspolizei Dresden, Bericht über das III. Quartal 1956, Dresden 10.10.1956.

party representatives. Some opinions were intended for the record alone, while others outwardly conformed with the demands of the party but were actually concerned with something else. The primary role of representatives of party and state was recognised and simultaneously challenged by the persistent and vehement voicing of differing perspectives by common members of the farm.

2.3.2. Rumors during the *Socialist Spring*

The first setting of the course towards the 'Socialist spring' took place in the first months of 1959. The Central Committee's wish to accelerate the speed of LPG foundations was taken up by the LPG conference in February 1959 and from then on became a core policy. Ulbricht's call that collectivisation was now the 'main task' was taken up by those who agreed that this course promised to overcome the socio-economic crises of the 1950s while also keeping up with developments in Western German agriculture.[391] The SED's auspicious view of the matter was met with an array of dissenting, affirming and, to a lesser degree, indifferent reactions. Leaving aside the question of how much support collectivisation had in society, it is safe to say that the absence of a genuinely enthusiastic movement towards the collectives added poignancy to the routine observations of popular attitudes on the country-side.

During the campaign, the community policemen and local police stations were preoccupied with antagonising behaviour against the state sector. The national headquarters received lists of grievances which became longer as the campaign intensified in late March and early April of 1959.[392] They were informed of 'open threats and physical violence against functionaries of state organs and members of the brigades', 'open agitation against collective farmers and members of the brigades', the 'demolition and violation' of banners and displays' accompanied by the 'sending of threatening letters' and the 'spreading of rumors'.[393]

These rumors were the hidden transcripts of the newly founded LPG, to use James Scott's term, as they were 'produced for a different audience and under different constraints of power than the public transcripts.'[394] They spread verbally through informal, often

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391 See Bauerkämper, *Ländliche Gesellschaft in Der Kommunistischen Diktatur*, 159.
392 Ibid, 188.
393 All quotes taken from BArch DO/1/28115, 11/115, p.83; HVDVP, Polizeiliche Lage bei der sozialistischen Umgestaltung der Landwirtschaft, Informationsbericht, Berlin 03.05.1960.
394 James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (Yale University Press, 1990), 5.

familial and recreational networks and were characterised by their taking 'place off stage, beyond the direct observation of powerholders'[395] Grumbling and complaining were a standard feature of GDR society, with a 'great deal of trenchant criticism'[396] being expressed on practically every aspect of everyday life. For the people's police rumors were one instance where grumbling could tip over into something more sinister. In order to maintain the discursive control on the country-side the community policemen were instructed that

> should discussions about the socialist transformation of agriculture bring any negative statements to light, the party and other involved organisations are to be consulted and it should be decided whether it is a matter of agitation and slandering the state which would necessitate a preliminary investigation.[397]

The repetition of 'tendentious rumors' was punishable on stage: one farmer from Jarchow was sentenced to eighteen months for 'praising the West and threatening the collective farmers that the day of reckoning was coming soon.'[398] Two farmers from Zemmin and Luckow were expropriated for publicly claiming that the free market in Western Germany had 'visible advantages'.[399] Along with these sentences came weariness and caution as people realised that an individual farmer 'might escape such treatment but the sure knowledge that it could happen'[400] infused many encounters. In this context the 'participation of the peoples' police as part of the agitation brigades implied threat enough of imprisonment' should an individual farmer refuse to sign his membership to the LPG straight away.'[401]

Rumors relating to Western Germany were wide-spread and surfaced in multiple variations. Many were concerned with monetary matters, for example promising that those 'moving 'illegally' to Western Germany would receive 6000.- DM on the spot and would not have to pay it back.'[402] Glowing images of a better life in the West went hand in hand with public demands for free travel and a free market based on the Western German

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395 Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 4.
396 Andrew I. Port, *Conflict and Stability in the German Democratic Republic* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 115.
397 BArch DO/1/28115, 11/115, p.36; HVDVP, Polizeiliche Lage bei der sozialistischen Umgestaltung der Landwirtschaft, Informationsbericht, Berlin 10.03.1960). The term community policeman is translated from the German *Abschnittsbevollmächtigter* (ABV).
398 Stefan Finger, 'Widerstand Gegen Die Kollektivierung Der Landwirtschaft in Der DDR 1952-1961' (unpublished Staatsexamen, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, 1999), 40.
399 Ibid, 39.
400 Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, xi.
401 Last, 19.
402 BArch DO/1/28115, 11/115, p.83; HVDVP, Informationsbericht 03.05.1960.

model.[403] As such, these rumors were not generic to the countryside but fed into the background noise as invocations of an alternative.

The 'really existing' LPG system was an unceasing source of stories during the 'Socialist spring'. They mirrored many of the long-standing difficulties and condensed past experiences into morally significant narratives. For example, one story went that 'there are too many workers in the collectivised villages' because of the increasing levels of mechanisation, and that this led to declining work units and pay. Based on previous experiences of low wages and financial struggles in LPG, this concern with the possible absence of an upward turn and also anxieties over redundancy of workers because of the new machines. Other lists of rumors portray the almost paranoiac concern of some police men with the enemy. One recorded that in Eastern Saxony people claimed that 'Foot-and-mouth disease is spread through forage maize. With this the enemy tries to hinder the strengthening of the maize production'.[404]

Many of the horror-stories about the collectives were accompanied by condensed slogans such as 'the peasants are just the slaves of the LPG' or 'there is more to come, lets see what the summit conference brings'.[405] It was persistently noted that people argued that 'We earn more as individual farmers than in a collective.' Rumors about the conflicts between old and new members in LPG were frequent as were concerns about the abolition of pensions and traditional farm inheritance.'[406] Others merely demanded 'First stabilise the old collectives, then we join them' or 'We want a monthly salary of ca. 6000 DM.'[407] Such demands were noted across the GDR: a farmer from Zeulenroda in Thuringa said 'Give the peasants their freedom and abolish the dictatorship so that we can work freely.'[408]

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403 Comp. Finger, 37.

404 BArch DO/1/28115, 11/115, p.83; HVDVP, Informationsbericht 03.05.1960. 'From various districts it is reported that the boards of newly founded *LPG*s consist of former fascists and persons with a hostile attitude towards our development.'

405 The speaker here refers to the (failed) Paris meeting between Dwight Eisenhower and Nikita Chrushtchev in May 1960. Commonly referred to as *Gipfelkonferenz* in German, the meeting also involved British, French and German representatives. It was part of a series of meetings dedicated to the German affair, especially the Berlin crisis and the question of the Oder-Neisse border, and was abandoned over espionage issues. The meeting was covered widely in the GDR as the Berlin crisis was perceived by the SED leadership as a window of opportunity for a separate truce between the GDR and the Soviet Union which would have stabilised the status quo in Germany. C.f. Thomas Großbölting, *Friedensstaat, Leseland, Sportnation?: DDR-Legenden auf dem Prüfstand* (Ch. Links Verlag, 2013), 159ff.

406 All quotes and examples taken from BArch DO/1/28115, 11/1115, p.28; HVDVP, Polizeiliche Lage bei der sozialistischen Umgestaltung der Landwirtschaft, Berlin, Informationsbericht 01.04.1960.

407 BArch DO/1/28115, 11/1115, p.28. Informationsbericht 01.04.1960.

408 Quoted after Finger, 38.

Predictions of a bleak future fed off the unfavourable comparisons with the FRG. Even more so, those rumors looking to the future predicted a repetition of the recent past: tales of hunger were linked to the new system as 'the fields of the LPG are managed so badly that there will be a famine in two years.'[409] such anxieties persisted alongside sensitivities about the army. Any movement of soldiers in the border area was accompanied by talk about the coming of war and 'that soldiers will be stationed in the villages' to quell any opposition against the LPG.

Similarly, rumors of 'the abandonment of the LPG system' were popular across the Republic and represented alternative news which those opposing collectivisation were hoping for. In the summer of 1960 they were 'strong' and in some cases remarkably precise, for example when it was claimed that in Schwerin (Mecklenburg) 'Walter Ulbricht is to have said on a conference that collectivisation was implemented too quickly and that farmers wanting to leave the *LPG* should do so before 1 July.' Not only this, but 'individual farms up to 10 ha will be created' and 'the LPG will have to buy more horses because there is no fuel for the tractors'.

Rumors countered the SED's promise of overcoming the past by carrying wide-spread experiences of war and the first Socialist decade into the future. They combined three temporal levels – past, present and future – to formulate the emotional and dramatic continuation of an (apocalyptic) past into the future. Lynne Viola has pointed out that the rumors of Stalinist Russia were essentially 'variations on themes from real life'[410]. At the same time they were hyper-real, exceedingly sensitive and de-personalised narratives of a different reality.

Nevertheless, rumors were not free floating. Instead of being rooted in a specific place and person, they were tied to a reservoir of experiences which the majority of people could relate to. In this sense rumors about the LPG were both hidden and public as people, including the police, knew they circulated in private and (semi-) public spheres.[411] More

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409 BArch DO/1/28115, 11/1115, p.147; HVDVP, Polizeiliche Lage bei der sozialistischen Umgestaltung der Landwirtschaft, Berlin, Informationsbericht 01.07.1960.

410 Lynne Viola, 'Guide to Documents Series on Collectivization', in *A Researcher's Guide to Sources on Soviet Social History in the 1930s* (New York: Routledge, 2015), pp. 105–29 (112).

411 In terms of directionality, rumours were not a one-way street. The Ministry for State Security deliberately launched rumors in order to influence the social standing of individuals. In his study, Bernd Eisenfeld has shown how the MfS generated and spread rumors about undesirable individuals in order to bring them to heel. Similarly, Bauerkämper has noted how agitators sweepingly classified whole villages as collectivised although farmers continued outside the LPG. This official 'counter-rumor' of whole scale success was created also as a reaction to the increasing dissolution of previously formed LPGs. See Bernd Eisenfeld, 'Gerüchteküchte DDR - Die Desinformationspolitik Des Ministeriums Für Staatssicherheit', *WerkstattGeschichte*, 1996, 41–53. On the creative proclamation of collectivisation figures see Bauerkämper, *Ländliche Gesellschaft in Der Kommunistischen Diktatur*, 186.

importantly, they were concerned with a most public matter, that of the common good and future of a society.

2.3.3. The Aftermath of a Regional 'Resignation Wave' in 1961

Across Löbau county in Eastern Saxony, members of collective farms declared their withdrawal from their collectives in the early summer months of 1961. In thirty of the county's 51 villages groups or individuals handed in their resignation by early July.[412] More than 120 collective farms were affected, with more than 220 resignations.[413] Instructors active in the area and local functionaries received orders to effect a reversal of these resignations and as a result of the usual methods of 'persuasion' the numbers fell from 228 to 23 between 3rd July and 10th July.[414]

The disbanding of collective farms had been observed by various institutions since the first collectivisation drive and had frequently been noted in the mood reports of various organisations, often as rumors.[415] The successful implementation of the second collectivisation campaign in 1960 had not stopped farmers from attempting to leave the collectives or from trying to disband them completely. Contrary to the official image, the collectivisation campaign had not blended into a period of calm, harmonious peasant-state relations.[416] Reflecting the concern of the party leadership Erich Mielke – head of the Ministry of State Security – requested his district administrations to analyse and assess 'barriers to progress, shortcomings, other harmful and enemy activity' in collective farms.[417] Mielke's ministry, however, was not the only institution to concern themselves with 'signs of disintegrartion' in state-controlled agriculture.

In June and July 1961 the figures around Löbau rose quickly enough for the people's police to become involved. On 5 July, senior lieutenant Hartmann and lieutenant

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412 HStAD 11646/ BDVP 23.1.590, p.174-182; Einschätzung zu der Austrittsbewegung aus den LPG im Kreis Löbau (Löbau, 5.7.1961).

413 The numbers varied across the county. From villages likes Ruppersdorf and Kemnitz with 15 and 13 collectives each, 32 and 17 withdrawals were noted, while in smaller villages like Herwigsdorf 12 people left the seven local farms.

414 Ibid.

415 The height of this development was probably reached in spring 1960. Between March and the 27th of July more than 2700 resignation declarations were recorded nationally. Of these, 1064 farmers retracted immediately, 569 were granted and the rest was pending. The subject continued to occupy the VP, MfS and the SED in the following years. Comp. Daniela Münkel, 'Der Abschluss Der Kollektivierung Der Landwirtschaft Im Spiegel Der MfS-Berichte', in *Klassenkampf Gegen Die Bauern : Die Zwangskollektivierung Der Ostdeutschen Landwirtschaft Und Ihre Folgen Bis Heute* (Berlin: Metropol, 2010), pp. 74–77.

416 Comp. Last, 22. See also Münkel's portrayal of disbanding collectives in Brandenburg. Münkel, 77–84.

417 Quoted after Münkel, 76. 21. April 1960

Hengst from Löbau county police office (VPKA) compiled a first interpretation of the events for the benefit of the district police headquarters. This was done partly in preparation for a county-wide forum of 'collective peasants' (*Genossenschaftsbauern*) which was scheduled to take place the next day. In concurrence with the county's SED leadership and the MfS, the lieutenants spoke of a 'resignation wave' and suspected 'organised enemy activity'[418]

Such an interest of the police force in the membership issues of local collectives was by no means out of the ordinary. As 'the most radical transformation of rural existence since the land reforms'[419], the drive towards collective farms had relied on the whole scale mobilisation of the party-state's apparatus, including the people's police. From early on, the SED's leadership had striven to integrate the new police force into the transformation of Eastern German society. In the countryside, this had from early on resulted in the criminalisation of deviant economic behaviour like late delivery of quotas. In the following years, crime prevention became a primary interest as most offences which were uncovered had taken place within the state controlled sector of agriculture, that is in collective farms, state-run farms and machine stations. From the late 1950s, the as yet un-collectivised sector was commonly regarded as a field of 'latent criminality'[420] by the police force. In tune with the SED's push for a final transformation of the country-side, the functions and self-image of the people's police underwent a substantial reorientation from 1957 until 1961.[421]

From 1957 onwards, the uneasy 'mixture of intelligence gathering and ordinary, preventive, pedagogic police activity'[422] was expanded in order for the *Volkspolizei* to

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418 'Austrittswelle' and 'organisierte Feindtätigkeit. Ibid.

419 Last, 3.

420 Lindenberger, 'Der ABV Als Landwirt', 181.

421 As Gieseke and Lindenberger pointed out, the VP tends to be neglected as a factor when accounting for the success and speed of the transformation during the during socialist spring. Lindenberger stresses that the orientation of the lower strata of the police apparatus, the ABV, towards the gathering of economic information together with the heightened attention of the ABV for their area indirectly contributed, in the form of readily available information, to the success of the 'conviction work' in spring 1960.' Lindenberger, 'Der ABV Als Landwirt', 184. (Translation KMO). On early VP history comp. Liesbeth Van De Grift, *Securing the Communist State. The Reconstruction of Coercive Institutions in the Soviet Zone of Germany and Romania, 1944–1948.* (New York: Lexington, 2012). *Staatssicherheit Und Gesellschaft: Studien Zum Herrschaftsalltag in Der DDR*, ed. by Jens Gieseke, Analysen Und Dokumente : Wissenschaftliche Reihe Des Bundesbeauftragten Für Die Unterlagen Des Staatssicherheitsdienstes Der Ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, Bd. 30 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007). On the relation between VP and MfS see Jens Giesike, 'Volkspolizei Und Staatssicherheit - Zum Inneren Sicherheitsapperat Der DDR', in *Die Polizei Der Gesellschaft. Zur Soziologie Der Inneren Sicherheit* (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 2003), pp. 93–122.

422 Stefan Hornbostel, 'Der Abschnittsbevollmächtigte. Ein Fast Vergessener Versuch Der Kriminalprävention.', *Kriminologisches Journal*, 32.3 (2000), 196–205 (197). Own translation.

become an 'immediate agent of the transformation'.[423] The overall aim was the fusion of police activity with the SED's economic programme and the police force was thus integrated into local and district wide networks of state institutions concerned with this.[424] Again, a key strategy for supporting the transformation with police means was the whole-scale criminalisation of any form of (economic) resistance to the new farming system.[425] This necessitated the comprehensive registration of delivery norms, fulfillment of the plans, live-stock figures and the state-controlled sector as such on a monthly basis.[426] Bearing all this in mind, it was logical that Löbau's police office concerned itself with the resignations. Just as their colleagues across the country, they not only gathered information but politically interpreted the situation on their hands.[427]

In keeping with their training, Hengst and Hartmann structured their representation of the events according to categories such as farm type, gender, biography and political affiliation in order to make better sense of what had happened. Most resignations had been from Type I farms where cattle and machinery remained private property.[428] They found it 'particularly striking 'how many functionaries, some cases 'complete boards', of the farms had withdrawn. Of those who left, 40% were women who resigned either alongside their husbands or for 'other reasons' which are not specified. About ten percent of the resignations had been handed in by former members of the NSDAP or the SS while one 'fascist officer' who had served in the *Wehrmacht* quit.[429] Thirty had been expellees and seventeen were 'religiously' affiliated. In political terms, no members of the SED had participated but 17 from the DBD.[430]

The authors argued that in villages with many farmers who continued to farm individually after the 'socialist spring' the numbers of withdrawal were accordingly high. Kemnitz, Bischdorf, Cunewalde and Herwigsdorf were given as examples for the

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423 Lindenberger, 'Der ABV Als Landwirt', 184.

424 This included the MfS, the SED. Majors, local and county councils, MAS, state-farm and LPG chairmen

425 For other strategies of keeping order in the collectivised villages, based on the combination of the political mobilisation of the ABV, see Lindenberger, 'Der ABV Als Landwirt', 176.

426 Generally, 'the implementation of the aims related to this monitoring – that is the specific criminalisation of unwilling farmers through economic offences – fell short of the expectations of the state's and police's leadership.' Lindenberger, 'Der ABV Als Landwirt', 184. (My translation).

427 See also Bauerkämper, *Ländliche Gesellschaft in Der Kommunistischen Diktatur*, pp. 470–82.

428 All in all 205 type I farms were affected, and 14 type III farms. In addition, eight horticultural collectives had reported resignations, but no state-run or type II farm. HStAD 11646/ BDVP 23.1.590, p.174-182; Einschätzung zu der Austrittsbewegung aus den LPG im Kreis Löbau (Löbau, 5.7.1961).

429 Ibid. Twenty-two had been members of the NSDAP and the SS.

430 Ibid. In addition, six members of the DCU and one NPDP members had withdrawn. In light of these numbers, it is unlikely that party political affiliation had played a role.

combination of a weak state-controlled sector and corresponding high 'enemy activity'.[431] Kemnitz and Rupperdorf especially were mentioned as places of alleged, organised planning towards the complete disbanding of the local *LPG*. In Ruppersdorf 28 resignations were handed in at once but it was 'not yet known who had the initiative in this. The investigation […] is pending'.[432] Down the road in Kemnitz, Gerhard Höfer's biography and behaviour condensed to a stereotypical image of the enemy: former NSDAP member, large farmer and the person 'who wrote the declaration of withdrawal which the other members then signed.'

When it came to the reasons for the resignations, the report presented organisational difficulties alongside the biographies of those involved. Many statements mentioned the advanced age of the applicant or personal conflicts within the collective. Often these issues were expressed in combination with fundamental criticism and disenchantment with the LPG system. One farmer by the name of Krause

> stated that the LPG had increased his work load because he no longer has his fields next to his house but has to walk to other parts of the village. This gave him too much discomfort. He also stated that during the agitation campaign too many promises were made when it comes to support by the MTS etc. and that these promises were not kept today. Also the maintenance of the fields is not compatible with his habits, he cannot watch this much longer and therefore no longer wants to be a member.

When it came to the political assessment of the 'wave', more explanatory virtue was ascribed to biography and character than structural or organisational issues. The identity of a person deviating from the party's course took precedence over local conditions because they were self-explanatory to the report's authors and readers alike. The need for de-constextualisation stood at the basis of this. Causes like organisational difficulties and local or personal conditions were indeed registered by the apparatus, but in the end were ideologically less relevant and given less weight as an explanation on a large, general level. They were thus of no use in the consideration of preventive measures. The suspicion of the author that this 'wave' was 'organised by the enemy' has to be seen in a similar light, just as blaming groups of individuals was more expedient than questioning structures. In this, the report discussed here is reminiscent of the treatment of chairman Exner in Ludwigsdorf and, although perhaps less so, of the new farmers' letters.

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431 Ibid. In Cunewalde ten farmers operated outside the collective sector, in Bischdorf 12, in Herwigsdrof 13 and in Kemnitz 32.
432 Ibid.

Hengst and Hartmann sent their report to Dresden a day before the withdrawals would be dealt with in a public setting. The forum of collectivised peasants was intended as a county-wide show of support for the regime and appears to have proceeded as planned. Not only was 'the role of the fascists involved [...] openly unmasked', it was also 'common among farmers' to disprove that the resignations were connected 'in this country [to] the consolidation of agriculture and [...] to the politics of the GDR and its strengthening'[433]. In terms of the overall situation in Löbau, Hartmann and Hengst 'estimated that the forum unconditionally contributed to the offensive implementation of the politics of party and government towards ensuring the further consolidation of cooperative work.'[434] The authors also made it clear that in their opinion those present had all been 'opposed' to resignation from collective farms and that 'in their discussion [had] supported the correctness of the politics of party and government.'[435]

The propensity of state-socialist actors to represent reality along a Manichean line of friendly and enemy agents is a truism at this stage. Similar to the structure of mood reports at the time, some space was given to criticism. A number of 'critical indications' against chairmen of collective farms were made but not recorded in detail. As the relationship between the collectivised farmers and their contact people would suggest, much of this took the form of loyal criticism. Statements like the following de-personalised a share of the overall responsibility in a way which was harmless to those involved because it was so general:

> since the completion of the transformation the immediate help and support for the new collective farms, especially of type I farms, was strongly neglected by the party, state institutions as well as *Patenbetriebe*. The observed unclarity and unsolved problems will remain unsolved and existent.'[436]

For all the interest in individuals and their biographies, names are conspicuously absent in the report on the forum. Arguably, it was not relevant for the security apparatus what exactly was said by whom during a public event as long the overall direction was endorsed. The general affirmation of ideology was what counted during the forum's

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433 Ibid.

434 Ibid.

435 Ibid.

436 *Patenbetriebe* were factories in nearby towns and cities which had been twinned with the nascent LPGs for the sake of organisational and ideological support. The underlying idea was that contact with ideologically advanced workers would rub off onto the peasants. Another example of this train of thought is the campaign of sending industrial workers to the countryside, also to work on collective farms. On this campaign consult Witkowski's informative study. See Gregory R. Witkowski, 'On the Campagin Trail. State-Planning and Eigen-Sinn in a Communist Campaign to Transform the East German Countryside', *Central European History*, 37.3 (2004), 400–422.

engagement with the 'resignation wave'. Just as in the aftermath of other crises, party and security forces were interested in registering *general* support for the regime by a *large* number of people in Löbau.

Popular opinion was expressed in a way which *served everyone present during the forum*. The incarnation of popular opinion upon which peasants and party-state agreed upon was of course conditioned by the meeting's public setting. The peasants affirming their support for the collectivised system and the regime did so for a plethora of reasons which can not be unraveled at this stage. They did, however, avoid the regime's negative attention and branding as enemies which they would have incurred had they refused the regime *publicly* and *in the moment* when a show of support had been expected. In this regard, the forum was a successful instance of the creation of a 'social consensus and reaffirming the image of unity' on the collectivised countryside.[437]

Public displays of discursive affirmation were a consistent expression of the aspirations of modern European dictatorships:

> Public expressions of support were precisely what [the regimes] wanted, and its hardly surprising that there were those ready to provide them: the benefits of doing so were obvious. And as far as fascist [or Communist] claims to enjoy popular consensus are concerned, a regime that requires unanimity of support will generally claim that it has this unanimity; it is part of the game to assert as reality what may in fact be wishful thinking.[438]

It is not suggested that diverse phenomena like pre-war fascism and post-war state socialism are conflated. However, the managing of public affirmation is one instance where the classic workings of modern dictatorship were visible in both contexts.

2.4. Summary

As Kershaw observed, with mood reports the 'picture remains impressionistic, but the material is often so direct and expressive that there can be little mistaking the broad lines of mood and opinion.'[439] In the case of Eastern Saxony, agricultural quotas and differentiation were highly contentious issues which dominated the rural political discourse until they were replaced by collectivisation. In the course of the chapter it was shown how individual statements were integrated into representations of popular opinion. These representations were binary in their structure and classified by the authors of the reports either as affirmative or dissenting. In addition, the representations of popular opinion

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437 Balázs Apor.
438 Paul Corner, 'Italian Fascism'.
439 Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich*, 10.

discussed here exhibited the mechanisms by which local functionaries reacted to criticism and generated affirmation or at least discipline. Four findings of the analysis will be recapitulated by way of summarising the preceding.

Regarding the internal workings of the party apparatus in the early GDR, it emerged from the analysis that local grievances and problems tended to be discussed without reference to ideological argumentation but rather in light of the situation at hand. This context-sensitive aspect receded as representations of popular opinion were transmitted to higher hierarchical levels. As the sequence on the regional and national DBD mood reports has shown, this de-contextualisation advanced as the reports became less a tool of information but more of political decision making.

The setting in which critical statements were uttered has proven key for their interpretation. General opposition of farmers was recorded especially during public meetings where the speaker could avoid identification and could expect a (silent) backing by his peers, as for example during the peasant meeting in Zodel. In public spheres where the contact between functionaries and farmers was more immediate, e.g. during assemblies of collective farms, the proceedings gave space to the expression of loyal criticism which was more complex in its intention and reception. Complaints about organisational matters, criticism of individuals and the administrative apparatus could function as a corrective from below as long as they remained within the discursive framework of the socialist transformation. In this form, they were sought by functionaries because they could point to areas of improvement which would in turn increase the popular acceptance of the new measures. At the same time, individuals hoped to influence or revert decisions in their favour. Complaints about the height of or mistakes associated with the quotas were received differently than ideologically phrased opposition to the quota system as such, and the reports indicate an awareness of this on the side of the peasants.

The treatment of conflict within public spheres incorporated both the individualisation of guilt and the de-personalisation of responsibility. Misjudgment and failures were routinely presented as belonging to the past. The recognition of past failures in each case marked the onset of the present overcoming of this failure and the promise of a more successful future, regardless if local plan figures or the precarious financial situation of a collective farm were discussed. In this context, local representatives like farm managers or cell secretaries were singled out and ascribed guilt, as happened with chairman Exner in Ludwigsdorf. As a way of cautioning others, the sanctioning of individuals frequently went hand in hand with evocations of collectively shared

responsibilities, for example when a party secretary promised the support of the party for a collective farm without specifying how this support would look like.

Discipline and control were not only generated within closed meetings of party cells and farm workers. The discursive affirmation from below was similarly managed during public meetings. Again, these displays of support and the successful overcoming of past problems served two causes. Within the apparatus, it counted that a broad support for a given topic was achieved. As a result, the debates leading to this public consensus were not mapped in detail. Locally, the expression of affirmation *on stage* served to stabilise the regime's claims to power. In the case of the resignation wave in Löbau in 1961, the public show of support for collectivisation consolidated the representation that the peasantry itself recognised the resignation wave as the work of faulty political consciousness. As in other cases, a version of popular opinion favouring the socialist transformation was constructed from the public speeches by farmers.

3. Representations of Popular Opinion in Lower Silesia

The events associated with the foundation of collective farms in Poland has been described in detail in the literature, including aspects of violence, coercion and administrative malpractice. Next to force, unpredictability has been made out in the literature as the second characteristic of the period. The establishment of a Polish and Communist administration was often ad hoc in nature and included frequent policy changes – of which collectivisation is a prime example. During the founding years of the People's Republic, in Lower Silesia, 'there was a feeling that land reform was temporary and the majority of settlers, uprooted and culturally distinct, suspected that Polish control over these lands would not be permanent.'[440] Between uncertainty and coercion an imagery has emerged in the secondary literature which leaves little space for the mundane, small scale dealings in the villages. However, the popular discourse around collectivisation did not cease once the farms took up operations. Support for and membership to the collectives tended to be greatest among poorer peasants, many of whom had already been organised in co-operatives of parcelled farms, and demobilised soldiers.[441]

The consolidation of Communist power in Poland underwent comparable stages as in the GDR and indeed most Warsaw pact states. However, the new Polish republic witnessed more actions of mass violence and repression than its Western neighbour. In addition to the ethnic homogenisation of the population, the organisation of control and discipline within the party was a major development of the time. Both within and outside the party, the sense of the party's precariousness of power was also fueled by the armed resistance of partisans to the new system which lasted from 1944 until the early 1950s. The high Stalinist period – including show trials, forged elections, mass arrests, spontaneous violence and the suppression of any opposition- is represented also by the merger of the PPR and the PPS to the PZPR in 1948. The decision to collectivise agricultural production was thus consistent with the leadership's aim to expand control on the county-side while at the same time impaired by the general sense of crisis and instability.

In order to complement representations of state coercion and resisting peasants during the foundation period, the following chapter takes a closer look at typical, everyday

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440 Jarosz, 'The Collectivization of Agriculture in Poland: Causes of Defeat', 118.
441 On the socio-demographic structure of the collecitve farms see further Hofmann, 171–75. Also, Jarosz, 'Konflikty Chłopów Z Władzą W Okresie "Planowego Skupu Zboża" W Latach 1950–1951', 152.

communication between party-state agents and the working peasants in the *społzdielnie.* In other words, how did members of collective farms speak about their new situation when meeting party officials? Which topics were contentious? How did people justify their intention to resign or to remain, how did their peers react to this, and how did the visiting instructors make sense of their encounters?

3.1. Reports from Visits to Collective Farms

In mid to late August 1951, the voivodeship committee of the PZPR in Wrocław dispatched cadres from the regional and county level to the villages. Apart from surveying the distribution and work of the party and mass organisations like the Union of Polish Youth, they strove to provide an over-view of the political and economic situation in the collective farms which had been founded in Lower Silesia since 1948.[442] The PZPR instructors travelled to the villages at a time when the country was firmly under Stalinist control. Collectivisation had been adopted for two and a half years and preparations for a constitution were under way as the Moscow-oriented faction – often referred to as 'Stalin's hard-line cronies in Poland'[443] – consolidated their control over the Party. The cultural and economic harmonisation of Poland with their Soviet model which had been set fully in train in 1948 was advancing steadily and in tune with the Stalinist consolidation in the political sphere. The same year Władysław Gomułka was imprisoned for rightist diversion after having lost a power battle with the then-head of the PZPR, Bolesław Bierut. The PZPR's local nomenclature was similarly unstable as a series of purges, unremitting promotions and demotions, and the evolving demands of government saw swathes of cadres dispensed across the whole country, usually at short notice.[444]

Emerging out of this cultural backdrop, the visiting instructors in the Lower Silesian countryside began their visits by seeking out the chairmen of the collectives and the party cell secretaries, often with mixed results. The degree of political organisation in the region was reported to be low; in the majority of villages visited in August 1951 small or non-existent PZPR cells were reported back to Wrocław. In addition to gathering statistical information about the performance of the farms, the instructors concerned

442 The Union of Polish Youth is commonly abbreviated ZMP (*Związek Młodzieży Polskiej)*.
443 Patryk Babiracki, *Soviet Soft Power in Poland: Culture and the Making of Stalin's New Empire, 1943-1957* (UNC Press Books, 2015), 2.
444 See Paczkowski, 222.

themselves with the plethora of sensitivities and quarrels, often intra-personal and symbolic, which governed the everyday on the farms.

3.1.1. Resignations

Conversations with members who wanted to resign play a prominent role in the reports. For example, eleven of the 53 members in Poręba, located in the very south of the voivodeship, had handed in their resignation in August 1951. Not uncommonly, most of the grain harvest and subsequent ploughing was still undertaken individually and according to a local party member the farm had sufficient horses and machines.[445] Half of the applications referred to health issues as reasons for their resignation, like the farmer who pointed out that he was 'sick at the heart'; the instructor noted that even after a 'long conversation with him, he didn't change his decision'.[446] Another man merely said 'he was sick and his wife also needed treatment', and that he was anyway 'estranged' from the collective.[447] Other resignations were handed in by carpenters, blacksmiths or locksmiths who wanted to return to their trade, often in an urban context. In spite of individual conversations, many 'categorically refused to withdraw their resignations'. Few explained why; one blacksmith mentioned he had spoken to the prosecutor in nearby Bystryzca who had told him that those who fell ill and did not go to work in the collective would be dealt with by the prosecutor. For the blacksmith, remaining in the collective 'in those conditions' was impossible.

Migration from villages to the cities in post-war Poland was both a part of a long-term trend and the result of the socialist steering of the national economy.[448] With the onset of the first Six-Year Plan in 1950, more than 140 000 villagers moved to urban areas, often to the new centres of heavy industry such as Nowa Huta.[449] The majority were young, more than half was female, and the share of those working in agriculture in relation to the overall working population declined from 56 % in 1950 to 47 % in 1960.[450] In the 'Regained

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445 APW KW PZPR 74/IX/11, p. 13-16; Sprawozdanie z wyjazdu do Spółdzielni Produkcynej w Porębie, pow. Bystrzyca, w dniu 26. sierpnia 1951 r., celem udzielenia pomocy w umocnieniu Spółdzielni.

446 Ibid.

447 Ibid.

448 On the *longue durée* of Polish migration from the villages to urban areas, both in a national and international context, see Bukraba-Rylska's highly informative discussion in Bukraba-Rylska, 233–57.

449 During this period approx. 700 000 migrated to the urban centres. This figure is taken from Michał Pohoski, *Migracje Ze Wsi Do Miast. Studium Wychodźctwa W Latach 1945-1957 Oparte Na Wynikach Ankiety Instytutu Ekonomiki Rolnej* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne, 1963). See also Malgorzata Fidelis, *Women, Communism, and Industrialization in Postwar Poland* (Cambridge University Press, 2010), 99–129.

450 Bukraba-Rylska, 223. On the migration of women and youth specifically see Fidelis, 107.

Territories' this trend took place in special circumstances. After the (post-) war induced mass migrations and redrawn borders, the Western voivodeships were overcrowded with new arrivals. In Lower Silesia this concerned especially the southern counties which could not accommodate everyone with sufficient housing or even land.[451] In order to bring people to move to the cities the MZO took to distributing smaller, economically non-viable, parcels of land.[452] Contemporary reports estimated that in 1948 more than 5700 holdings had been abandoned as a result of the MZO's policies and the challenges to post-war farming. It was also estimated that roughly 70 per cent of those leaving moved to towns and cities.[453]

The connection between peasants abandoning their farms and (rumours of) collectivisation was not explicitly reflected upon in the reports. Rather, the resignation wishes were traced to practical failings of the new system and their individual difficulties. Apart from old age, illness and vocational migration, the organisation of labour was a common source of complaint, as were specific local constellations like peasants withholding their draught horses and cattle from the collective pool.[454] Most farms had to work the fields simultaneously to constructing and repairing the collective buildings; in some cases the milking took place in near darkness because cowsheds had no lighting, if the cattle could be held in stables at all.[455] The suitability of the land for grain or cattle farming only became clear to the settlers over the years, often the crop plans were not amended and yields stayed low as a consequence.[456] Even in places were the attitude of the villagers towards the collective farm was described as 'good' and there being 'no tendencies to disband the *spółdzielnia'*, incomes were pitiful as the day-rates for work were low.[457] In addition, many members were described as being 'incapable of the work' while what little book-keeping which was done was erratic at best. Similar conditions were

451 The MZO estimated in January 1947 that more that in the voivodeship Wrocław more than 49.000 people lived on the country-side than could be housed and employed. This surplus of rural population was even more pronounced in Upper Silesia, including the Opole region, with more than 440.000 excess inhabitants. Figures taken from Hofmann, 438.

452 Hofmann, 165.

453 The remaining 30 % sought to receive different, larger plots of land. In the first quarter of 1949 the numbers remained high, with more than 1400 plots being returned. Figures taken from Hofmann, 184.

454 Comp. APW KW PZPR 74/IX/51, p. 42-45; Sprawozdanie z analizy R.Z.S. w Dziecmierowicach, Wałbrzych dnia 29.8.51.

455 APW KW PZPR 74/IX/51, p.42-45; Dziecmierowicach 29.08.1951.

456 APW KW PZPR 74/IX/11, p.266-267; Sprawozdanie z wyjazdu w teren w dniu 16.VIII.51. do pow. Ząbkowice. Spółdzielnia Produkcyjna typ I. Rudnica.

457 Ibid.

reported from most of the visits, especially with regard to bookkeeping, revision committees and day rates.[458]

The personal experiences of many settlers coloured their expectations of the economic performance of the new farms. In Lądku, the farmer Paczkowski explained he wanted to resign because the chairman had already sold five of the farm's horses. The farm's 95 hectares thus had to be worked with the remaining five, which were to be sold off soon, and in Paczkowski's eyes this was an impossible state of affairs.[459] His seven female and ten male colleagues were similarly critical, arguing that since they came from 'behind the river Bug' they 'already knew what the collectives were like'.[460] They derived their knowledge from having lived through the whole-scale economic integration of the Eastern Polish territories into the Soviet Union, including collectivisation, after the occupation in September 1939. This line of reasoning – the evocation of the Soviet Russian experiences – came to be wide-spread across Lower Silesia after the arrival of Eastern expellees who recounted their eyewitness accounts.[461] It was spread not only by the new arrivals but also by Red Army soldiers and represents arguably the most common and quoted criticism against collective farms, not only in Poland.[462] In this case, the visiting instructor concluded his report with the laconic observation that 'they are speaking of [imminent] war', which was a widespread fear at the time.[463]

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458 Not everywhere was the situation as dramatic as in Lądku where no books were kept because no one knew how. See APW KW PZPR 74/XI/11, p. 10; Sprawozdanie z wyjazdu służbowego po linii KW w sprawie udzielenia pomocy KP w umocnieniu Spółdzielnie Producyjnych na terenie powiatu bystrzyckiego, [no date] 1951. In Miszkowice, working norms and day rates were agreed upon verbally by the members which often led to quarrels but at the same time did away with the need for written documentation. The visiting instructor declared this the biggest shortcoming of the farm which was otherwise doing alright. See APW KW PZPR 74/XI/26, p. 69-72; Analiza spółdzielni Produkcyjnej III-go typu "Wolność" w Miszkowicach pow. Kamienna Góra, Miszkowice, dnia 30.VIII.51 r..

459 APW KW PZPR 74/ IX/ 11, p. 10; Lądku, 1951.

460 Ibid. The territories East of the river Bug, a tributary to the Wistula, had been part of the Polish Republic before the Second World War. With the Westward movement of the Polish borders - agreed upon at the conferences in Yalta and Potsdam, the incorporation of these regions into the Soviet Union was finalised.

461 For examples of this see Łukasz Kamiński, *Polacy Wobec Nowej Rzeczywistości 1944/48* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2000), 266.

462 The important role of Red Army soldiers in the creation of the popular imagination in central and eastern Europe of Soviet Russian collective farms has been noted by a number of scholars. See further Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism*, 11. In the context of East Germany Bauerkämper observed that "Contrary to party propaganda, the Soviet Union was clearly not seen as the superior model for agrarian transformation in the GDR. (…) [T]he experiences of life in the Soviet Union as soldiers or prisoners of war combined to create a strong aversion toward the collectives.' Bauerkämper, 'Collectivization and Memory: Views of the Past and the Transformation of Rural Society in the GDR from 1952 to the Early 1960s', 217.

463 APW KW PZPR 74/ IX/ 11, p. 10; Lądku, 1951. Andrzej Paczkowski has argued that this fear was more pronounced in the Western territories due to the strong presence of the Red Army in the region and 'the endless "campaign for peace" and the constant references to the German threat' in the official discourse which kept the possibility of a renewed hostilities present. Paczkowski, 217.

News reports and rumours about troubles in the agricultural sector were mentioned just as often as personal experiences. The incidents of Gryfice in the summer of 1950 had quickly become a household reference also amongst collectivised farmers and served as opener for dissenting reflections about the state of Polish farming.[464] Nationally and in Lower Silesia as well, tensions within the *spółdzielnie* were related to Gryfice and its aftermath. The violence during the grain acquisition and the official back-pedalling afterwards affected many new farms, including those which appeared to be stable. In Grochowa, for example, only three farmers of the village had not joined and the poor peasants were openly in favour of the merger of their farms. Nevertheless, after Gryfice and the publication of 'the resolution of the central committee', the whole local *gromada* had written a letter to 'the Minister of Agriculture about the disbanding of the collectives, (…) saying that their accession had been forced and that they would like to leave the collective since membership 'was not mandatory.'[465] The situation was delicate for the visiting instructor as 'law-abiding officials were accused of excessive liberalism in the face of the "class enemy" and were also punished.'[466] Since the signatories only superficially interpreted the propaganda of voluntarism correctly, it was all the more important for the reporting instructor to demonstrate and implement the 'correct' understanding of the situation, that is to prevent resignations while not undermining the official view of 'distortions.'

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464 The Gryfice incidents took place during a state-controlled campaign for the acquisition of grain which was aimed at maintaining the availability of grain to the state market and establishing control over the market end of production in the run up to collectivisation. During this campaign instances of malpractice and coercion were reported across the country but were specifically violent in Gryfice, located in the West Pomeranian voivodeship. According to Jarosz, 'the program was met with such resistance among peasants that local leaders, under pressure from Moscow, resorted to forcing farmers to joining cooperatives.' (Jarosz, 'The Collectivization of Agriculture in Poland: Causes of Defeat', 123.) The application of force was subsequently labelled as a 'distortion' by the PZPR and publicly condemned in the public media. The incidents prominently re-entered the public sphere in May 1951 when the show trials against local leaders of the ZMP, the militia, and the party commenced. (Comp. Jarosz, p.124.) Bogdan Sekściński mentions Gryfice as the most famous and most violent transgression during the grain action. Comp. See Sekściński, 254. On the action of grain-buying comp. Jarosz, 'Konflikty Chłopów Z Władzą W Okresie "Planowego Skupu Zboża" W Latach 1950–1951'.

465 All quotes taken from APW KW PZPR 74/IX/11, p. 265; Sprawozdanie z wyjazdu służbowego do Spółdzielni Produkcyjnej w gromadzie Grochowa p. Ząbkowice sl., Wrocław, dnia 27/VIII.51. The resolutions mentioned here were passed by the Central Committee of the PZPR in the aftermath of Gryfice, condemning the violation of the principle of voluntary membership. Comp. Jarosz, 'The Collectivization of Agriculture in Poland: Causes of Defeat', 124. The visiting instructor was troubled by this reference, not only because of the argumentative pitfalls but also because of the spread of this reasoning. He noted thatt 'It is the opinion of the whole *gromada*. The class enemy uses this argument.' A *gromada* was the smallest administrative entity in the People's Republic, usually covering one village, from 1952 until 1972. It was replaced by the *gmina* which can incorporate more than one settlement.

466 Jarosz, 'The Collectivization of Agriculture in Poland: Causes of Defeat', 124.

3.1.2. Criticism of Local Cadres

Local representatives of the party state were often held responsible for the ever present lack of organisation. Instructors reported how 'for two hours [they] could not find' local party secretaries or that others did not know about recently handed in resignations.[467] Descriptions of drunkenness and inactivity were frequent; in Lądku the collective's chairman was busy with his lover.[468] In other places chairmen lacked 'all energy' to agitate the remaining individual farmers to join. In one case a vice-chairman was said not to have set a foot into the collective for more than three months. In the same village the local PZPR secretary 'did not show the smallest interest in party work' and was drinking 'too much vodka', even at the meeting held that day.[469] The voivodeship committee took a similarly dim view of these cadres but accepted the more sanitised version that they were incapable of leading groups or large-scale agricultural operations.

To the instructors, the good standing and character of local functionaries was clearly a pre-requisite for the internal and external functioning of the collectives. The responsibility for organisational 'weaknesses' and work problems was routinely attributed to individual chairmen and secretaries, not only by the instructors. While staying at a collective whose 'overall situation [was]not good', the instructor spoke to some of the 38 members about the village's remaining individual farmers and 'about the topic of the harvest and the *spółdzielnie*. The farmers said that it was the fault of the directorate that they don't go to work because the directorate does not care about these topics.'[470] In

467 APW KW PZPR 74/XI/11, p. 268-269; Sprawozdanie z wyjazdu w teren po linii umocnienia społdz. Prod. do grom. Brzeznica pow. Ząbkowice, Wrocław 28.08.1951. This is also mentioned in APW KW PZPR 74/XI/11, p. 264; Sprawozdanie z wyjazdu służb. do Spółdzielni produkcyjnej Byczeń pow. Ząbkowice w dniu 26 sierpnia 51. In Byczeń, 34 of the 52 members wanted to withdraw.
468 APW KW PZPR 74/ IX/ 11, p.10; Lądku, 1951.
469 APW KW PZPR 74/IX/51, p. 42-45; Dziecmierowice, 29.8.51. Another continuous problem was alcoholism and drunkenness on duty. References to this were a fixture in many reports throughout the collectivisation period. In Borowa, for example, as late as 1956 the party cell secretary was described as 'the biggest drunkard in the village' who managed to wangle vodka from his peers for his daily inebriety. APW KW PZPR 74/XI/11, p. 34-38; Notatka o sytuacji w spółdzielni produkcyjnej Borowa pow. Oleśnica (…), [no date] 1956. On the anti-alcoholic stance of the regime c.f. Jan C. Behrends, 'Rausch Und Depression. Alkohol Im Kommunistischen Polen.', in *Rausch Und Diktatur. Inszenierung, Mobilisierung Und Kontrolle in Totalitären Systemen* (Frankfurt am Main/New York: Campus, 2006), 239–54. For a more general discussion of personal hygiene and sobriety in the Soviet programme, see Tricia Starks, *The Body Soviet: Propaganda, Hygiene, and the Revolutionary State* (Madison, Wis. ; London: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008).
470 The term directorate referred to the economic and political leadership, i.e. the chairman, the bookkeeper, and the party cell secretary. APW KW PZPR 74/XI/11, p. 268-269; Sprawozdanie z wyjazdu w teren po linii umocnienia społdz. Prod. do grom. Brzeznica pow. Ząbkowice, Wrocław 28.08.1951.

Lutomnia Górna, the absence of four PZPR members from work on the farm had resulted in disciplinary issues with 'many other members'.[471]

Instances occurred when the practised relationship of power was momentarily tilted and gave way to the open expression of indifference, annoyance and frustration. When one instructor pointed out that agitation for the collective might just as well be undertaken during his weekend visit, the 'the party secretary said he would not work because it was Sunday.'[472] After the summons of the chairman, he walked out and instead gathered the village's youth to go to a football match in the next village.[473] Similarly, the presence of outsiders did not always keep a check on the frustrations and bad temper of chairmen. During a members' meeting in Poręba about the backlog of work, a farmer narrated how 'the chairman Brukow when asked who will do the work, had said, that he will gather the sick ones and will take them to the bridge from which they will shit [from fear].'[474] Brukow later explained that he had spoken 'out of annoyance' with the weakness of the workers.[475] Such questionable personal behaviour fed into the individualisation of guilt and responsibility which has already been noted in the Saxon case studies. As Rev noted, this attribution was a consequence of contemporary conceptualisations of collectivity as such 'since in the theory of the period the concept of a collective legal person hardly existed, responsibility could be nothing but individual.'[476]

The visiting instructors also acted as lightning rods for the frustration of the locals with the party itself. The absence of contact to higher party organisations like the district committees was experienced as a lack of support, even abandonment by the party at a time when it was clearly needed. In Rudnica, many complained that no one from the PZPR's county committee had been to the farm since its foundation, and that no form of support had reached them so far.[477] It was commonly noted that the work organisation on farms was not systematic and that contact with superordinate party organs was scarce, despite the wide-spread financial problems. Often recently founded collectives were already behind

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471 APW KW PZPR 74/IX/47, p.12; Notatka z pracy społdzueln I ich umocnieniu jak tez rozbudowanie na terenie Powiatu Swidnica, Świdnica [no date]. (Original spelling).

472 APW KW PZPR 74/IX/11, p. 266-267; Rudnica, 16.08.1951.

473 Ibid.

474 APW KW PZPR 74/XI/11, p. 13-16; Sprawozdanie z wyjazdu do Spółdzielni Produkcyjnej w Porębie, pow. Bystrzyc w dniu 25. Sierpnia 1951 r., celem udzielenia pomocy w umocnieniu Spółdzielni, [no place/date].

475 Ibid.

476 Rév, 338.

477 APW KW PZPR 74/IX/11, p. 266-267; Rudnica, 16.08.1951. In other places, members asked for 'better orientation' in organisational and political matters. Comp. APW KW PZPR 74/XI/11, p.273; Sprawozdanie grupy instruktorów Zarządu Wojewódzkiego ZMP w wyjazdzie do Ząbkowice w dniu 28.VIII. br., Ząbkowice, 31.08.1951.

their harvest schedule while still getting organised and progress was slow because of inexperience and again, the absence of support.[478] For some the short period since the foundation had been long enough to convince them to return to central Poland to farm a smaller holding rather than continuing.[479]

The charges of neglect towards the higher levels of the party, especially the district level, were rarely levelled at individuals and were more vague than criticism directed at chairmen and secretaries. Mostly they were formulated in the negative: *no one* had come, instead of pointing out that such and such a comrade had not shown up. This was done either out of consideration, or out of fear of possible repercussions of a denunciation or, most likely, because the members of the district committees were not personally known to the farmers.

3.1.3. Enemy Activity – The Case of Wilhelm Majewski

Most reports from August 1951 provided sketchy images of the socio-economic situation as they were compiled after short stays which included one, at most two, meetings on site. Their authors relied particularly on their impressions of atmosphere and a set of analytic tools. As a result, their conclusions tend to be formulaic, for example when the membership numbers of the PZPR and other official organisations like the ZMP or ZSCh are used to deduct the overall political attitudes in a community. Negative reflections by locals on the collective system as such or the local collective farm are ascribed to the influence and activity of the class enemy and rarely specified further. One reason for this was the dependence of the visitors on their local interlocutors since they arrived without knowledge of the web of social relations and the prehistories of the current difficulties. From some reports an awareness of this emerges. However, reflections on the limitations of the quality of information gathered, especially in terms of local attitudes, tended to focus on the short duration of the stay rather on diverging priorities and needs in Wrocław and the villages.

In Lipienica, a group of comrades around Edmund Klat and Teresa Dziak elicited a more detailed picture of the state of affairs. Similar to many of their colleagues, they were worried about the state of the local organisations: neither the ZMP nor the ZSCh were

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478 APW KW PZPR 74/IX/44, p. 33-35; Sprawozdanie z działalności grupy Spółdzielni Produkcyjnej w Drutowicach typu III-ciego, Drutowice, 24.08.1951.
479 Ibid.

active and the new village hall stood empty.[480] The Circle of Rural Housewives (KGW) had not come together for six months, basically since the collective farm had been founded.[481] The circle's president, however, had publicly signalled the group's support for the spółdzielnie 'although she herself had not yet joined' and only one woman was active in political work.[482] The remainder, so the authors, 'agitate against the collective farm' and abstain themselves from work there even though they had signed the membership forms.

For Dziak and Klat, the paralysis in the various state-affiliated organisations which should generate support for the Communist project amongst youth, women and 'party-less' farmers were merely symptoms of the 'enemy influence' which had befallen the local party cell. The first secretary had 'only in the last days' withdrawn from the influence of one Wilhelm Majewski and had publicly 'unmasked' him to the village. The second secretary, characterised as a good worker and having a positive attitude towards the new state, had also been 'turned' by Majewski since working next to him. In their eyes not all was lost, however as 'long conversations' and 'intensive work' might still lead to a reversal of opinion, the authors estimated.

In order to make Majewski fit into the template of class enemy, they proceeded to prove the negative effects of his 'agitation.' Domestic details are presented as evidence: the wife of party secretary, Zołnowa, was shown to having observed that 'my husband, who was well disposed towards me, since joining the collective farm often fights with me'. In her eyes this was a result of her husband's exposition to Majewski in the new working environment. The extent and force of his opposition, however, would emerge most clearly from his own speech. People had overheard how he had boasted 'that he had been in Russia with his father and besides knew from friends that such is the poverty and hunger in Russia, that there are also intelligent people who did not join the *kolchozes* and who are still alive.' A condensed, almost apocalyptic, rendering of conditions on the Soviet countryside completed his characterisation: he was quoted to having spoken to Eastern Poles 'who told me that in Russia there is such poverty that a piece of bread is hard to come by'. When the former chairman of the collective had replied to this that the day rates

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480 APW KW PZPR 74/XI/26, p. 56-65; Sprawozdanie grupy towarzyszy two. Klata Edmunda I Dziak Teresy ze spoldzielni produkcyjnej w Lipienicy, gmina Krzeszow spoldzielnia typu III, [no place] 20.08.1951. (Original spelling). Lipienica is located in the south-western corner of the Wrocław voivodeship, close to Kamienna Góra and Wałbryzch. The local ZSCh consisted largely of farmers outside the collective, its leader was 'of good will' yet illiterate and complained of the 'lack of attention and care of the higher instances of the organisation.'

481 The Circle of Rural Housewives is translated from *Koło Gospodyń Wiejskich*. The KGW was a state-affiliated mass organisation and the rural counterpart to the League of Women.

482 APW KW PZPR 74/XI/26, p.56-65; Lipienica, 20.08.1951.

would rise by 7 zł if everyone worked well, Majewski reacted in tone: 'You sucker will work for the *kolchoz*, you don't want to work your own field and work individually, to live like a master.'

The fact that most quotations attributed to Majewski and his wife – who apparently concurred with her husband by saying that they were 'clean Poles, no one of us has anything to do with the Party' – were based on hearsay should not be forgotten. The degree of censure directed at Majewski is in so far remarkable as other villagers were quoted with equally problematic statements, for instance, the farmer Pawlowski, explained his absence from collective work with his opinion that the 'government leads a fight against the peasant in the villages, it wants to finish him. The law oppresses him. I am an old socialist, I have worked in the party (…) for 35 years.'[483] The focus, however, rests with Majewski and his associates who are equally implicated. The previous relationship between him and the authors of the report is not elucidated nor is indicated which consequences, if any, could be expected.

The authors thread a fine line between apparently disinterested reporting and denunciation while demonstrating the successful internalisation of the Communist logic of unmasking clandestine enemies. Their reasoning expressed concern for the well-being of the new institutions and the positive development of the attitudes in rural communities. In doing so, they exhibited traditional Communist narrations of progress by identifying and overcoming obstacles, by identifying faults in the (political) consciousness.[484] The preoccupation with Majewski's identity as an enemy is to be read in light of traditional Communist anxieties over so-called enemy agents who *needed* to be unmasked. The question remains to which degree Majewski had hidden his identity as class enemy and whether he himself would have conceived of his opinions in this manner.

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483 APW KW PZPR 74/XI/26, p. 56-65; Lipienica, 20.08.1951.

484 The element of unmasking a hitherto clandestinely operating (class) enemy, in this case Majewski, had a long tradition in thinking of Communist cadres. In the 1930s Soviet Union the reinvention of biographies included the creation of 'file selves' and the careful management of Communist identities. These identities could and were challenged in the course of political re-orientations in the party, or for no apparent reason during Party purges. These challenges, and the anxieties they aroused, were aimed at uncovering the hidden, masked enemy identities of rank-and-file and elevated members alike. For more on this point, see Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s*.

3.2. 'A Process of Convincing' - Defusing Criticism and Stabilising Control

The discussion above has focused on expressions of criticism by peasants and the procedure of the instructors during their visits. The economic situation of the collective farms and the interaction with the local government and the party were topics which were frequently debated during these encounters. The following section is dedicated to the instructors' strategies of reacting to this criticism and to their portrayal of the peasants in this context.

The mixture of recommendations and disciplinary actions taken by the instructors were based on the intention of the regional PZPR to strengthen existing and support failing farms. Successful collective farms were regarded as one facet of the improvement of conditions of the rural population; the practical and political benefits were self-evident from a Communist point of view: local living conditions would improve, support for (or at least silent acquiescence) for the new system of farming and of governing would rise, as well as food production; all in a controlled manner from which both the government and the population would profit. From early on, one main task of the instructors was to disprove those voices which said that 'they had not observed anything which would entice them to join' the collectives which already existed.[485]

Convening Meetings

Similar to their colleagues in East Germany and other Communist countries, instructors in Lower Silesia preferred the organisational framework of a meeting for channeling anger and maintaining the interpretive hegemony of the party. Depending on their composition and setting, meetings provided a (semi-)official space where control could be exercised and consent generated, precisely because they took place 'on stage'. Meetings represented a safe and effective tool for the cadres since a gathering's public nature, and the fact that statement could be recorded, marked the discursive boundaries of the discussion in the party-state's favour. Furthermore, they were a space of potentiality enlightened comrades speaking with conviction would ideally result in a change of hearts and minds. Resolutions like in Brzeznica that 'on Monday everyone will plough the harvested soil together' signified the successful course of a meeting.[486]

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485 For example during the party seminary in Borowa. Comp. APW KW PZPR 74/IX/35, [no page number]; Sprawozdanie z odbytego seminarium w gromadzie Borowa, gm. Janowice, pow. Oleśnica w dniu 16.XII.1949 r., [no place/no date].

486 The performance of this statement was arguably more important than what actually happened on the field on Monday morning. APW KW PZPR 74/XI/11, p. 268-269; Brzeznica 28.08.1951.

As Scott observed, the 'combination of adaptive strategic behaviour [on the side of the farmers] and the dialogue implicit in most power relations ensures that public action will provide a constant stream of evidence that appears to support an interpretation of ideological hegemony'.[487] The workforce assemblies instigated by the visiting instructors also produced this stream of evidence. In Grochowa, for example, it was made clear at the beginning of the evening meeting that 'the question of the meeting could not be what the collective farm did or did not do' and that a dissolution was out of the question as it would have a 'demobilising' effect on the village's population. Following this, the course of the meeting was presented as a success since it 'created the opinion that in the *gromda* there will be a collective farm and that it will be good.'[488] Following this, the instructor divided the workers into groups of four and met them in their own homes in order to stabilise the public version of events.

This procedure, just as the convening of meetings and declarations of assent, were symbolic performances which were challenged by equally symbolic behaviour. The sense of control which was crucial to the success of these meetings was slippery and easily tilted. It depended on everyone keeping their temper: exclamations like '*we w*aited for three years for the Americans and now they found collectives here!'[489] displayed the fissures in the official script, especially if they were made by members.

The tension emerging from such statements was a consequence of previous experiences with representatives of the central authorities and local government alike. Since the onset of the collectivisation drive in 1948, and even more after Gryfice, visits by high-ranking and external cadres had become associated with verbal and physical pressure. Apart from head on confrontation, the agitators had elicited all varieties of avoidance – including peasants hiding in their fields until the agitators left.[490] The frequent references to old age and infirmity which were brought forward by farmers as explanations for not joining or resigning were another strategy of maintaining distance without openly confronting the emissaries of collectivisation.

Parallel to the symbolic control in the public sphere, acts of conveying the distance to the whole collectivisation project were carried out from under the cover of darkness and anonymity. In Grochowa, the wedding of Krosowski took place while the various meetings linked to the collective took place. The party guests must have been acutely aware of the

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487 Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 70.
488 APW KW PZPR 74/IX/11, p. 265; Grochowa, 27.08.1951.
489 APW KW PZPR 74/XI/11, p. 13-16; Poręba, 25.08.1951.
490 See Sekściński, 254.

visitor and his agenda. He heard 'racketing against the collective farm and singing of the melody of "Boże coś Polskę" together with other 'enemy words'.[491] The song *Boże coś Polskę* was singularly suited to convey, even hummed, allegiance to the patriotic, nationalist, conservative and quintessentially pre-Communist traditions in Poland, not only because of the evocation of God.[492] Scenes like above were far from uncommon. Less frequently villagers would not only symbolically but physically disturb the meetings until they had to be closed because fighting had broken out between the various fractions, some of whom were drunk.[493]

Another issue was the pressure which continued to be directed against those who had signed their resignations. Depending on the local personnel, the managing board of the collective, party secretaries together with the visiting cadres would seek to talk to the renegades in their homes, the village hall or on their fields as private or semi-private conversations had proven effective during the previous agitation periods.[494]

The basis of these actions was the argument that economically and politically well-run collectives would be the best deterrent of resignations while enticing the remaining individual farmers to join. The expansion of political mobilisation, agitation and 'enlightenment work' were standard demands and their absence a continuous source of criticism.[495] In the reports to Wrocław more support from district and voivodeship organs was recommended, especially from the party committees. On the regional level, the success of political agitation, including large meetings and deep conversations, was considered in an optimistic light. During a meeting of the 'whole political apparatus' of the KW, it was noted that 'because peasants were informed of the rule of law in Poland' and

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491 APW KW PZPR 74/IX/11, p. 265; Grochowa, 27.08.1951.

492 The melody of this song was written in 1816 by Alojzy Feliński and completed by the words of J.N. Kaszewski. Popular in the 1860s and 1870s, it had been described as alternative or unofficial anthem of Catholic Poland.

493 APW KW PZPR 74/IX/51, p. 42-45; Dziecmierowice, 29.8.51. The village councillor (*sołtys*) was regularly drunk before 11 am.

494 Comp. Sekściński, 259. As said, the conversations in smaller circles often took place in private settings. For one example see APW KW PZPR 74/XI/44, p. 43; Sprawozdanie ekipy politycznej wyjeżdżającej na Sp.Pr. w Działoszy typ III., [no place/no date]. The public representation that on many collective farms 'the work of the enemy is not visible (…) because people are 100 % convinced of the superiority of the collective farming' - was often directly counteracted by the reporting that farmers only retracted their resignation applications after these semi-private meetings of which no minutes were kept. For one example where it was noted that those wanting to leave 'retracted under force', see AP KW PZPR 74/IX/11, p. 17-29; Sprawozdanie z wyjazdu do Spółdzielni Produkcyjnej Długopole – Zdrój, pow. Bystrzyca w dniu 26. sierpnia 51 r., celem udzielenia pomocy w umocniueniu Spółdzielniu Produkcyjnych, [no place/no date].

495 This line of thought ran through all hierarchical levels of the PZPR, e.g. the disctrict PZPR in Świdnica observed that in its territory 'not enough political work' took place. Comp. APW KW PZPR 74/IX/47, p. 9-11; Informacyjna z przebiegu zakładania spółdzieln produkcjnych w powiecie Świdnice, [no place/no date].

that therefore they 'must be truthful towards the state and the collective' many peasants had returned horses, cows, seed, grain and machines which had gone missing from the depots. The cadres thought it equally promising that because 'it was explained to peasants that there was no force behind this foundation of the collective farm, peasants understood and in the majority of cases retracted their demands to disband the collective or resignations with good will.'[496]

Improving Administration

Beyond recommendations to motivate those who worked badly, the dire economic situation of many collectives was to be remedied by a variety of measures.[497] Generally, the attraction of the new farms was to be raised by 'easier access to credit, tax relief and exemption, priority status in terms of electrification, drainage and building materials'.[498] The establishment and improvement of financial control, especially of book-keeping and revision committees was regularly called for. On a local level, the implementation of working brigades was demanded regularly.[499]

All reports from the August visits of 1951 featured comments on the lack of detailed figures on the day-to-day running of the collectives. Recommendations to increase the administrative grasp of operations were standard. Depending on the local conditions, the completion of inventories were desired, as was the replacement of alcoholic book-keepers and board members, grazing plans for 1952, and the building of cow sheds in order to increase productivity.[500] Collectives were similarly 'encouraged' to build new pigsties and to expand their cattle stock. Deadlines for farmers to transfer their horses to the collective pool were also set down with a view to decreasing the time needed to sow and harvest. In other cases, contact people and procedures to gain credit for the acquisition of cows and pigs were laid down.[501] The poverty and extremely precarious situation of some villages prompted some instructors to organise regular deliveries of milk and other household goods or setting up a telephone connection.[502]

The extension of oversight also appertained to absenteeism from work. The recommendations on this issue were reminiscent of the coercive measures which had

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496 Ibid.
497 APW KW PZPR 74/IX/11, p.266-267; Rudnica, 16.08.1951.
498 Sekściński, 253.
499 APW KW PZPR 74/IX/51, p. 42-45; Dziecmierowice, 29.8.51.
500 APW KW PZPR 74/IX/51, p. 42-45; Dziecmierowice, 29.8.51.
501 APW KW PZPR 74/XI/26, p.56-65; Lipienica, 20.08.1951.
502 Ibid.

accompanied the collectivisation campaign. The regime's reaction to absenteeism depended on the instructors' perception of the political stance of the farmer concerned. When farmers like Andrzej Pawlowski – who had worked exactly one day – were overheard saying 'I have stopped working for the collective farm because the party scoundrels are tiring' and were 'leading [the way] to ruin', further measures than a verbal admonition were taken.[503] He was also quoted as having explained his absence by his understanding that only his livestock had been collectivised. It was recommended to commit the president of the agricultural department of the district's national council 'to take over Andrzej Pawlowski's farm in order to found the basis for the collective' while drawing attention to his 'abnormal psychological state'.[504] The case of another couple who had been initially supportive of the collective but had since absented themselves was to be referred to the prosecuting attorney 'for an initial discussion about the obligations of a member' and about the 'returning' of individually farmed crops to the common pool.[505]

Referral to the security forces was a standard reaction to verbal transgressions about other topics. In one case a collective farmer had openly 'lamented' the expulsion of the village's German population in 1945. Moreover, he asked settlers arriving shortly afterwards 'why do you come here? At most you will stay in this region for three months because the Germans will come back.' Perhaps even more damming in the eyes of the instructors, he had told them 'not to search for a farm here because they belonged to the Germans'.[506] The instructors also noted the rumour in the village that this man, originally from Romania, had been a member of the Romanian army 'during the occupation', having thus 'fought together with the Germans, against the Red Army.' With their inclusion to the reports, these points took on a considerable destructive power; depending on the perception and the relationships of their authors.

Increasing Payment

In the quest to keep peasants in the collectives, the height of the *dniówki* – the day-rates for work done in the RSP – had become the litmus test of economic performance both for peasants and cadres. With their accession signature members committed themselves to fulfil a minimum of one hundred working days, for each of which they would receive a

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503 APW KW PZPR 74/XI/26, p.56-65; Lipienica, 20.08.1951.
504 Ibid. The national councils, in Polish *Rady Narodowe*, were the territorial organs of the local government in the People's Republic. Elected for three years, its members acted comparatively autonomously on each level.
505 Ibid.
506 Ibid.

fixed payment.[507] One year after the August 1951 visits, the committee observed with some alarm that the day rates of farms founded 3 years before, in 1949, were falling, in some cases drastically. In Gronowice, in the Syców district, they plummeted from 18 Złoty to 4. In the most cases the decrease was not as drastic; the numbers from Niemcza-Kidlin (from 28 złoty to 24) and Krzeczyn (from 24 złoty to 14) were typical.[508] The lowness of day rates in many places resulted in an uneven distribution of income amongst the members. This was also the case in Lipienica. The board member Piotr Klimek earned 47,17 złoty, his wife 7,25, and the normal member Jan Ryba was listed with 15,18 złoty. His colleague Anrzej Wiśniak – who had 'lamented' the expulsion of the Germans – was accounted for 106 złoty while Pawlowski was noted down with one złoty. Emila Zolno, the only politically active member of the rural housewives circle was recorded with 35 złoty.

As in other cases, the declining day rates were attributed to administrative lapses (i.e. faulty book-keeping) and national circumstances – above all 'detached planning', Gryfice, and the absence of changes in peasant attitudes (i.e. their persistent unwillingness to 'defend socialist property against theft'.)[509] When called to explain the precariousness of collective farming provincial party authorities favoured a mixture of the credible and the far-flung: state aid had been excessively allocated to the state farms. This aside, 'tension in international relations, especially the events in Berlin and the case of Beria (…) adversely affected' their relationships on the ground, it was argued.[510] Before moving on the representations of popular opinion before and after 1956, it should be noted that support by party-state functionaries was aimed at increasing the knowledge about the farms, decreasing local opacities in terms of information and steering while also seeking to improve the performance of the collectives.

3.3. Narrating Successes within the State Agricultural Sector in 1956

The Polish October in 1956 made visible fundamental shifts in the internal and external constellations of the Polish Peoples' Republic. The areas of influence between the state and the Catholic church were reconfigured while the end of open mass violence

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507 It has also been noted, however, that many estimates of days worked were to a large degree works of fiction, a sort of counter-fiction on the side of the members, comparable to the official insistence on the voluntarism of merging farms. See Turower, 537.

508 APW KW PZPR 74/IX/20, p.137 ff.; Ocena perspektyw rozwoju Spółdzielni Produkcyjnych na terenie województwa Wrocław, Wrocław [no date, pencil writing 1952].

509 Ibid.

510 Comp. Turower, 541. (My translation).

signified a transformation in the relationship between the state and its population. With regards to Moscow, Poland and other central and eastern European people's republics embarked on a renegotiation of their relationship and moved towards a status which could be described as that of 'polycentric satellites'.[511] Gomułka's speech on the 'national road to socialism' at the VIII plenum of the PZPR popularised these transformations.[512]

The Second Five-Year Plan, inspired by the new course, laid down that in 'the course of developing the producer-cooperative movement, one must systematically insure (sic) the principle of voluntariness.'[513] The explicit stating of the voluntary nature of the communist transformation of farming led to the (spontaneous) disbanding of collective farms across the country. Kemp-Welch estimates that 75% of existing collectives disbanded within three weeks, other figures indicate a rate of 65%, or over 6800 farms, closing down over a course of three months.[514] By 1957 only 1534 collective farms remained across Poland.[515] As was the case during the push for collectivisation the 'fastest and largest effects were visible in the 'regained territories'.[516] Of the more than 1600 farms in the Wrocław voivodeship, the figure fell to 41 in 1957.[517] The changes of 1956 did not, on the other hand, spell out the end of collectivised farming in the Polish People's Republic as such. The PGR, continued to operate until 1989 and after, while a few collective farms did not disband. The next section is concerned with the representations of self-reflection by collective farmers, and the records of the few collectives which continued to farm after 1956.

3.3.1. During Farmers' Conventions in March 1956

In March 1956, roughly half a year before the VIII Plenum took place, a series of meetings on the current situation of the collective farms were held in the districts of the

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511 The term is taken from Paweł Machcewicz's contribution to Carole Fink, Frank Hadler, and Tomasz Schramm, *1956: European and Global Perspectives* (Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2006), 164.

512 For an introduction to the history of the Polish October of 1956 see the contribution by Kramer in Roger Engelmann and Thomas Großbölting, *Kommunismus in der Krise: die Entstalinisierung 1956 und die Folgen* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008).For a reading of the Polish October in the context of global politics see esp. Jan Rowiński, *The Polish October 1956 in World Politics* (PISM, 2007). For a comparison of the various interpretations of the Polish and Hungarian 1956s see Johanna Granville, 'Poland and Hungary, 1956: A Comparative Essay Based on New Archival Finding...', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 48.3 (2002), 369–95.

513 C. Philip Skardon, *A Lesson for Our Times: How America Kept the Peace in the Hungary-Suez Crisis of 1956* (Author House, 2010), 168. Agricultural production was scheduled to increase by 27% between 1955 and 1960, the growth rates for heavy industry were leveled at up to 55% compared to the 1955 figures.

514 Kemp-Welch, *Poland under Communism*, 101.

515 Comp. Gryciuk, 159.

516 Gryciuk, 158.

517 Ibid, 159.

Wrocław voivodeship. The report of these meetings stressed how the 'discussion centered on how the *spółdzielnie* in Lower Silesia became stronger, how the authority of collectivisation rose.'[518] The fact that 19 new farms had been founded in the run up to the March meetings, that 243 farmers had joined the party, and that the workforce had risen to 1100 people were cited as proof of the generally improving situation.

Within the system, the same problematic issues which had been criticised in the years before prevailed. Based on instructors' reports and the voices from the peasantry, the regional PZPR committee concluded that the precarious, seemingly unchanging situation of many collective farms was due to the

> bad work of the managing boards, bad work of party organisations, bad organisation of work, theft of collective goods, absence of investments by members, lack of economical basis, lack of labour, enlarged private plots, bad classification of soil, excessive number of agricultural tasks of in relation of those inclined to work, (…) bad cattle husbandry, lack of help from the POM and district administration.'[519]

In spite of these points some collective farmers expressed agreement with the party's interpretation of steadily improving conditions on the farms.[520] For instance, one farmer from the Szewca district recalled that 'In our village there were many individual farmers who laughed at the collective farm, [saying] that we will not manage, that we will break apart, even said that we will die of hunger.' He added that contrary to these expectations, 'We built a base, built a new well, bought machines, and for the occasion of this meeting 10 individual farmers joined.'[521] The accession of new members was a popular line of argument for the ultimate viability of the farms, as was the return of members: 'those who did not believe in the power of the collectives and deserted them (…) today return because they see their usefulness'[522]. Another speaker was quoted as having said that 'recently six members returned to the collective who had left two years previously to work in industry.' A sense of feeling vindicated at not having resigned pervaded many of the references of these returns, in combination with a brittle tone of righteousness at not having lost faith in the transformation as the others had. This also emerges from statements like the one of the

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518 APW KW PZPR 74/IX/20, p. 309-322; Ocena przygotowań i przebiegu powiatowych zjazdów spółdzielczości produkcyjnej województwa wrocławskiego; [no place/no date].

519 APW KW PZPR 74/IX/20, p. 359- 361; Informacje z przebiegu opracowania wniosków w sprawie umocnienia słabych spółdzielń produkcyjnach, [Wrocław, no date]. (Original spelling).

520 The POM and the PRN were especially criticised during the meetings.

521 APW KW PZPR 74/IX/20, p. 309-322; Ocena przygotowań i przebiegu powiatowych zjazdów spółdzielczości produkcyjnej województwa wrcołaawskiego; [no place/no date], p.311.

522 Ibid.

farmer Kusiak who wrapped up this point by saying that 'in the end, the farmer has to understand and use the benefits which the state gives the village.'[523]

A variety of reasons were given for this late, and perhaps not wholly convincing, success story. One chairman explained how close adherence to the decisions of the V plenum of the PZPR' central committee, when the First Five-Year plan had been passed, was the basis for his farm's performance today since they had 'worked on their fallow land, increased the soil under tillage by 50 hectares' and so managed to increase the day rates by 2 kg of grain and to buy a heavy duty cart for transport.[524] During the run-up to the passing of the Second Five-Year plan these insights were certainly voiced at the right point in time. Another chairman had reacted to the 'complaints of some about the matter of resignations' by implementing monthly advance payments on the day rates, usually between 150 and 200 złotys, and claimed that since then those who had resigned, among them many youngsters, had returned.[525]

The positive imagery of the collectives was set in relation to other aspirations of the Communist transformation on the countryside: 'during the meetings, not only women but men alike took the floor' and spoke about the 'need to create in all collectives conditions that all women can become members and can actively participate in the realisation of the production plans and have deciding power on the fate of their collective.'[526] Claims to female board membership were made; one farmer from Działoszyn recounted how one 74 year old woman who had worked more than 260 days on the farm in the past year.[527] Another speaker criticised the thinking of many men that women are 'there to take care of the house and children, and are not for field work'[528] as they in fact could be useful to their husband's collective as well. Youth participation, and the role of the ZMP, were similarly discussed, and (somewhat improbable) success stories exchanged. From Sarby the following advice was made:

> it must not be that our youth run away from the village to the towns as other statutory members of our collective farm have done. For these youth one has to create such conditions like we did in Sarby, where we founded an artistic group which is currently preparing for the district competitions. The youth see that the collective farm takes care of them and so there is no case of the youth running away.[529]

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523 Ibid, p. 312.
524 Ibid.
525 Ibid, p. 317.
526 Ibid.
527 Ibid.
528 Ibid.
529 Ibid, p. 317.

The merger of farms had not only created new ownership structures and work processes but had also introduced new hierarchies, allegiances and conflicts within the collectives and also in the village community. The strain on the social relations created by the new farms was expressed repeatedly by their members and were also noted by party observers. During one March meeting, a chairman explained that there were still 60 individual farmers in his village. In his eyes the reason for such a low collectivisation rate here was due to 'the bad connection between the collective and the individual farmers' as each group kept to themselves and did not work together.[530] In the same vein an individual farmer from Jankowo spoke of the fact that

> 'there is a collective in our village but the members lack a [proper] attitude towards the individual farmer. The board of this collective and its members don't behave conscientiously and rightly, for this reason when we look upon this, we individual farmers, with a pain in our heart, have to come to the conclusion that the collective farmers are worse off than us because if they help us with two carts of potatoes they take one and this does not entice us to join.'[531]

Relations within the collective were also prone to conflict. The same year in Poręba, three farmers had harmoniously shared the ownership and work of a 30 hectare farm, even sharing their kitchens during periods of heavy work. Since their joint membership to the local collective, two of the three had ceased to speak to the third, Janowski, who had signalled his support for the collective model. Having openly described him as 'their enemy'[532] and having handed in their resignations, they evaded all contact with the visiting instructor and the local party secretary.[533] The resentment was by no means one-sided. During a general meeting in the same village 'those members heavily criticised those who asked for a resignation' Tempers also ran high when work discipline was touched upon with those supporting the new farm claiming that 'among members there was a lack of duty. There are those who work well but there were many who wanted to stand in the yard and watch others work.'[534]

Evasion was also reported up to Warsaw from the voivodeship level. It was noted that even in places 'where there is enough strength in numbers', with functioning ZMP and party cells, 'no one showed up for the statutory settling of accounts' in spite of the

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530 Ibid, p. 320.
531 Ibid, p. 312.
532 APW KW PZPR 74/XI/11, p. 13-16; Poręba, 25.08.1951.
533 Although the cause of this conflict appeared to be known to the villagers, the instructor failed to gather more information about the matter, having met a wall of silence.
534 Ibid.

considerable height of the logged day rates.[535] Similarly, it was 'characteristic' for farmers who were both members of the party and the collective, to tailor their voting to the situation at hand: they did not endorse motions of the party cell in the general assembly of the collective farm although having voted for them at the cell meetings beforehand.[536] Such adaptive behaviour would also explain the observation that in 'many local party cells [POP] it is indeed spoken about building the organisation of the party, building and strengthening the collectives. Yet until recently no improvement in this field was noticeable at all.' Positive examples like the one from Glinno where local party members had joined the ploughing although they were not members, 'thus mobilising the remaining collective farmers to work' were rare.[537]

3.3. After the Polish October in 1956

As mentioned above, one outcome of the Polish October was the disbanding of the vast majority of collective farms which had been founded since 1948. The process of migration away from the countryside was temporarily reversed as interest in individual farming plots rose and land scarcity became an issue again as many of those who had left before 1956 returned. Often they had their land deeds ready, or claimed the right of being the first settlers, and expected to retake possession of the farms they had abandoned in spite of the fact that their farms had been taken over by other settlers in the meantime.[538] The disbanding was described at the time as being far from ordered. Newspapers reported that 'in numerous instances farmers unrestrainedly' went about dividing up cattle and machines.[539] In the absence of oversight from the authorities, 'some resort to ransacking and lynch law' as 'the stronger ones take the best animals from the cowsheds and pig sties'.[540] The ever-present anxieties of party activists about the strength and distribution of the party increased proportionally to the winding-down of the co-operatives and culminated in December in the wide-spead worry that 'in the village there is no party'.[541]

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535 Ibid. The latter was reported by the voivodeship committee of the PZPR in January 1956. APW KW PZPR 74/IX/20, p. 292295-; Notatka Informacyjna Nr.1 Z przebiegu rożliczeń w spółdzileniach produkcyjnych, (Wrocław, 05.01.1956).

536 Ibid.

537 Ibid.

538 Comp. Ordyłowski, *Wieś Dolnośląska W Latach 1945-1956 : Władza a Społeczeństwo*, 230.

539 Janosz Dębek, O palacyzch problemach nach wsi dolnoslaskiego. Kto potozy krad chaosowości? in *Gazeta Robotnicza*, 5.12.1956. Quoted in Ordyłowski, *Wieś Dolnośląska W Latach 1945-1956 : Władza a Społeczeństwo*, 228. The *Gazeta Robotnicza* can be described as the public organ of the PZPR in the Wrocław voivodeship.

540 Ibid.

541 APW KW PZPR 74/V/58, [no page]; Protokół narady wojewodzkiej aktywu partjnego, Wrocław 12.12.1956.

In spite of these changes, some farmers continued to farm together, or returned to this model, interestingly in collectives which were founded 'after October 1956.'[542] They incorporated the land of disbanded farms and in rare cases workers from other farms who moved in order to join newly founded ones, as happened in the Świdnica district.[543] The new collectives tended to be small, with membership under 15 people.[544] Where possible, the farm land and some machinery was taken on from the previous farms. For example, one large collective was split up to form two smaller ones, one in Niemcza and one in Kitlin.[545] None of the members had brought their own land to the operation, both farms worked the land which had not been signed over to individual ownership before. Since the land used to form part of a former German estate, the ownership deeds had probably not been signed over to settlers before 1948.[546] In other places fallow or 'free' hectares were joined with fields whose owners had moved away or did not exert their rights.[547]

The continuing co-operatives were characterised by the merger of collective and individual farming. This was openly acknowledged in the book-keeping and communications with the party, and appears to have been accepted without the censure, lament and pressure which such a set-up would have elicited previously. In most cases, collective operation was limited to the production of grain, hay, and vegetables, while smaller plots were used for the individual production of potatoes and root vegetables.[548] Since no one of the members had brought their own land to the farm, and since the inventory had been taken over from a previous collective, the basis for personal jealousies and worries stemming from a personal attachment to a particular field or tractor forged by ownership were reduced. In spite of decreases in numbers, size and fields of activity, a picture of modest prosperity emerges from the reporting. The condition of farm buildings,

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542 APW KW PZPR 74/IX/11, p.25-26; Notatka o sytuacji gospodarczej w spółdzielnach produkcyjnych KITLIN i NIEMCZA w pow. Dzieroniów, Wrocław 16.08.1956. (Original spelling). Of the farms discussed in this part, Saldno I was founded in June 1958 while Saldno II, Kitlin and Niedzwiednik were set up in late 1956. The farm in Niemcza was established in 1957.

543 APW KW PZPR 74/IX/11, p.25-26; Kitlin i Niemcza, 16.08.1956.

544 They were small farms in terms of membership. With 14 the one in Kitlin was the largest. In Saldno there were ten and eight members, in Niedzwiednik nine and in Niemcza ten as well.

545 APW KW PZPR 74/IX/11, p.25-26; Kitlin i Niemcza, 16.08.1956.

546 The transfer of the property rights to the settlers was de facto halted with the onset of collectivisation drive. In the cases of large estates which had not yet been broken up, ownership remained with the PNZ or the *Fundusz Ziemi*, or reverted back to it once the collectives disbanded.

547 The farm in Niedzwiednik consisted of 76 hectares, of which 56 had been taken on from the previous collective; the remaining 20 had been fallow land.

548 In Niemcza, 80 of the farm's 120 hectares were used for grain and 20 as feeding grounds for cattle; only on the latter was ploughing, tilling, sowing and harvesting done together. Due to a lack of large stables, cattle was owned but not kept collectively so that each farmer kept a few cows, pigs, rarely sheep. Other farms kept no cattle at all as they lacked the necessarily labour. Comp. APW KW PZPR 74/IX/11, p. 276-277; Notatka R.Z.S. Niedzwiednik pow. Ząbkowice, Wrocław 23.08.1956.

houses and cattle were characterised as 'good' and it was highlighted that some collectives possessed their own machines.[549]

It is similarly striking that the internal relations of the members and those to the remaining village community appeared to be free of many tensions discussed above. Internally, no absenteeism from work was noted, the book-keeping was 'regular and proper'[550] in all farms, the boards worked well, contact to the district union of collectives, the POM and the national councils was described as good in all cases. All these were points had by no means been a given in the years before. The impression of the visiting instructors was clearly that 'the atmosphere is good and healthy'[551] and that the farms now had all the 'conditions to prosper.'[552] In none of these cases individual farmers who had reclaimed their land after 1956 had joined the collectives. However, outwardly at least there were none of the previous tensions: 'they [the collective farmers] manage everything themselves. All in all, they live in peace. Relations with the individual farmers are good and in order, together they help each other and work.'[553]

From the references to the village communities it appears that neither the stigmatisation, anonymous threats and open aggression which had accompanied previous membership to collective farms were levelled at the remaining co-operatives in the Świdnica and Ząbkowice districts.[554] In Niedzwiednik, the collective farmers were adamant that the fields of their village should not be cartographed again (to determine the boundaries of the collective). Either out of solidarity or fear of conflict, they voiced their 'opinion [that] the measuring could at some stage in the future lead to fights between individual and collective farmers.'[555]

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549 This impression is confirmed by the level of the day rates which was considerably higher than in the early 1950s. In Kitlin, for example, members received 98 złoty per working day in addition to their own revenue and grain contingent. In Niemcza, 70 złoty were paid out and in Niedzwiednik the relatively low day rate of 30 złoty – in combination with approximately 350 working days registered by the members – resulted in an annual salary of 10 500 złoty, in addition to the payment in grain.

550 Ibid.

551 APW KW PZPR 74/IX/11, p.25-26; Kitlin i Niemcza, 16.08.1956.

552 Ibid.

553 APW KW PZPR 74/IX/11, p.25-26; Kitlin i Niemcza, 16.08.1956.

554 Jarosz noted that the organisers of cooperatives in various villages received anonymous threats and were the subject of aggression. Likewise, it was common for members of collective farms to be stigmatized by the community, or deliberately ignored in public places. Comp. Jarosz, 'The Collectivization of Agriculture in Poland: Causes of Defeat', 129.

555 APW KW PZPR 74/IX/11, p. 276-277; Niedzwiednik, 23.08.1956. The detailed measuring of land, and entry into the register, would have resulted in an increase of the mortgage installments in the village. The land in the village had been set down as security for a loan of the disbanded collective; in 1958 the interest rates of the collective farmers were considerably lower than those of their independently farming neighbours.

Similarly, the co-existence of individual plots and collective fields appears to have eased internal relations to a degree where they would not be mentioned to a party instructor. In the report, the absence of denunciation, open conflict, and settling of old scores which dominated many peasants' statements in the early 1950 also points in this direction – although there might be other reasons for the absence in the filing. This easing of internal and external relationships was arguably an effect of the actual, physical reinsertion of the voluntarism principle in the aftermath of the Polish October. Contrary to the public version before 1956, the new context allowed for individual farms to co-exist along with the state-controlled sector, including collective farms. The overall sense of 'thaw' within the party-societal relations, and reduction of persecution and state-administered violence no doubt also added to the relaxation. It should be noted that the remaining collectives had been set up by landless farmers and former farm labourers. Economic necessity would have been a – if not *the* – major factor in the decision to join or continue as the collectives offered a (relatively) stable income. This last aspect – the attraction of collective enterprise to poorer peasants – emerges as a long-term characteristic of Polish collective farming before and after 1956.

3.5. Summary

It has become clear from the summer reports that instructors sought to stabilise or increase membership to both party cells and collective farms. This included the active and often spontaneous prevention of resignations and the recording of criticism which was expressed during local meetings and in more private settings. In addition, they checked upon and evaluated local functionaries who also received recommendations for the economic and political 'strengthening' of the collective.

The preceding discussion has traced two aspects of the 'habitual social and cultural behaviour in producing techniques of control and discipline' in the early phase of rural Polish Communism: the instructors exercised these techniques vis-a-vis members of the party and the collective farms while also enacting and showing discipline for the benefit of their superiors. The correct (ideological) interpretation of and reaction to local events, including the mapping and – from today's point of view - representation of popular opinion was essential to both aspects before and after the Polish October. Instances where these techniques were successfully made use of have been shown, e.g. when resignations were retracted after lengthy conversations with instructors and when farmers publicly expressed

their loyalty to state agriculture. Limitations of the same have been covered too, e.g. in similarly public criticism of local government and the party, persistent absenteeism, and the non-compliance of individual chairmen. The derivation of the political 'health' of a collective or a village from the amount of politically organised people is another instance of the framing of reality in the PZPR at the time.

The critical statements which were recorded in writing referred to coercive measures of the party-state during the foundation and experiences during the everyday running of the new farms. In addition, negative portrayals of Soviet collectivisation and Polish crisis moments like Gryfice featured in the farmers' statements. In most cases, however, the criticism was based on specific local conflicts to which events outside the village were integrated. Explicit anti-Communist speech was recorded in individual cases like that of Wilhelm Majewski. Specific problems of the collective labour were recorded more often. In light of the strong likelihood that dissenting speech be classified as 'class enemy activity' would be persecuted, this silence points to a commonly shared awareness of the boundaries of speech on collective agriculture.[556]

The system of state agriculture relied on the amalgamation and utilisation of statistical data because

> in order to work out reliable plans (…) the authorities had to control all the resources and inputs, i.e. all the information relevant to the production process. (…) [T]he authorities needed access to detailed information concerning each producer. At that point the apparatus became hopelessly dependent on the individual. The producers possessed the monopoly of information; the centralizer had to rely on the information provided by individuals.[557]

The recommendations put forward by the instructors with the aim of improving the performance of the collectives were designed to expand administrative transparency and thus control over the decisions taken locally. Apart from stressing the need for proper book-keeping, they advised the expansion of cattle stocks and cops, the exchange of unreliable functionaries, and work on the political attitudes in and around the farms. The importance of the day-rates as barometers of the farms' success was also recognised and monitored. The strong interest in the structures which enabled a detailed knowledge of all

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556 References to preceding financial and physical coercion by party-state agents were also not recorded in the documents analysed here. For a discussion of these comp. Sekściński, 258.

557 Rév, 337. The last sentence should be understood to refer both to individual people who actually provided the information verbally or in writing, and to 'individual' collective farms as such.

collective farms emerged out of the need for detailed information within a centrally planned economy.[558]

At the same time, the reports discussed here are silent about one central economic aspect. The combination of a membership of poorer small-scale farmers and limited access to land influenced productivity levels. In addition, unfamiliarity with the land, faulty work flows, conflicts among the members, slow mechanisation rates, and limited financial resources prevented the speedy growth which had been promised. In other words, the precariousness of the economic foundation was rarely if at all discussed beyond administrative recommendations.

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558 The same applied to state-run farms and the remaining individual farmers.

Part III – Memories of Collectivisation

1. Introduction

The inhabitants of Kemnitz and Krzyżowa made comparable but not similar experiences during the late 1940s and 1950s. Overall, processes of appropriation (cultural/material), loss (multiple German and Polish histories of expulsions, expropriation, war-related experiences and destruction), and construction (establishment of new states, rebuilding of infrastructure and means of productivity) defined everyday life in the region during the first decades of Communist rule.

With regards to the pre-histories of the inhabitants, however, there were profound differences. The German experience of the Second World War, especially of civilians in a peripheral village, was fundamentally different to the experiences of Poles during the National-socialist and Soviet occupation, persecution, and war.[559] The similarities of the post-war conditions should not disguise the fact that ordinary Saxons had a far greater chance of surviving the war than ordinary Poles. Life in a Saxon village was not the same as life in a Volhynian village in terms of the extent and quality of persecution, war-related destruction, and death rates.

What distinguishes both places, therefore, is the different quality of war experiences and continuities between the pre-war and post-war periods. For one, Saxon villages did not experience a whole-scale exchange of population as Lower Silesia did. Expellees from the former Eastern territories arrived in most Saxon villages but the majority of people who lived in Kemnitz in the late 1940s came from local families or had moved from neighbouring villages. By contrast, the new inhabitants in Krzyżowa arrived

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559 Timothy Snyder has published a popular study on the Second World War in central and eastern Europe which focuses on the multiple occupations and atrocities committed during the war. See Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands. Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (London: Vintage, 2011). Both the German and the Soviet occupation of Poland, including manifold histories of *Shoah*, persecution and war crimes, have been covered by a plethora of studies which cannot be listed in this context. Another comparative perspective is taken by Chodakiewicz in Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, *Between Nazis and Soviets: Occupation Politics in Poland, 1939-1947* (Lexington Books, 2004). Also, *Polen unter deutscher und sowjetischer Besatzung / 1939 - 1945*, ed. by Jacek Andrzej Młynarczyk, Einzelveröffentlichungen des Deutschen Historischen Instituts Warschau ; 20 (Osnabrück: fibre-Verl., 2009), xx. For a first orientation on the German occupation of Poland comp. Dieter; Pohl, *Die Herrschaft der Wehrmacht / deutsche Militärbesatzung und einheimische Bevölkerung in der Sowjetunion 1941 - 1944*, Quellen und Darstellungen zur Zeitgeschichte ; Bd. 71 (München: Oldenbourg, 2008), LXXI. Further, Stephan; Lehnstaedt, *Okkupation im Osten / Besatzeralltag in Warschau und Minsk 1939 - 1944*, Studien zur Zeitgeschichte ; Bd. 82 (München: Oldenbourg, 2010), LXXXII. The controversial and informative contributions of Jan Gross should also be mentioned in this context. Comp. Jan Tomasz Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (Princeton University Press, 2001). For an introduction to the Soviet occupation to Poland and regional histories of the *Kresy* see Jan Tomasz Gross, *Revolution from Abroad: The Soviet Conquest of Poland's Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia* (Princeton University Press, 2002). Also, Elazar Barkan, Elizabeth A. Cole, and Kai Struve, *Shared History, Divided Memory: Jews and Others in Soviet-Occupied Poland, 1939-1941* (Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2007).

from all over Poland and the former Polish territories in the East and thus had neither the same social nor material basis to rebuild their lives as the inhabitants of Kemnitz had. Furthermore, the power base of the respective Communist parties, the composition of their cadres, and their measures to ensure political hegemony took place in specific national contexts, albeit under the ideological umbrella of Marxism-Leninism and close scrutiny from Moscow.

Kemnitz and Krzyżowa are comparable in their overall size, geographical situation, and land ownership structure at the end of the war: a mixture of family-based farms and large estates.[560] In both places, the arrival of party functionaries agitating for collectivisation marked the continuation and high-point of the post-war re-ordering of rural life. The changes were material as well as cultural and had a direct bearing on the identity, (self-)perception and social contacts of the villagers. The aim of the following chapter is less to provide a chronological history of the two villages but rather to trace what the interview partners thought had happened to them and how they made sense of their experiences, to use Kershaw's words.[561]

Thus, three research questions inform the following analysis. Firstly, are the various aspects of collectivisation and of everyday life remembered? How are the institutions of collective farming – both collective farms and state-run farms – recalled? How are these memories situated within the wider mnemonic landscape of this period, especially with regard to the social relations before and after 1945? The chapter proceeds to discuss the memories from each village separately and concludes with a comparison.

2. Memories of Collectivisation in Lower Silesia

2.1. Appropriation, Loss and Construction in post-war Lower Silesia

In the 1940s and 1950s two jokes circulated in Polish society. One asked whether Communism could exist everywhere in the world – the answer was 'No, because where would Poland buy its grain?' The other joke ran along the lines of 'Which are the four

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560 The two estates in Kemnitz were disbanded during land reform and distributed among expellees and new farmers. The main farm in Krzyzowa (the former Moltke estate) retained its structure and was turned into a state run-farm after a short period of occupation by the Red Army.

561 Comp. Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich*, 2.

plagues of the PPR?' - 'Spring, summer, autumn and winter.'[562] Like many others these jokes play with the gap between the new regime's propaganda claims and the everyday experiences of the population. In the jokes, as in real life, the new government's effectiveness and legitimacy became linked to its (in-)ability to feed the population and advance the agricultural sector.

As Ivan Berend noted, one effect of the character and length of the Second World war was that 'discontinuity became an overwhelming characteristic of postwar Central-and Eastern Europe'.[563] In Poland this was the case in many ways. The Polish state (re-)emerged with new borders and witnessed the implementation of a new political and economic system amidst extensive material destruction. The set-up of Polish society had changed profoundly, and was to change further, and many of its citizens recovered slowly from their mental and physical wounds which were inflicted during the war and occupation. Facing all this, the new regime had an interest in solving the most pressing issues, among them food supply, and to establish its capacity to govern and to transform, and to be seen as doing so.

The former German regions in the West played a special role within contemporary discourses on the political legitimacy of the regime and its agricultural productivity. For the settler population Lower Silesia's agricultural future was of prime importance as it linked their own economic survival to the stability of the post-war order. The successful integration of the Western territories, including the establishment of a functioning agricultural sector, 'became a decisive factor which would guarantee the establishment of the new power, but also the continued existence of the Polish state.'[564] This included the construction of a functioning administration and industrial production. An array of settlement policies, land reform and extensive propaganda activities formed part of the physical and mental appropriation of the *Oder* regions which were to compensate for the loss of the Polish regions which had been annexed by the Soviet Union.[565] The appropriation of the newly gained territories was to enable a socio-economic revolution and to ease the arrival of the new settlers by providing a mental and Polish map of their

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562 Both quotes are taken from Tadeusz Szarota's informative study of political jokes during the PPR. Tadeusz Szarota, 'Śmiech Zakazany - Kawał (Dowcip) Polityczny Jako Informacja O Postrzeganiu Peerelowskiej Rzeczywistości', in *Zycie Codzienne W Polsce 1944-1956*, Polska 1944/45-1989, Studia i Materiały (Warszawa: Instytut Historii PAN, 2001), V, 209–36 (217). (Translation KMO).

563 Berend, 4.

564 Halicka, 293.

565 See Ibid. The term *Oder* region, in German *Oderraum*, is taken from Halicka's highly recommended study on the cultural appropriation of the Western territories post-1945.

new surroundings. For many settlers migrating to a new home (region) was a metaphor for their hopes attached to the end of the war. They actively identified themselves as 'pioneers' making the unknown hospitable and working towards a better life (not necessarily under the Communist umbrella).[566] The next section will chart the origins of the new village community in Krzyżowa before turning to personal experiences of arrival and economic interaction with the new state.

2.2. Social Groups within the Post-War Village Society

The origin of the new inhabitants in Lower Silesia was diverse. The settlers arrived for various reasons, with diverse personal histories and luggage. The slow process of economic stabilisation generated an array of hierarchies and attributions to which a family's background before migration was crucial. The time of arrival was no less decisive as it determined which resources the settlers could draw upon, both socially and economically. Two major social groups can be identified from the self-descriptions of the villagers. Eastern-Polish expellees, mostly from the areas surrounding Lwów/Lviv and Równe/Rivne, and inner-Polish migrants who usually moved for socio-economic reasons.[567] Regardless of their background, many arrived in the Western territories as children and migrated within the region for reasons not immediately linked to the family's history of settlement.[568] In addition to these groups, the German inhabitants and former forced labourers featured in the conversations and are hitherto discussed.

'From the Centre' – Migration from Central Poland

A large share of settlers gradually arriving in Krzyżowa migrated westwards from central Polish regions. In the words of one interview partner: 'They were all blow-ins. (…) A few came from the Kielce region, from around Lublin but we would joke that most were Cracovians and mountain people (*górale*).'[569] Other interview partners came from Poźnan, the Warsaw region and Upper Silesia. One Cracovian arrived in 1946 with his three siblings and parents, having left behind an overcrowded farm. His grandmother had supported herself, her parents, her three sons and their families on the meagre income of

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566 On the pioneer mentality see the chapter on the 'syndrome of preliminarity' in Thum, *Die Fremde Stadt: Breslau 1945*. See also Kenney's early study of factory workers in Wrocław and their (self-)identification as Polish and Communist pioneers in the city. Padraic Kenney, *Rebuilding Poland: Workers and Communists, 1945-1950* (Cornell University Press, 1997), 135–87.
567 The social composition of Krzyżowa is discussed in detail in section six of this chapter.
568 Marriage to a local resident and job prospects were often mentioned as occasions for moving house.
569 Interview with P.S., 14.08.2015.

the smallholding after her husband had died in the First World War. He recalls being told that his father

> had travelled with a neighbour to here, the territories which were already regained (*już to ziemie odzyskane*), this … this Silesia. Twice they travelled to Wrocław by train and from Wrocław they came on foot. On foot they came to take a look where everything was. They walked here because Wrocław was much more destroyed.[570]

The tendency to present life before migration to the Western territories exclusively through the motive of poverty prevails. Statements such as 'There was no space. Here there was ...there was a little farm for us'[571] and 'There was poverty before the war... such poverty that it squealed.'[572] were common. This also meant that, economically at least, the aims were clear: 'The rest came from Central Poland. Because there was poverty, and one came to the West. To enrich oneself.'[573] The following statement of one woman is characteristic of this mono-causal representation: '... they came from the Cracow region because there was the greatest poverty. Because of the mountains and all. Those who came in the forties, forty-six, forty-seven, fifty, they were all from there.'[574] Later on she completed this by saying:

> There were the same small farms and of course, if there were many children, well, one left for bread, as the saying goes. And for money. One pulled the second after him.(...) Made him follow. (…) One came from Cracow or somewhere there and thought 'I'm doing well here' and after some time he brought the next one. And so it filled up. (…) They were given apartments and all this. And work …[575]

The state farm's accountant moved to the village in 1952, after his military service and education at the Technical College for Agricultural Accounting.[576] He undertook this course 'already in the West' because his home village in the Warsaw region had 'no conditions for it.'[577] During the Second World War his mother had not been able to send her children to the fee-paying underground school.[578] He enjoyed his work as head book-keeper of the

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570 Interview with S.F., 16.08.2015. The family nowadays lives on a former German farm by themselves and is still active in farming. That his father came twice on his own speaks for a prepared and considered decision to relocate. Both parents came from farming families and crucially needed to expand their access to land in order to support their own growing family. That the two men walked the roughly seventy kilometres from Wrocław to Krzyżowa indicates the importance of the whole undertaking and the logistical challenges of migrating in a war-damaged infrastructure.

571 Interview with S.F., 16.08.2015.

572 Interview with H.R.

573 Interview with K.H., 13.10.2015.

574 Interview with P.S., 14.08.2015

575 Ibid, 10.09.2015

576 The term is translated from the Polish original *Technikum Rachunkowości Rolnej*. (Translation KMO.).

577 Interview with H.R., 14.08. 2015.

578 On this point he added that 'there were these secret schools during the occupation. But the teachers had to be paid half a metre of rye every month.'

village's state-run farm. In his opinion 'life here was completely different than in central Poland. There was destitution. Here everyone had their own little pig [and] killed it. Here there was a bakery, there not.(...) You could go and get your bread here.'[579] Another woman recalled that a friend of her husband wanted to move to the Western territories 'because there they hand out farms for free.'[580]

Nostalgia and Integration - Migration from the Kresy

Migrants from the former Eastern Polish regions offered an inverted version of the above in which re-settlement and life before 1945 were presented differently. For them, Krzyżowa was the last station of many since their forced departure.[581] The initial experiences of arrival strongly influenced the integration into the new surroundings. Processes such as the loss of home and insecurity upon arrival, the willingness and pressure to adapt to the new situation, treatment at the hands of the state and one's new neighbours were acted out not only in the social domain but also in the context of agricultural production.

Although the new regime and its press were engaged in an attempt to prove the essential Polishness of the Western territories what was left of the material culture and infrastructure was decidedly 'poniemieckie' – post-German. The former German influence *and* its absence were unavoidable and recognised by the settlers. Those alighting from the trains 'encountered a wholly alien soil, upon which stood alien houses, with different churches, graveyards and unintelligible inscriptions (…) a large civilisational and cultural gap'[582] opened up. The following statement by a woman in her late eighties is exemplary for the mixture of emotions which many expressed when asked about their first months in the village:

> 'We had it very good in the East. Because there the soil was very good, everything was good: gas, kerosene, we had everything. Not like here. What we … got for our farm here, in Krzyżowa, was only hills, sand, and

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579 Ibid.

580 Interview with M.C., 22.10.

581 For the younger members of this group – to which the interview partners belong – a normalisation in terms of housing and settlement began in the 1950s. They left the villages where they had first found accommodation with their families and moved to new homes for personal or vocational reasons. For example, one woman arrived in the village in 1953 after marrying a peasant who had taken over a German farm in 1945. Her family had been allocated a small farm in a village roughly twenty kilometres away. Her neighbour, also from the *Kresy*, had married the local stationmaster in 1952. After expulsion from the family's farm her family had settled in Zamość but was forced to move West after two years. Arriving in the area in 1948, they were allocated a small farm in a village at the foot of the Owl Mountains where members of the family still live.

582 Wolff-Powęska, 'Die Doppelte Identität in Den West- Und Nordgebieten Polens', 22.

nothing more. And there we had had two hectares of peat meadows (…)
You know? Such soft, loose soil.[583]

In the narrations, the events which happened in Krzyżowa were regularly linked to the past which took place beyond the village, in the East.

The nostalgic impetus of the narrations is marked. One interview partner emphasised that 'we had a large farm in the East. We had to leave everything, everything we had to hand over, because our successors were already there, they took it all.'[584] Another speaker remembered that her father used to have seven hectares of field and a large fruit garden, and that thus her family was wealthy. Others expressed the same nostalgia for their living standards of the past. The idealisation of farming life in the East is often expressed by referring to the metaphor of the good soil. At times, this is voiced in almost loving terms: 'Such soft, loose soil.'

The consistent evocation of prosperity in the eastern territories by the women might appear surprising at first. Production methods in Eastern Poland in the inter-war period are commonly characterised as inefficient and antiquated, especially on the medium and small scale farms which made up the largest share. Apart from the large estates, farms tended to be under-capitalised and prone to fragmentation as a result of the prevailing inheritance traditions. This, in combination with low levels of mechanisation, meant that labour productivity was low.[585] Arguably, the positive emotional attachment to the dark soil which some interview partners expressed is a reflection of the increased importance of the natural setting for a farmer's success in such a relocation.

The expulsion from the eastern Polish territories constitutes the origin and the condition of the memories of all members of this group. In this context, Ruchniewicz argued in 2007 that the 'idealised memories of the Polish eastern territories – which wholly neglected the economic backwardness and the conflicts between Poles and national minorities – was (sic) cultivated as a part of a private (memory) tradition by these families

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583 Interview with E.E., 14.08.2015.

584 Ibid.

585 These comments are based on Derek Aldcroft, *Europe's Third World: The European Periphery in the Interwar Years.* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2006), 112–25. In addition, so Aldcroft, 'crop structures remained fairly static, farming techniques were backward and farms were under-capitalised (…) by Western standards.' Comp. Ibid, p. 113ff. On this point see also the 'Introduction', in *Agriculture and Economic Development in Europe since 1870*, ed. by Pedro Lains and Vincente Pinilla (London; New York: Routledge, 2009), 1–24. In his contribution to the same publication, Nikolaus Wolf points out that overall the eastern Polish voivodeships benefited from the establishment of a sovereign Polish state after the First World War, including higher growth rates compared to the central Polish regions. (Comp. Nikolaus Wolf, 'Ökonomische Zugänge Zur Geschichte Der Deutsch-Polnischen Beziehungen' (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2008), pp. 9–22 (14).For an English-speaking discussion of Polish agricultural history see Nikolaus Wolf, 'Local Comparative Advantage. Agriculture and Economic Development in Poland, 1870-1973', in *Agriculture and Economic Development in Europe Since 1870* (London; New York: Routledge, 2009), pp. 255–85.

during the Communist era.'[586] Life in the east was indeed a topic within the families, but not only. As one said: 'The *Kresy*? We could and did speak of it. (…) when something needed to be said. Among the neighbours. (…) It wasn't [*a taboo*] How many times have I spoken about my childhood and this experience [*of flight]*. They listened.'[587] In other families the wish to differentiate themselves from other groups of Poles was expressed with the help of domestic and culinary practices which were woven into the memories of everyday life. As one woman recalled:

> It was difficult. I had to take care of the cattle, the fields, to wash... To tell the truth, I didn't save my energy. (…) More than once I stood washing and ironing until two o'clock at night, so that everything would be ready, dried. People envied me because that was how I had been brought up by my mother, at home. And here, those who came from Central Poland, the women couldn't do anything. They didn't know how to cook, what to cook and in our house there were *pierogi*, *gołabki*, *króliki* baked in sauce... And here? They didn't know how! Only here did people get to know *pierogi*, and *gołabki*.[588]

During the interviews, the conflict-rich history of the *Kresy* was just as present as the nostalgic tendencies. The force with which these memories are expressed is striking. One interviewee said she only finished the first seven years at school because it became to dangerous: 'I couldn't go. How they murdered us, (…) how terribly the Ukrainians murdered us [Poles], how they slit, how they burned.'[589] During the second interview she returned to the topic of her Ukrainian neighbours. She said she did not want to return to her former home region. 'To where these bandits were murdering? I would never again want to find my self there or ever travel there. Because I saw how they (…) murdered.'[590]

Her next door neighbour reacted in a very immediate way to the question of what she remembered of her time before her family fled. She said:

> 'A, there … I could say, but right now.... there were the Ukrainian gangs, who plagued the Poles. With my own eyes I saw, and heard everything. [begins to cry] … No, no... And there we were, our father; how do you say … they burned our house twice. They came at night. My sister was still little, and lay in the cot. She was maybe half a year old. (…) We had clad the windows so no light could be seen but they knew by heart who lived where.'[591]

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586 Krzysztof Ruchniewicz, 'The Memory of World War II in Poland', *Eurozine*, 5 September 2007 <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2007-09-05-ruchniewicz-en.html>; Halicka.
587 Interview with K.H., 10.09.2015.
588 Interview with E.E. She here refers to traditional eastern European food: *pierogi* are filled dumplings, *gołąbki* are filled cabbage rolls while *króliki* most likely refers to a traditional way of preparing rabbit meat.
589 Interview with E.E., 14.08.2015.
590 Interview with E.E., 22.10.2015.
591 Interview with K.H., 10.09.2015. Of her last evening in the East she said: 'And it got dark, it was a terrible sadness. Yes, grief was so great that I can feel it even today, such sadness. I see and feel the sadness, because it got dark, and these gangs had already begun to prowl. And that's why I would not

Conversations with later-born speakers from the *Kresy* are less shaped by memories of fear and trauma. Instead, the portrayals of their flight and/or migration focus on the experiences the speakers themselves made and can remember at first hand. One woman's story centered on her frequent visits to family members who continue to live in present-day Ukraine. A slight shift from self to family could be observed in the self-characterisation of younger interview partners. Instead of 'I come from the *Kresy'*, they would mention 'My parents/my family came from the *Kresy*.'

Former Forced Labourers

Some former Polish forced labourers set up new lives in the village after the war ended.[592] The majority had previously been assigned to the Moltke estate for field and stable work. When the estate transformed in to a PGR, 'some stayed'[593] and continued working in the same positions. The PGR manager's widow could readily recall the names of those 'captured from the towns and villages. There were a couple of such families but they have already died as well. The cook on the PGR, a Polish woman, and one tractor driver had worked here since '44 and settled afterwards.'[594] The difference between the

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want to go back there. Or just go there and don't tell them who I am because its possible that these Ukrainians are still alive, those who lived close to us.' Nevertheless, her narration was not wholly devoid of more complex images of the ethnic relationships in her former village. For example, her family fled to the farm of a Ukrainian neighbour who hid them for one night, before the family walked to the train station.

592 The topic of forced labour and DP (Displaced Persons) is arguably one of the most extensively researched fields within the study of National-Socialist Germany and the Second World War. For a first orientation comp. Almut Leh and Christoph Thonfeld, *Hitler's Slaves. Life Stories of Forced Labourers in Nazi-Occupied Europe*, ed. by Alexander von Plato (New York: Berghahn, 2010). Rikola-Gunnar Lüttgenau and Jens-Christian Wagner, *Zwangsarbeit. Die Deutschen, Die Zwangsarbeiter Und Der Krieg. Begleitband Zur Ausstellung*, ed. by Volkhard Knigge (Weimar: Siftung Gedenkstätten Buchenwald und Mittelbau-Dora, 2010). Cord Pagenstecher, *Erinnern an Zwangsarbeit. Zeitzeugen-Interviews in Der Digitalen Welt.*, ed. by Nicolas Apostolopoulos (Berlin: Metropol, 2013). Marianne Neerland Soleim, *Prisoners of War and Forced Labour: Histories of War and Occupation* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars, 2010). Mark Spoerer, *Zwangsarbeit Unter Dem Hakenkreuz: Ausländische Zivilarbeiter, Kriegsgefangene Und Häftlinge Im Deutschen Reich Und Im Besetzten Europa 1939-1945* (München: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 2001). Cord Pagenstecher, 'Rehabilitierte Erinerungen? Individuelle Erfahrungsverarbeitungen Und Kollektive Repräsentation von NS-Zwangsarbeit Im Internationalen Vergleich', *Zeitschrift Für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 64.2 (2016), 205–7. Another first point of call are the papers of the multi-disciplinary conference *Beyond camps and forced labour: current international research on survivors of Nazi persecution*, hosted by the Imperial War Museum London in 2015. By comparison the experiences of former forced labourers after their 'return' to the newly established communist regimes in central and eastern Europe is covered much less prominently in the literature, and is usually discussed as an annex or footnote to the experiences before 1945. For an introduction to the integration of former forced labourers and DP into the FRG comp. Alexander Clarkson, *Fragmented Fatherland: Immigration and Cold War Conflict in the Federal Republic of Germany, 1945-1980* (New York: Berghahn, 2013).

593 Interview with P.S.

594 Interview with M.C., 22.10.2015.

forced labourers and the settlers from Central Poland was that the first, similar to the expellees, had no possibilities of returning to their homes, while the latter could go back to their houses and families before deciding to resettle.[595]

One of the managers of the PGR in the 1950s was a liberated forced labourer. From a family of small family farmers, he was – in his widow's words – 'caught when he was only 17. They took him to a German woman in the same village where I grew up. (…) She needed workers because she owned such a large farm.'[596] Together with two other young men and two women, he remained there until liberation and then moved to a better position on a newly-opened PGR and later to the village.

Most stories on former forced labourers, however, coalesce not around the PGR manager but an independent farmer who had continued living in the area after the population transfer. Both his widow and his son were adamant that he had been socially ostracised since 'there were some who came from other Polish territories, who said that he was *Volksdeutsch*. You understand? [*Kapuje Pani?*]'[597]. His mother agreed that her 'husband simply had no peace because they berated him as Swabian [*Szwab*], as Hitler (…). When there were letters from the FRG, (…) the post man did not hand them over, he actually didn't deliver them.'[598] Concerning the farm, he 'exhausted himself and he worried because people wouldn't allow for peace – Hitler, Hitler, Swabian, Swabian.'[599] These descriptions, it should be noted at this point, are voiced by close family members and are thus highly subjective. A more rounded picture of this biography cannot be provided as other interview partners declined to comment on this specific case.[600]

The pressure applied to this man was primarily social, and whether the origin of this lay in his identity as former forced labourer or had other reasons cannot be verified beyond doubt. Their narration, however, corresponds to the broader picture of the return of former forced labourers to Poland, who 'as a rule did not suffer any further discrimination linked to having worked for Germany. True, in individual cases they suffered persecution

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595 Halicka, 164.
596 Ibid.
597 Interview with A.E., 22.10.2015. The term *Volksdeutsch* was used during National-socialism to denote ethnic Germans living beyond the borders of the Reich in 1938.
598 Interview with E.E., 22.10.2015.
599 Ibid. Swabia is a region located in the south-western part of the Federal Republic. In the early modern period, large scale west-east German migration occurred into central and eastern Europe, for example by the *Donauschwaben*/*Banater Schwaben*, descendants of which live in present-day Romania but also in the Russian Federation.
600 As widow and son claim, their neighbours were not the only ones who took an interest in their husband and father. They spoke of cars waiting outside the house, of visits from party members gleaning their political opinions between coffee and cake. Yet, they never considered moving again, essentially because 'everywhere was the same.' Both agreed that these visits were the only direct contact with the authorities and that no other immediate negative effects occurred.

and fear, lost their jobs or were barred from further school or vocational education.'[601] Instead, their war-time biography functioned as a 'flexible incriminating device'[602] by the authorities whenever this appeared feasible or useful. It is also possible that this man's association with Germany was reused and reinterpreted for rhetorical reasons and embellishment.

Apart from this individual story, most other references to former forced labourers occurred in relation to the Moltke estate, as could be expected. One woman recalled being friendly with a number of people who had been forced labourers on the estate. She repeated during the conversations, that 'they always spoke well, always with a lot of sentiment, of the Moltkes (…). I remember one neighbour who said how nice [*fajnie*] he had been, horse-riding along the fields. The Moltkes, the counts, they were always remembered very warmly, very well.'[603] The positive standing of Helmuth James and Freya von Moltke within the memories of the village was expressed more than once.

Another characteristic mention of forced labourers occurred in a description of the looting of the palace after the Moltkes had departed: 'And Poles, they took what was left. Those who already lived here in '45, '46. Because there were some who were here … those who had worked on the estate during the war.'[604] This statement is far more problematic than the whitewashing of 'the counts' during the war. In the last statement, forced labour becomes invisible and is replaced by the seemingly simple information of 'work'. As she arrived years after the events, her version should be treated with caution.[605]

Representations of German Neighbours

In the immediate post-war years, the German residents formed a significant group in the transforming village society and also in the mental landscape of the settlers. In February 1946 roughly 61 000 Germans remained in the Schweidnitz/Świdnica area, where the Kreisau/Krzyzowa is situated.[606] Given their number and the moral-practical challenges

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601 Christoph Thonfeld, '"A Moment of Elation ... and Painful": The Homecoming of Slave and Forced Labourers after the Second World War', in *Hitler's Slaves: Life Stories of Forced Labourers in Nazi-Occupied Europe* (New York: Berghahn, 2010), 395.
602 Ibid.
603 Interview with P.S., 14.08.2015.
604 Interview with M.C., 22.10.2015.
605 Her presentation of the looting of the palace as a morally objectionable action is similarly tendentious. The matter already appeared at the beginning of this chapter. Not only are all details of the act of looting missing, she also does not explain why to her the looting of an abandoned estate by former forced labourers after their erstwhile masters fled should have been prevented.
606 Hofmann, 441.

their presence posed to their new neighbours, it is hardly surprising that representations of Germans were a frequent topic during the interviews.

The complex histories of the planned, chaotic and spontaneous flight, expulsion and evictions of the Germans – and of their position in Polish socialist society if they remained – have been extensively researched, just as the relations between Poland, the Federal Republic, and the GDR since the war.[607] Since this chapter deals with the memories of the arriving Poles, the German perspective on the population transfers is not covered in the following paragraphs.[608]

The period of co-habitation in the late 1940s forms the basis of the representations of Germans by the interview partners. Experiences made during this period also serve as an explanatory framework when other instances of encounter were narrated. Relationships between arrivals and locals were complex and prolonged – in some cases contact was upheld until the post-communist era – because cohabitation in the countryside lasted longer than in the cities and towns.[609] In many cases, German and Polish families lived door to

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607 Hans-Henning and Eva Hahn's fundamental and informed work deserves special mention here. See Hans Henning Hahn and Eva Hahn, *Die Vertreibung im deutschen Erinnern: Legenden, Mythos, Geschichte* (Verlag Ferd.Schöningh, 2010). Also, Hans Henning Hahn and Hahn, 'Mythos "Vertreibung"'. On Polish-German relations see W.-D. Eberwein and Basil Kerski, *Die deutsch-polnischen Beziehungen 1949–2000: Eine Werte- und Interessengemeinschaft?* (Springer-Verlag, 2013). Rudolf Jaworski, 'Kollektives Erinnern Und Nationale Identität. Deutsche Und Polnische Gedächtniskulturen Seit Ende Des Zweiten Weltkrieges', in *Erinnern, Vergessen, Verdrängen: Polnische Und Deutsche Erfahrungen*, Veröffentlichungen Des Deutschen Polen-Instituts Darmstadt, 11 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998), pp. 33–52. Hans Adolf Jacobsen and Mieczysław Tomala, *Warszawa-Bonn 1945-1991: stosunki polsko-niemieckie : analiza i dokumenty* (Polski Instytut Spraw Międzynarodowych, 1992). *Interesse Und Konflikt. Zur Politischen Ökonomie Der Deutsch-Polnischen Beziehungen, 1900-2007*, ed. by Dieter Bingen, Peter Oliver Löw, and Nikolaus Wolff (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2008). The wealth of publications emerges also from Domanska, Lawaty and Mincer's bibliography in German-Polish relations since the early 20th century. Anna Domanska, Andreas Lawaty, and Wieslaw Mincer, *Deutsch-Polnische Beziehungen in Geschichte Und Gegenwart: Bibliographie 1900 - 1998* (Otto Harrassowitz Verlag, 2000).

608 The history of the *Vertriebene* in the FRG and the GDR has enjoyed great popularity among academics in the past decade and more. For a comparison between the integration of expellees in the GDR and FRG respectively consult Schwartz, 'Assimilation versus Incorporation: Expellee Integration Policies in East and West Germany'. On the cultural reworking of expulsion c.f. Elisabeth Fendl, *Zur Ästhetik des Verlusts. Bilder von Heimat, Flucht und Vertreibung* (Waxmann Verlag, 2010). On the integration of expellees in Western Germany see the introduction to Mathias Beer, *Flüchtlinge und Vertriebene im deutschen Südwesten nach 1945: eine Übersicht der Archivalien in den staatlichen und kommunalen Archiven des Landes Baden-Württemberg* (Franz Steiner Verlag, 1994). On the history of expellees in the Soviet Occupation Zone/GDR see Alexander von Plato and Wolfgang Meinicke, *Alte Heimat, neue Zeit: Flüchtlinge, Umgesiedelte, Vertriebene in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone und in der DDR* (Verlag-Anst. Union, 1991). Also Michael Schwartz, 'Vertriebene Als Fremde. Integrationsprobleme Deutscher Zwangsmigranten in Der SBZ/DDR', in *Ankunft - Alltag - Abreise. Migration Und Interkulturelle Begegnung in Der DDR-Gesellschaft* (Köln/Weimar/Wien, 2005), pp. 135–73.On the role of the expellee organisations in Western Germany during the first post-war decade see Tobias Weger, '*Volkstumskampf' ohne Ende?: sudetendeutsche Organisationen, 1945-1955* (Peter Lang, 2008).

609 Małgorzata Ruchniewicz, 'Die Deutschen Und Die Polnischen Übersiedler Aus Den Ostgebieten Nach 1945. "Auch Sie Haben Geweint."', in *Verlorene Heimat: Die Vertreibungsdebatte in Polen/ Przeprosic Za Wypedzenie?* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1998), pp. 290–96 (292).

door or wall to wall with each other for months and years, necessitating everyday interaction and, as will emerge in the following, co-operation.

In a sense, those departing (or fearing departure) and those arriving were suspended in time, at least until the border changes were consolidated. *Plotki* and *Gerüchte* about border reversals or a renewal of fighting circulated widely.[610] The two distinct and internally diverse groups were bound together by locality, living conditions, (highly diverging) war experiences and, at least implicitly, by the issue of forced migration. Economic exchanges, housing, and farming were only some areas where interaction was unavoidable.[611] Many German farmers took up work on estates run by the Red Army or repossessed farms as 'this was the only way they could receive supply goods.'[612] In a period of food shortages, harvest and sowing time posed immediate demands of labour and co-operation which – for the moment at least – took precedence over questions of nationalities. In addition to this time, another mnemonic field can be distinguished in the source material. After their departure, many former *Kreisauer* returned for *Heimatbesuche*, roughly from the 1970s onwards and again after 1989.

All interview partners could readily recall personal encounters with Germans in the 1940s. Many spoke at length of the biographies and fates of their temporary neighbours without resorting to generalisations. The absence of any explicitly negative sentiment or *Schadenfreude*, or expressions of moral superiority is to be noted. For example, when one speaker recalled the departure of two German women who had owned the farm which his family had settled on, the tone is neutral:

> It was a small farm, here. German women lived here, two Germans whose two husbands had gone to war and one had already died during the war, my father told me. (…) Of the second no one had any news until after the war ended, nothing. (…), then the notice arrived for them to leave, to pack everything. My father brought them to K. with the cart and later they had an address in Germany. After some time she wrote to us, the German woman. She told us her husband had died. [She was] alone.'[613]

Despite being asked about his or his family's emotional reaction to the departure, the speaker declined to elaborate on this. The details of expropriation of German owners were generally not mentioned by the interview partners. One exception was the story of a former forced labourer.

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610 Comp. Halicka, p.154.
611 On housing especially comp. Małgorzata Ruchniewicz, 291.
612 Hofmann, 203.
613 Interview with S.F., 16.08.2015.

In 1953, a woman from an expelled family from Równe/Rivne married the owner of a medium-sized farm in the village. Her future husband had been brought to the village in 1940 as a forced labourer at the age of sixteen or seventeen.[614] Until 1945 he was quartered with a German farmer and worked on his farm. The relationship with the farmer and his family was described as good and his treatment as accordingly humane. From the conversation it emerged that the German family did not flee in the spring of 1945 but left at a later stage. However, the date of their departure could not be stated. Similarly, the interview partners did not clarify whether the German family left on their own accord or was ordered out by the Polish authorities. His son recalled what happened once it became clear that the German owners were leaving:

> Father stayed and R. gave him everything because he was there in 1945. The war ended … everything stayed here because he could not take everything with him. Only what they could carry. My father brought them to the station in Kraszewic, between Świdnica and Krzyżowa, the station that no longer exists. (…)That farmer said: 'You've worked everything here, you know how to. He said 'We give you this farm.' But you know, only provisionally because no one knew how the state would behave, if he could keep it or not.[615]

As a result of this, his wife was in the relatively fortunate position to marry a farmer who not only had acquired land and farm buildings but also the necessary machines to farm it. Unfortunately, it cannot be verified whether both sides perceived the handover of property as amicable as the Polish family does to this day.[616] The development from forced labourer to independent farmer *on the same farm* nevertheless represents a rare story from the German-Polish post-war transition period. All in all, the tone of the narrations on this period ranges from neutral to understanding to compassionate. Individual Germans were presented as neighbours and victims of crime without explicit attempts at justification based on nationality.

German Tourists

A number of interview partners spoke also about German inhabitants from the village who had returned as tourists. Similar to the statements on their actual departure, the tone in which these visits are recounted tends to be neutral. As one woman recalled the encounter of her parents with the erstwhile owners in the 1970s, 'It was normal. They

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614 Neither his wife nor his son where sure about this fact. Interview with E.E., 14.09.2015.
615 Interview with A.E., 22.10.2015.
616 The German family did not visit the village again, and neither the son nor the widow of the new owner could or wanted to say where they lived now. As a result of this, their version could not be checked against the memories of the German family.

arrived, introduced themselves and my parents told them they lived there. And later no one came because the Germans, the older, no longer lived. And my parents are no longer alive and later no one came.'[617] Although she described everyone's behaviour as 'friendly, polite'[618] she also made clear that it would have been out of the question for them to sleep in the house: 'For sure they did not stay with us. For sure. Maybe in a hotel in Świdnica.'[619] The other interview partners spoke similarly of these visits, usually mentioning when they had taken place and that no open conflicts had arisen during these encounters.[620] In a silent agreement, other villagers traded mementos of the German period, like earlier photographs of the palace, and their willingness to speak to the tourists for chocolate and other gifts from Western Germany.[621]

The absence of reflections on the emotional stress these visits must have posed for the new owners is notable. At the same time, the (slowly) increasing sense of permanence of life in the new homes was accompanied by a 'mixture of contentedness, indifference and grief when facing the departing [and visiting] Germans' since their role as tourists signalled that things would remain as they were.[622] All in all, the memories of co-habitation with German *Kreisauer* and their return visits are remarkable for the lack of emotion they portray. The moral implications and feelings linked to the image of the departing Germans are not explicitly mentioned by the interview partners. The moral condemnation of theft from German households is also noteworthy.

2.3. Material Conditions upon Arrival

Many interview partners remember the initial economic situation of their farms and households in similar ways, regardless of their family background and situation before migration. The overall impression of the village in the late 1940s and early 1950s is one of fluctuation, manifold shortages and disarray. German owners continued to live in the

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617 Interview with K.H., 10.09.2015.

618 Ibid.

619 Ibid.

620 Many reasons could have played a role in this. The language barrier surely was a factor, as were insecurities as to what was expected from them on both sides, and perhaps the passing of time which had allowed for some closure on the side of the Germans. In addition to this, Demshuk noted, the gap between memories and the present became greater with each year: The imagined *Heimat of memory*, now temporally frozen, became the 'real' Silesia to be preserved for future generations, while the *Heimat transformed* lost its appeal.' Andrew Demshuk, 'Reinscribing Schlesien as Śląsk: Memory and Mythology in a Postwar German-Polish Borderland', *History and Memory*, 24.1 (2012), 39–86 (79).

621 Interview with L.S., 22.09.2015.

622 Sikorski, quoted after Małgorzata Ruchniewicz, 294.

farms, in many cases sharing their rooms with the recent Polish arrivals. The Polish army had taken over the running of the Moltke demesne in the centre of the village. Many houses and agricultural buildings had been destroyed during the war, or were in bad repair due to a chronic lack of (building) material and machines.

2.3.1. *Szaber* and Poverty

Descriptions of the early years centre on the ever-present poverty. 'They were poor, poor after the war. Because everything was destroyed and only later things began to develop themselves, when I began to go to school.'[623] Another woman said: 'Yes, we got a farm, here … but it was a wretched sight. The worst was 1946, '47 and '48 were also very difficult.' Draught animals and cattle were few and far between. Machines were just as scarce and spare parts even more. One woman recalled how the death of a draught horse in the late 1950s brought a 'second poverty' upon the family which had just began to consolidate their farm.[624]

Property crimes and *szaber*[625] are common motives in the memory discourse of Polish settlement in the Western territories. They also feature prominently in the recollections of this interview group.[626] For example, one male farmer became agitated when speaking of this time:

> They [*his parents*] came because here was this little farm. They had three cows and one horse. After some time the Russians came and stole [*szabrowali*] everything. They took everything. (…) They looted, took everything! My father travelled back once again and brought some cows and horses and so we managed.[627]

While being so specific as to who had taken the family's cattle, the speaker was less precise when it came to German owners. The two German women with whom his family shared the house at the time were robbed of 'everything', including their sheer curtains. Asked by

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623 Interview with P.S., 10.09.2016.

624 Interview with E.E., 22.10.2015.

625 The Polish term *szaber* can be translates as theft or looting. In his monograph on Wrocław/Breslau in 1945, Thum pointed out that the term denotes 'a temporarily accepted form of plundering and thus refers to a legal grey zone. It concerned the appropriation of objects which their owners had abandoned and which were not guarded.' (Thum, *Die Fremde Stadt: Breslau 1945*, 185. Translation KM.O.) *Szaber* was thus often directed at former German belongings, but not exclusively so. The people actively engaged in *szaber* are referred to as *szabrownicy*.

626 The everyday occurrence of *szaber* is often linked to the weakness of the administrative apparatus and policing. That *szaber* was a mass phenomenon is widely reflected in the memoirs of the time. As Halicka noted, 'there are few eyewitness accounts from the time which do not mention *szaber*.' Halicka, 174. (Translation KMO).

627 Interview with S.F., 16.08.2015.

whom, he replied 'oh, such a group that looted' and added 'my father never took anything, he was always a role model.'[628] The imbalance in the description of the victims and perpetrators of this *szaber* episode is probably due to the speaker's unwillingness to speak badly of his peers. Indeed, for many the goods aquired through *szaber* became the basis of their new life in the Western territories. It filled the demand for material resources which was not met by the authorities who were not in a position to offer extensive financial support or re-compensation of war losses. At a time when a credit system *de facto* did not exist in the villages, the political will to implement a large-scale, extensive support system for individual farmers was absent. At the same time, the economic damage of this redistribution was immense.[629]

The issue of theft and *szaber* was also raised during the interviews when they turned to the dilapidated condition of the former Moltke manor house which was part of the state-run farm.[630]

> upstairs everything was broken. Smashed windows. In part, mostly the Russians destroyed it [the palace]. Because when the war ended they returned from Germany through Poland to Germany (sic). And looted [*szabrowali*]. They took furniture, such pretty furniture. They came with horses and carts (…) they went everywhere and looted [*szabrowali*]. Mostly in the large estates because these heirs were rich, had lovely furniture. Not like ordinary people. Pretty furniture, everything, the Russians stole the furniture. And Poles as well, whatever remained the Poles took. Those who already lived here in 1945, 1946.[631]

This statement is problematic for a number of reasons. Her utterances are based on hearsay, as she arrived in the village in 1962. It is likely that she retells the story of the dilapidation of the palace she herself was told after her arrival. The story of looting Russians and Poles, which also is said to have caused the structural damage to the building, should be therefore regarded as one version of the village's history *as the villagers prefer to remember it* and which she incorporated into her individual memories.

Her comments on the Polish residents of the village in 1945 and 1946 are of interest beyond the immediate issue of *szaber*. In the course of the interview, this woman repeatedly linked the *szaber* of 1945 to the run-down condition of the former Moltke manor house which became visible to outsiders after 1989. Throughout the narrator strove to establish a strong causal relation between both points, arguably to pre-emptively refract any charges of neglect away from the villagers. Arguably, the cause of the palace's

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628 Interview with S.F., 16.08.2015.

629 Comp. Halicka, 174.

630 On the Polish administration's incapability of guarding and securing former German possessions see Małgorzata Ruchniewicz, 293.

631 Interview with M.C., 22.10.2015.

continuing demise was more a result of notoriously scarce building materials, lack of financial means especially during the last decades of the PPR, and the subordinate importance of the palace for its new inhabitants as a symbol of aristocratic German rule. At the same time, her narration also articulates the problematic position of the former forced labourers who remained in the village after the end of the war.

2.3.2. 'Manually and with Horses' – Farm Labour

Emphases on the physicality of farm work occur frequently in the interviews. The strenuous nature of field and stable work is said to have eased once machines, especially harvesters, were acquired. The state-run farm had to rely on manual labour until the mid-1960s, so the wife of a manager of the state-run farm recalled:

> Everything was done manually and with horses. (…) For the people it was tough. How the women wore themselves out. Men were more resistant to this work than women.... because it was tough in the PGR. Such hard work. Harvest, sheaves, taking the cattle by their hair to the meadows, it was tough. I didn't work there but I heard from people that harvest time took it out of them.[632]

A similar image is drawn up by one of her friends who used to help the women working in the state-run farm during harvest. She agreed that 'more was done manually, not like now when the Combine gathers everything up and chop-chop, and that's it.'[633]

The resources of the settlers were limited both in terms of machinery and disposable income. Many did not have much to bring with them, especially those from large families and small farms in central Poland. The chaotic conditions on the trains and roads frequently resulted in the loss of goods during migration. The economic damage caused by s*zaber* and theft has already been mentioned. Transport capacities were limited.[634] The war-related destruction of infrastructure, buildings and machines was extensive, just as in other parts of central and eastern Europe. In the face of this scarcity, the former German possessions were an insufficient substitute. In addition, most farms relied on the labour of family members as few could afford to hire paid labour. The resulting combination of high levels of work intensity and low yields meant that this sector of agriculture continued to operate on the subsistence level in the first post-war decades.[635]

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632 Interview with M.C., 22.10.2015.
633 Interview with P.S., 10.09.2015.
634 Of the interview partners, one family arrived with one pig and three cows but most of the others brought no cattle with them.
635 Comp. Hofmann, 168. Also Demshuk, 'Reinscribing Schlesien as Śląsk'.

2.3.3. Resettlement, *de facto* Expropriation and Farm Distribution

As Halicka noted, 'in its first phase the re-settlement of the Oder area was chaotic and partially uncontrolled.'[636] Only in its later stages, when the number of settlers rose, some form of control was established. More importantly, the settlers 'took on existing structures and distributed the land according to the previous borders of the holdings.'[637] As settlement 'involuntarily oriented itself along the already existing economic structure'[638] the new residents in the villages determined how the re-settlement progressed; 'instead of theoretical guidelines regulating the average size of a holding, the number of actually usable houses and farm buildings'[639] turned out to be the determining factor. The time of arrival became decisive. Compared to the inner-Polish migrants who had an organisational head-start, 'most of the eastern Poles who arrived in the West during and after the summer of 1945 came "too late"'.[640] In this context, the distinction between Eastern and Central Poles was upheld by all interview partners, at times with considerable emotion,

One woman who arrived in 1946 with her parents from the former Polish territories in the East remarked that most of the Eastern expellees her family knew wanted to return once they understood how the land was distributed. In her eyes, those from Central Poland preferred to stay: 'They have it good here, because they took the best farms from the Germans. It happened like this: first come, first serve (*kto pierwszy, to zabrał*). And we did not come to the West by our own will, the state brought us here.'[641] Another speaker was more outspoken about the first re-settlers – her present day neighbours: 'What did they arrive with? With bare heads, bare feet and naked (*Gołe, bose i nago*). (…) [Those] from the East, who were brought here, they had the best houses, everything, the best farms, riches.' She continued to speak about a farm just a couple of meters down the road:

> What a beautiful farm he got. And he who left an estate… And he [*the neighbour*], what a beautifully, finished farm he occupied. What did he bring with him? An estate, or what? And we? Got this old shack. We left behind 20 hectares of land. That is the difference.[642]

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636 Halicka, 219.

637 Halicka, 219.

638 Hofmann, 163.

639 Ibid.

640 Phillip Ther, 'The Integration of Expellees in Germany and Poland after World War II: A Historical Reassessment', *Slavic Review*, 55.4 (1996), 779–805 (797).

641 Interview with K.H., 13.10.2015.

642 Interview with E.E., 14.08.2015. Her son described the German houses and farms as 'luxury' to the central Polish settlers in a similar air of spite.

She clearly feels cheated of her rightful compensation. It should be noted that many expellees were 'promised that they would keep their social and vocational status in their new home, that the living standards from before the expulsion would be restored.'[643] The direction and force of emotions generated by the reduction of their status have underpinned this woman's daily life and sense of self for more than fifty years.

This anger was also levelled at the family with whom she shares a house until today. It is still palpable after more than fifty years[644]: 'For which reason is she to live here and give me trouble? This house should be mine, all of it. Because there [in the East] we had cattle, we had an estate, everything. (…) We hadn't even unpacked properly, and they had already occupied the flats and that was it.'[645] The origin to her frustration lies in the comparison between her previous and current housing situation. Her repeated use of the term *majątek* – which translates either as demense or manor - is aimed at communicating both the social status and the wealth of her family's position.[646]

The feeling of having arrived not only involuntarily but also too late impacted on the perception of the regime which was already fraught. As the Eastern Poles belonged to the later groups of settlers and subsequently 'only found more destroyed and worse equipped farms, they felt doubly deceived by the government.'[647] The regime had presented a legal framework in which the expellees would receive compensation for what they had left behind. However, this was soon to clash with land reform in the Western regions. As Hoffman outlines, the amount of land which was to be compensated for was adjusted downwards to meet the new regulations of how large an individual farm after land reform was to be:

> Subsequently, repatriation from territories annexed by the Soviet Union resulted in the expropriation of land ownership of more than 15 ha without compensation. The eastern Polish large landowners were thus expropriated in a much more rigorous manner than the owners affected by land reform in central Poland.[648]

Once land reform was implemented, many recognised the need for creativity in order to minimise the negative consequences for their own holding. One family decided to

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643 Halicka, 271.
644 It was common that more than one family occupied a house which had formerly belonged to one German family. In this case, one family each occupied one floor of the two-story farm house, while the garden was used only by the family of the woman who was interviewed.
645 Interview with E.E., 22.10.2015.
646 She does not refer to the property as *gospodarstwo* or *zagroda*, both of which denote a farmstead. At this point in time, her statements cannot be verified.
647 Hofmann, 165.
648 Hofmann, 164.

register the new land in the name of the wife's fathers' name. In contrast to her husband, he had owned land in the East and was thus exempt from certain payments to the state fund:

> We had had a farm in the East, so we didn't have to pay the *Fundusz*. And my husband signed the farm over to my father. So as not to pay, because every year a couple of thousand had to be paid. (Question: This means that if one came from the East, as a substitute for the lost property (*majątek*), one could take a former German? And if one didn't, then one had to pay the *Fundusz*?) Yes, those from Central Poland, who arrived here, they had to pay.[649]

For the narrator this slight advantage was one to seize. Her family adapted their economic history and present circumstances to the contemporary demands of the state fund by changing the roles of father and son-in-law. This adaptation of their history and present circumstances was motivated by financial considerations and the speaker was accordingly matter-of-fact about their decision to deceive the state in return.

The loss of land, machinery, valuables and especially cattle – either because it could not be transported or vanished on the road – resulted in a widespread impoverishment.[650] Two statements highlight just how little the expellees arrived with: '… we sat among the cows and had one pig with us, for us to kill because it was the time of hunger. We were afraid of the hunger, (…) here, in the German …. lands.'[651] Another woman said that 'the state already had us in such wagons, those for cattle. (...) The people were crammed in; you took with you what you could. And the rest … everything else remained there'.[652] As a result of the loss of resources and the absence of re-compensation many remained economically on a subsistence level for years to come.[653] The scarcity of consumer goods forms the background to the economic struggles in the all narrations discussed here.

2.4. After Land Reform – Ownership, Taxation and Registration

Aware of the wide-spread expectations of post-war re-construction and prosperity among the rural population, the Communist regime invested considerable propagandistic, financial, and political resources in the issue of land reform. The distribution of parcels of land from disbanded estates to landless rural labourers and small-holdings had been an

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649 Interview with E.E., 14.08.2015.
650 Comp. Thum, *Die Fremde Stadt: Breslau 1945*, 787.
651 Interview with E.E., 14.08.2015.
652 Interview with K.H., 10.09.2015.
653 Comp. Hofmann, 168.

integral part of Polish debates on the modernisation of rural society since the 1920s.[654] In pre- as in post-war Poland, many agreed that the ownership structures in agrarian regions needed to be ordered in a more just manner. Rising numbers of landless peasants and small-holdings which were barely economically viable added to the sense that modernisation was overdue.[655] Land reform was widely supported among Communists and non-Communists alike and presented as a pre-condition of national re-construction. In this context, the Western territories gained in 1945 were not only to compensate for the loss of the *Kresy*. They were also regarded as a clean slate upon which a more productive, prosperous and socially just system of agriculture could be implemented.

However, in the years following 1944 conflict arose about the content of this reform, and the nature of its implementation. The decree on land reform passed by the Committee of National Liberation in August 1944 awarded the settlers the legal rights of the land but not rights of ownership or transfer.[656] In addition to this, estates larger than 100 ha were expropriated and guidelines for the desired size of farms laid down. Thus the expropriation of large landowners *and* settlement in the Western territories represented 'the consequent continuation of land reform and – just like land reform – part of the Polish national struggle for liberation which the Communists amalgamated ideologically and propagandistically with the socio-political revolution.'[657] As former German possessions had passed *unisono* into the possession of the Polish state, the distinct possibility existed that the transfer of documented ownership could and would be revoked. This knowledge played a role in the bartering between the producers and the state which controlled their main market. The following section examines in how far these aspects can be traced in the memories of the period.

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654 On land reform in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and in the Second Polish Republic see Jacek Kochanowski, 'The Changing Landscape of Property: Landownership and Modernization in Poland in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries', in *Property in East-Central Europe. Notions, Insitutions and Practices of Landownership in the Twentieth Century* (New York; Oxford: Berghahn, 2015), pp. 29–47. Juliusz Łukasiewicz, 'O Strukturze Agrarnej Królestwa Polskiego Po Uwłaszczeniu (On the Agrarian Structure of the Kingdom of Poland after the Emancipation)', *Przegląd Historyczny*, 62 (1971), 295–315. For an overview of central and east European Agrarianism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries see Dietmar Müller, *Transforming rural societies agrarian property and agrarianism in East Central Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (Innsbruck; Wien; Bozen: StudienVerl., 2011). Also, *Bauerngesellschaften Auf Dem Weg in Die Moderne: Agrarismus in Ostmitteleuropa, 1880 Bis 1960*, ed. by Helga Schulz and Angela Harre (Wiesbaden: Harrasowitz, 2010).
655 For a summary of public discourse on the agrarian question in the inter-war period see Jerzy Ciepelewski, *Polityka Agrarna Rządu Polskiego W Latach 1929-1935 (The Agrarian Politics of the Polish Government in the Years 1929-1935)* (Warszawa: Ksiazka i Wiedza, 1968).
656 Comp. Cmiała, 213.
657 Hofmann, 159.

To Fear, To Renovate, To Rebuild – Taking Ownership

Fear of a German return and the prospect of Polish expulsion have become a trope in the discourse on the Western territories, especially for explaining specificities of Lower Silesian society before 1989.[658] In the interviews, this early fear was mentioned frequently. During the 1950s, a return of war or of the previous owners, or both, appeared probable. One farmer recalled how his grandparents and uncles from the Cracow region refused to visit his father on his new farm: 'They did not travel here … after six or seven years they came. And they were afraid that the Germans return and that they will die.'[659] The workers in the state-owned farm did come for work but are said to have been equally preoccupied with 'the general understanding [that] there would be a war.'[660] Another remembered that this topic was discussed within her family:

> Dad always used to say: "and we will leave, we will go to where we come from. We'll stay here for a little while, only for now." He really didn't want to renovate this house. (…) but it had to be done. The walls were dirty, they had to be painted, whitened. (...) Some did it, others didn't.'[661]

In the interviews such descriptions of uncertainty do not relate exclusively to the period before the border agreement between the GDR and the PPR in 1950.[662] In addition to the potential external threat of a border reversion, the Polish administration's handling of the ownership rights sustained the settler's sense of impermanence. The decision to reconstruct farm buildings became amalgamated with projections of territorial and political stability, in

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658 The trope also features prominently in German-Polish exchanges on the treatment of the architectural remnants of the German period. German perceptions of a lack of long-term, structural maintenance was expressed in relation to stately houses and public buildings as well as family homes and farm buildings. References to the settlers' fear of renewed expulsion is arguably a simplified and mono-causal approach to the emotional landscape between villagers and their houses, and its material fallout. Aspects such as the constant difficulties in obtaining building materials in the Peoples' Republic, their inferior quality, or the extremely difficult economic situation in Poland in the 1990s are much less commonly considered as possible reasons for the run down state of the German architectural heritage. Furthermore, a distinction between the former German stately homes and palaces – which were not easily converted and ideologically tarnished – and the farms which served both as a home and livelihood of the settlers is rarely undertaken. More generally on the exasperation of West German tourists to Silesia with Polish efforts of re-construction, their reaction to Polish re-inscriptions of former German sites of memory, and personal encounters between former and new Silesians see Demshuk, 'Reinscribing Schlesien as Śląsk', 59–64.

659 Interview with S.F., 16.08.2016.

660 Interview with H.R., 14.08.2015.

661 Interview with P.S., 14.08.2015.

662 Between 1945 and 1950 the new border represented a *de facto* imposition on both states. The victorious war-time coalition had agreed on the new territorial demarcation between Germany and Poland at the two conferences of Yalta and Potsdam without Polish participation. (Comp. Jan Karski, *The Great Powers and Poland: From Versailles to Yalta* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 473–83.)In the light of West German clamouring for a revision of the Oder-Neisse border, the absence of Polish delegations at the table in Yalta, and the overall chaotic situation within Poland, the Treaty of Zgorzelec/Görlitz between the GDR and the PPR in 1950 has to be regarded as the first action inspiring confidence in the Polish state – and thus the new border. On this point see further Behrends, *Die Erfundene Freundschaft*.

the form of the issue of ownership rights. The retired owner of a comparably prosperous farm made his family's position at the time clear:

> In the kitchen the roof leaked, it dripped into the kitchen bucket... because the Germans will return, there was no certainty. No one was sure. No one. But after these years, maybe already in the '60s something began to change.... that they wouldn't come back. That this had been signed, dad said. They began to renovate, the roof already got fixed. Well, you know, everyone is the same. If its not … if its not yours, or your children's. Sign it, hand it to me black on white – and I will renovate.[663]

For the speaker, the physical handover of ownership rights – in this case by a signed document – is a pre-condition and a mirror of the physical work done at his house. In many ways the new owners were dependent on investing labour while trusting the regime to regard this matter with similar genuineness.[664]

For another woman, the family's efforts at renovation honoured this seeming commitment compared to their neighbours. It was less a matter of resources or trust but a question of social distinction: 'Well, little by little things got done. Because its clear that one has to live, to live somehow. Things have to look a certain way. You don't do it for someone else but for yourself, because if not... its to vegetate. Some people don't have this.'[665] Here the question how the neighbours deal with the uncertainties of their new life – that is if they exhibit trust and renovate – becomes a reflection on their moral character. In this sense, the above is also a reflection of the narrative efforts linked to the emerging social hierarchies in the village community.

Territorial uncertainties aside, many of the rural population were unsure whether to stay in agriculture. The difficult conditions on the farms in combination with the prospects of higher wages and social standing in the industrial sector prompted many to hand back their deeds and migrate once more.[666] All interview partners mentioned that it was common to take up work in a nearby town and that this additional income went towards the up-keep of the family holdings.

The new home, both the region and the house, was slowly appropriated. During the conversations, this was often narrated in parallel to autobiographical developments by the interview partners. In the memories of one speaker the beginning of the slow

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663 Interview with S.F., 14.08.2015.
664 Both politically and administratively, the behaviour of the regime has been characterised as erratic. Short-term changes in the division of responsibilities, party policies and strategic positions were often linked to arbitrary and willful demonstrations of power and violence, not only with regard to the peasantry but also national minorities. On the last part see Fleming, 75–80.
665 Interview with P.S., 14.08.2014.
666 Comp. Kamiński, 204 f.

reconstruction of the village coincided with her growing up: 'Everything was destroyed and things began to develop when I began to go to school.'[667] Another farmer said about his decision to return to the village after his army service:

> [I went to work] … on the farm. (…) I was attached to it. The cooperatives already existed, and when I finished the seventh grade, I said: 'Go to school, after all? Ah no, I will work here.' (…) I was happy to return here. Happy to be back. I tied myself (*przywiązałem się*) to Krzyżowa, of course.[668]

His decision to continue on his father's farm was inspired by two factors: an emotional attachment formed in the relatively short period since the end of the war and his personal vocational aspirations.

Transferring Ownership of Individual Farms

Many settlers arriving in the western territories wanted to improve or at least maintain their previous economic circumstances. Key to this was the acquisition of individual ownership rights of the land they farmed. Many expected this to happen quickly. Between the adoption of land reform in 1944 and the proclamation of the new course in 1948, ownership titles were handed out, albeit with considerable fluctuations depending on the political climate.[669] With the official onset of the collectivisation policy, delaying the handover of the deeds became a strategic tool of state functionaries when dealing with the peasants.

The slowness of ownership transfer had been frequently criticised by peasants and functionaries alike. For the latter, the insecure tenancies became a lever once the collectivisation policy was endorsed. Now 'the possibility existed that [a peasant's] lack of willingness to join the collective farm could result in the loss of ownership of his farm' or the indefinite postponement of the ownership transfer.[670] For those who had already obtained their deeds, the decree of 06.06.1951 allowed them to pass on their farms to their heirs.[671] However, the holdings could not be 'partitioned, sold, leased or vacated.(…) In many cases the transfer of property was only concluded in the early 1960s.'[672] As ownership transfer itself was '*de facto* stopped'[673] across Poland while collectivisation

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667 Interview with P.S., 14.08.2015.
668 Interview with S.F., 16.08.2015.
669 On the detailed process of ownership transfer see Jarosz, 'The Collectivization of Agriculture in Poland: Causes of Defeat', 119.
670 Cmiała, 213.
671 Comp. Hofmann, 168.
672 Hofmann, 168.
673 Ibid.

efforts were in full swing, the advancements of the scope of ownership rights mentioned above, touched upon a relatively small portion of farmers. In addition, some farmers returned their deeds rather than joining the new cooperatives.[674]

During the interviews, no mention of the above was made. Rather, the eventual reception of ownership rights and an overall atmosphere of progress are interwoven in the narratives. Curiously enough, no interview partner recalled the precise date of when their family became the legal owners of their farm. Their descriptions are instead coloured with a sense of postwar reconstruction of life. The realisation that residence in the village would be permanent was integral to this. As one man recalls:

> things were getting better. Everyone (…) began to say, that already... that already it would come. People thought that now proprietorship would come, that they will manage to pay, that they will be owners. They began to renovate, they began … they regarded things differently. During this time things got better, the pressure was no longer there.[675]

However promising this period was perceived at the time, one condition for a complete transfer of property remained. The financial settlement of the land charge had to take place before any deeds exchanged hands and for many families this was an additional strain.[676]

Classifying and Taxing Individual Agricultural Property

The state remained a crucial factor even after the new owners had received their documents of proprietorship. It regulated the production side by levelling taxes according to soil quality and farm size. At the other end, market prices and compulsory deliveries were controlled by the state which was the largest and often only buyer. As in other industries, the party-state's efforts to record, classify and control agriculture – in other words to determine what constituted a proper farm – were prone to changes and subject to the *ad hoc* nature of the emerging Polish administration and its internal politics. With both prices and taxes directed by the authorities, trading outside the state's influence became a lucrative and wide-spread alternative, also for the residents of Krzyżowa.

From June 1950 onwards a new system of taxing farms was introduced across Poland. The state classification of land (*społeczna klasyfikacja gruntów*) was to establish the capacities of economic zones, counties and villages. The boundaries of these categories and the parameters of classification were often laid down during this process. Soil quality was to be similarly recorded and attributed to a soil classification (*klas ziemi*) which then determined the extent of the taxes and compulsory deliveries. The results were in many

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674 See Kamiński, 204 f.
675 Interview with S.F., 16.08.2015.
676 Comp. Hofmann, 168.

cases fictitious and riddled with inaccuracies or downright mistakes, and frequently resulted in higher claims on the individual farmers.[677] Retrospective changes were nigh on impossible.

Although agricultural production had began to rise after the war, 1950 saw a bad harvest and as a result the price gap between the official and black markets widened. The 'medicine for the increasing tendency'[678] of the farmers to evade declaring their grain – thus being able to sell elsewhere – was to be the planned buying of grain by the state at fixed prices. The local implementation of this action became linked to the pressure towards joining the newly set up collective farms. The same was the case with the compulsory charges. These had drastically risen from a comparably low level from 1948.[679] Also, 'peasants had been obligated to sell up to 75% of their harvest to the state in very unfavourable conditions. In addition, crop selection and amount as well as the decision which land was deemed arable was laid down by central economic planning.'[680]

Against this backdrop, complaints about the extent and nature of state interference should be considered as a symptom of and direct reaction to the increasing collectivisation pressure of the early 1950s. This is the case for both sides, the peasants as well as the state and its functionaries. One man, who was in his late teens at the time, mentioned the common practice of not registering the harvest with the local representatives of the agricultural ministry. It is likely that the hidden goods were either sold on privately or used by the farm inhabitants themselves. While speaking of this, he made a rare reference to the field of ideology:

> Everyone started to hide things because they were afraid to own more inventory... because you would be a *kulak*, (…) The ones to be destroyed (*zniszczyć*). That were the 1950s.[681]

The example above, just as the complaints about taxation or private sale of crops arguably constitute a fallout of the push towards collective farms, even if this push is not explicitly mentioned.

Details of the segmentation into economic zones or soil classification were not provided by the interview partners. Similarly, the exact height or designation of the taxes or changes to the charges were not specified. When asked about these topics, the interview

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677 These comments are based on Jarosz's overview of soil classification in 1950 and 1951. See further Jarosz, 'Konflikty Chłopów Z Władzą W Okresie "Planowego Skupu Zboża" W Latach 1950–1951', 152.
678 Ibid.
679 Comp. Halicka, 230.
680 Ibid.
681 Interview with S.F., 16.08.2015.

partners offered various explanations, usually that they were too young to be interested or that it was too long ago. Others suggested that the details of the charges were not important but rather the stress it placed their family under. Generalisations occurred frequently – in the vein of 'everything had to be handed over'. In many cases, one's role as a victim at the hands of the party-state was emphasised over the actual intricacies of financial or crop transactions. However predominant this tendency was during the conversations, instances of positive reinterpretation took place as well.

> KO: Why was it difficult?
> E.E.:Well, because you had to pay back everything. These plans...
> everything, milk, everything had to be handed over.
> A.E.: The farm had developed.[682]

While the mother speaks mainly of the state's pressure, her son re-frames the increasing height of the deliveries as a result of the growing production of the farm. By doing this, the payments become a result of his parents' successes in running the farm. In other cases the topic of the compulsory charges were portrayed as another addition to their work load. In one family, the husband took up work in town while the wife ran the farm: 'I took care of the farm. He went to work because we wouldn't have managed with the taxes.'[683] During a second conversation she returned to this point in more detail:

> Ach, with these communists, life was difficult, hard. It was necessary to go to work (outside the farm), as I said, handing over, paying taxes, everything, meet the plans, everything. And on top of this we had to work very hard, my husband and myself. I had elderly parents, my father was 70 years old, and mama lived until she was 91(...).[684]

The decision to sell privately to townsfolk was usually powered by economic considerations – prices were usually higher.[685] The indignation at the disparity between the price paid by the *Polskie Zakłady Zbożowe* and the scarcity of high-calorie food also played into this. The women of the village traded eggs, milk, cheese and other home-made food with women from the nearby town of Świdnica.[686] At the time, the profit from this

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682 Interview with E.E., 22.10.2015.
683 Interview with E.E., 14.08.2015.
684 Interview with E.E., 22.10.2015.
685 Comp. Jarosz, 'Konflikty Chłopów Z Władzą W Okresie "Planowego Skupu Zboża" W Latach 1950–1951', 175.
686 They travelled either by rail or bus to and from the local station, in the early days some walked. A woman living close to the rail station remembers these transactions like this: 'That means I had one such woman who came here by herself. Here. She came by herself, because the train ran here, and bought milk, cheese.(...) For a little money, because no one had a lot.'Her husband had died young and she raised her three children alone. As she did not go to work, the income from the animals she kept was the only money to supplement her widow's benefits. Interview with K.H., 10.09.2015

trading represented a crucial extra income. Another woman was adamant that her mother had not engaged in any illegal activity but had not done anything out of the ordinary:

> Legal. (…) It was normal. My mother also took milk, cream, she made cheese … and in town she had one woman who always came and bought. My mother had two such women to whom she brought some milk, cheese, cream, twice a week, and there was some money. Many women did it. (…) It was legal, no black something. A lot of women carried things to town. If you had a cow and eggs...you went...'[687]

Her statement is somewhat inconsistent – to how many women did her mother have contacts, for example – when it comes to the details of this episode. Her overall interpretation of the normality of her mother's dealings is voiced with strong conviction.

As with the comments on taxes, these representations of private commerce in the town are closely linked to the party-state's see-saw policy towards individual farmers. Demand and consumption of agricultural produce, meat especially, had risen steadily since the late 1940s. In contrast, overall agricultural production did not keep pace with this development.[688] Throughout the ensuing shifts in economic planning the authorities remained caught between their aim of increasing production – in order to satisfy popular demand of affordable high-calorie food – and their ideological unease with the agents of this increase, the individual peasants.[689]

Within these circumstances, participation in private trading and the black market can also be seen as a reaction to the central planning authorities. The peasants' opportunism in increasing their income, their flexibility in gauging market conditions, and working around control mechanisms had been practiced during the German occupation period when the 'borders of hitherto acceptable behaviour blurred'.[690] As Communist state planning advanced, they 'merely had to adjust this ability to the new conditions. They did this by vigorously participating in various economic activities, (…) they knew expertly and creatively how to use the lack of food stuffs, especially meat, on the urban markets.'[691]

2.5. Memories of Collective Farms

The adaptation of collectivisation effected a readjustment of the economic pressure yielded towards individual farmers. Newly founded collectives were treated preferentially

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687 Interview with P.S., 14.08.2015.
688 Comp. Jerzy; Kochanowski, 217.
689 Comp. Jerzy; Kochanowski, 218.
690 Jerzy; Kochanowski, 19.
691 Ibid. As Kochanowski rightly observed, 'in this context meat should certainly be regarded as one of the essential indicators of social prestige and material status.' (202.)

in terms of taxes, credit, and machinery.[692] Later, with the collectivisation rate progressing on a low level, outright threats and physical oppression increased.[693] The peasants' reactions to this included the downright refusal to hand over money or crops. 'An immediate sharp decline of agricultural productivity'[694] followed the announcement of the push towards the new collective farms as many no longer worked on their fields. In the Western and Northern territories, this announcement saw farms abandoned on a mass scale. Many settlers, especially those farming on parcelled land, were highly susceptible to the economic pressures mounted by the regime and thus decided to abandon farming and move to one of the nearby towns.[695]

Although the cadres had hoped otherwise, no spontaneous people's movement emerged towards the collective farms.[696] One factor in this absence was the course of post-war land reform which had shaped peasant reactions to collectivisation. Similar to the GDR, the distribution of large estates to smaller-scale units was a policy about which Polish society as a whole appeared to be in consensus as this accord 'reached far into the ranks of the opposition'.[697] Land reform was supported widely because it strengthened family-run, individually operated farms. By adopting collectivisation, the regime was seen as unilaterally revoking the previous agreement. The vehemence with which some peasants reacted against collective farming was also based in the disappointment that their own visions of land reform were discarded although the regime had until then nurtured these aspirations.[698] For many, the push towards collective farms was perceived as the one-sided termination of the previous promise of upward social mobility which privately owned farms stood for.[699]

In the eyes of one interview partner, the village was unsuited for a collective farm because of its size and the smallness of most local farms. He asked: 'What was there? A couple of farms... ten such farms and they were small ones... in other neighbouring

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692 Hofmann, 184.

693 See Jarosz, 'Konflikty Chłopów Z Władzą W Okresie "Planowego Skupu Zboża" W Latach 1950–1951', 154–57.

694 Hofmann, 183.

695 Comp. Hofmann, 185.

696 While this much is agreed, debates in the literature continue about the causes of the absence of popular support. A mixture of the historical relationship of Polish peasants to their state, contemporary economic requirements, cultural anti-Communist/-Russian sentiment as well as politically framed anti-Communism have been suggested as possible causes, although their importance remains open to debate. On this question compare for example Kamiński, 202.

697 Hofmann, 159.

698 Comp. Hofmann, p. 158. Land reform was viewed more critically in the Eastern territories. On the regional specificities see Kamiński, 266.

699 Comp. Hofmann, 171.

villages, in G., in B., everything was larger. There were six collective farms. Here there was one in 1955, 1956. It existed only two years.'[700] His statement that large farms were needed to form a cooperative appears to be paradoxical at first. After all, the cooperatives were targeted mainly at small and medium sized holdings. However, the speaker described small-scale, part-time farmers as the most skeptical to the new farms.[701] Their additional external income provided these families with some security in the face of price fluctuations and state pressures.

Asked why her family had not become collectivised, one of these women was decidedly matter of fact: 'I don't understand. (…) We did not agree to it, because we met our obligations, we had paid our taxes, they could not do anything about it.'[702] Her incomprehension at the question is noteworthy, almost as if there had been no alternative to *not* joining the collective farm. In reply to the same question, another woman merely stated: 'We did not join the collective.'[703] They could quite literally afford to remain at a distance to the sphere of public agriculture. In contrast, the medium sized farmers relied exclusively on agriculture for their income – and linked their personal identity to their life as individual peasants – membership to the new collective farms was often an act of economic necessity.[704]

A sense of the manifold reasons which prompted some to join the collectives emerges from the narrative of the son of a full-time farmer:

> He was, he was [a member], before they [the other peasants in the village] did not want to. They had found some people from the village [to join]. (…) Well, and they pestered people, as I said, they pestered them and then … so much, so much meat had to be handed over per hectare. I'm beginning to forget. For cents. For cents. Well, they paid … and grain, and grain... but this soil was not too good, you see. And in our family there were four children, two grannies (…), no pension, no nothing. (…) When father could no longer stand it, he said 'Ah, I'll go and have a look.'[705]

His narration interlaces many of the aspects of post-war farming in Lower Silesia, from dependent relatives, the destruction of (financial) resources in the war, challenging realities of soil and weather, and the regime's economic pressures. All this constituted the background to his father's signature. For the son, membership is not a matter of victory or

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700 Interview with S.F., 16.08.2015.
701 Comp. also Bukraba-Rylska, 336.
702 Interview with E.E., 14.08.2015.
703 Interview with K.H., 10.09.2015.
704 Comp. Ibid.
705 'Za grosze. Za grosze.' Interview with S.F., 14.08.2015. A *grosz* is the smallest currency unit of the Polish złoty.

submission as his father *actively* made a pragmatic decision in order to ensure the family's sustenance.

Rumours about collectivisation were wide-spread in Polish society at the time, just as the negative images many farmers had of collective farms. Both were fuelled by the stories told by Eastern expellees, many of whom had experienced Soviet collectivisation at first-hand during the Soviet occupation period. At times, they went hand in hand with rumours of an immediate renewal of war[706]. Generally, these memories tend to be graphic in their portrayal of ubiquitous poverty and economic decline.[707] Bauerkämper's finding that the personal memories of Soviet Russian collectivisation heightened the East German regime's 'struggles over [the] legitimizing ideology' also applies to the early years of the PPR.[708] These, and other aspects, underpin and structure the memories around collective and state-run farming, as will become clear. An imagery of collective agriculture exhibited in the memories is based on such rumors and linked with personal experience:

> If I remember what collectivisation looked like in this village? (…) Well, they said there will be poverty, they said they [the collective farms] would not come, and so on. Well, there was one in W. [the next village], up on the hill. (…) They managed it so... they drank... that people almost did not die from hunger.[709]

Here the moral dubiousness of the *kolchozes* and their economic failure are amalgamated to an image of profound deprivation. In order to transport her assessment of cooperative farms as spaces of condensed immorality she chose alcoholism and hunger accordingly. Another woman spoke in a similar vein, this time about the dissolution of the cooperative model in 1956:

> But it was not good, it was not good.(...) Because everything was together, and no one took care of it. No one, everyone looked after oneself only, only of oneself. (…) When it became clear that the *kolchozes*, collectives could be dissolved, that they were not needed, everyone gladly left.[710]

The agricultural thinkers of the Communist parties had envisioned a new spirit of mutual co-operation spreading amongst the farmers once they shared their resources. The quotation above described the inversion of this vision – reciprocal scrutiny in combination with the envious, almost anxious, wish to ensure that no one should take advantage of the other. Another man recalled how 'One eyed the other, that he stole or did this or that

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706 Comp. Ibid, 160.

707 Comp. Hofmann, 160. This point is made also by Ordyłowski, Gryciuk, Pietraszka and a number of other Polish studies like Bukraba-Rylska, 335.

708 Bauerkämper, 'Collectivization and Memory: Views of the Past and the Transformation of Rural Society in the GDR from 1952 to the Early 1960s', 217.

709 Interview with E.E., 22.10.2015.

710 Interview with P.S., 10.09.2015.

everyone... and the authorities said how much had to remain in store (…) What was left over was split up between the members. How much was left? A couple of cents. It was no life.'[711]

The majority presented the local cooperative as a fiasco and linked this outcome to the envious egotism which the two previous interview partners described. A woman with no immediate contact to the cooperative remembered how the adults chatted about the whole issue: 'They said: We founded it because we had to. But it only lasted for a little while because everyone only took care of their own.(...) They founded it in spring, and in autumn they disbanded.'[712] In her view, this was mainly because the grain that each farmer had paid into the cooperative was nowhere to be found after the summer. She concluded that 'They always remembered it badly. Spoke badly about it. When they spoke amongst themselves, those men, my parents...'[713]

Whereas the speakers were in unison in their negative portrayal of the cooperative and also seemed to agree about the reasons for this, they were less forthcoming with details about the everyday experiences of these two years. Temporal details were only made in reference to 1956 and the disbanding of the cooperative. Statements on economic aspects remained vague, as this example shows:

> And so they founded the… collective farms were set up, individual holdings were liquidated. Cooperatives established. Only two farmers were not in the cooperative, the rest founded one. Until the uprising… to disband communism in Poland and the cooperatives were dispelled...[714]

The year 1956, although rarely explicitly referred to, constitutes a nodal point in many memories of communism. The narrations of 1956 are broadly similar in ascribing a homogeneous national sentiment as the cause of both the Polish October and the failure of collectivisation. The following reasoning is exemplary of the shared perception of this episode of Polish history: 'at the top the Russians ordered everything. (…) Collectivisation and 'good bye'! To collectivise. To found and then to see. And the Poles were hard and did not want to ... under... it was Gomułka who gave us the "no".'[715]

This reasoning rests upon a number of presumptions. Firstly, that collectivisation was a Russian – rather than Soviet - affair which was supposedly forced upon the Polish authorities without them being in any way involved or interested in the policy. Secondly,

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711 Interview with S.F., 16.08.2015.
712 Interview with P.S., 14.08.2015.
713 Ibid.
714 Interview with H.R., 14.08.2015.
715 Interview with S.F., 16.08.2015.

the Russian involvement is presented as short-sighted and misdirected. The Polish opposition to such a misguided undertaking is presented as only underlining their superiority over their Russian masters. For the speaker above, the refusal of the Polish to subjugate to the collective idea was a result of their homogeneousness and clear-sightedness. Such a representation is congruent with many current popular Polish depictions of the history of the PPR which seek to canonise a version of Polish history shaped by Russian/Soviet colonisation, Polish victimhood and morally superior resistance.

As previously noted, references to individual events or years were seldom made. Some interview partners were unaware that the state-run farm was not the only form of collectivised agriculture in the village: 'There were no collective farms here (…) No, in G. there is one. Till this day. Until today this collective farm exists.'[716] A second woman also thought of the cooperative in the next village. Furthermore, she offered her own explanation as to why the local cooperative had lasted only such a short time:

> I know that in our village there was one for two, three years and later it fell apart because … it was not good, as they said, the management. (...) In G. there was a collective farm. But that was already later, later. In the 60s, 70s. And during this time the management was already intelligent people, who had finished their studies, proper farmers.[717]

In this story, as in many other narrations, the local cooperative remains a hazy image with few contours. The distance of the speakers to the conversation's topic is palpable and the degree of descriptive focus accordingly slight.

The former bookkeeper of the local state-run farm remembered the ideological order of the day more clearly, and located it within his life's chronology:

> … as they explained to us in the army during the political lessons, there were middling peasants [*średniacy*], poor peasants [*biedniacy*], and rich peasants [*kułacy*]. If you didn't want to belong to the *kulaks*, you had to join the collective.[718]

Other interview partners did not discuss the agitation period. The names of local representatives of the party-state were not mentioned, nor were individual interactions with them described. The narration of this man stands out because he recalled a meeting with the head of a collective farm in great detail. The man interviewed had lived in the village for some years before he started work as bookkeeper for the state-run farm. As he said, the conversation below took place before he started to work on the PGR:

> [His name was] Rajber. A Jew. Maybe you are also a Jewess? [laughs] Not from this kind of family? He said to me: "You are an enemy of the

716 Interview with M.C., 22.10.2015.
717 Interview with P.S., 10.09.2015.
718 Interview with H.R., 14.08.2015.

> socialist system, an enemy of the collective idea". "And what of it, Sir?" He then said to me: "Not Sir [*Pan*], only Comrade." And I said: "I beg you, I'm not in the Party, so how am I a Comrade?" (…) He took out a pistol, placed it on his desk. I told him: "You take care of that pistol because I too know about weapons. For two years", I said, "I was in the army. And I can leave at any moment, although I came to work for the community. I can leave, go back to the army. Just make it through another year and then have peace and lead a civilian life."(…) Somehow he calmed himself and said: "Influence your father-in-law that he signs up for the collective farm." I say: "He is not my father-in-law, nor anything." I said: "Were you young?" He said: "I was." "Did you [*Pan*] go to some girl?" "I went." "Well, and I sought such a girl." And so we spoke about other things, chatted. He calmed down. But he said: "If you have some news, some comments, call me." "Alright." And when I had already left, it stopped (...) They did not found collectives there. My father-in-law did not join the collective.[719]

The advanced age of the speaker is perhaps evident throughout his monologue, i.e. when he switches the tense of this story abruptly mid-way. Less a matter of age, his anti-semitism emerges clearly in the beginning when he introduces the local manager of the collective to the story.[720] His self-presentation stands somewhat in opposition to these oral aspects. He presents himself as the agent of this story: a clear-headed, socially adept young man standing up to the manager when faced with a gun. Similarly, he paints the image of himself as a man knowing how to relax the conversation by appealing to male camaraderie, although the story becomes nigh on incomprehensible at this stage.

The dynamics of their conversation are almost theatrical. The softness and casualness with which Rajber demands information from the speaker were probably not uncommon. There is a faint sense that the two men struck an unspoken agreement – the manager forgoes violence and negotiates for information and the admonition to influence the father-in-law. Unfortunately, the listener does not learn whether this information was

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719 Ibid.

720 Bearing in mind how wide-spread Anti-semitism was in Polish society during and after the Second World War – in other words during the formative years of the speaker – this attitude is hardly surprising. As Pufelska noted, 'One can assume that no political orientation or social strata was resistant to Anti-semitism.' (Agnieszka Pufelska, *Die 'Judäo-Kommune'. Ein Feindbild in Polen. Das Polnische Selbstverständnis Im Schatten Des Antismitismus 1939-*. (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2007), 202. On the issue of Anti-semitism in the (early) Polish Party comp. Leo Gluchowski, 'The Defection of Jozef Swiatlo and the Search for Jewish Scapegoats in the Polish United Workers' Party, 1953-1954', *Inter Marium*, 3.2 (1999).Also, Krystyna Kersten, *Polacy, Żydzi, Komunizm: Anatomia Półprawd 1939–68* (Warszawa: Niezależna Oficyna Wydawnicza, 1992). On Polish-Jewish relations in general c.f. Joanna Beata Michlic, *Poland's Threatening Other. The Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2006). Also, Annamaria Orla-Bukowska, *Rethinking Poles and Jews : Troubled Past, Brighter Future.*, ed. by Robert Cherry (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007). On Polish memories of the Holocaust consult *Der Holocaust in der polnischen Erinnerungskultur /*, ed. by Anna Wolff-Powęska, Geschichte, Erinnerung, Politik ; 2 (Frankfurt am Main ; Berlin ; Bern ; Wien: Lang, 2012). On Polish-Jewish relations during the German occupation see also the original and controversial study on Jedwabne by Jan Gross. Gross, *Neighbors*. On the following controversy comp. Antony Polonsky and Joanna B. Michlic, *The Neighbors Respond: The Controversy Over the Jedwabne Massacre in Poland*, New Ed (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2003).

provided later on as there is a convenient narrative gap when it comes to this point. The speaker, it should be noted, was not fundamentally opposed to other forms of agriculture than the family farm and spoke well of his work on the state farm. At the same time, comparing his narration with the statements of other speakers underlines that the significance ascribed to collectivisation in the memories is highly subjective and linked to an individual's biography.

2.6. Memories of the State Farm and Its Workers

As in other Central and Eastern European countries, the collectivisation of agriculture in post-war Poland included the foundation of large-scale, state-run farms based on the Soviet Russian model of the *sovkhozes*. The Polish term *Państwowe Gospodarcze Rolne* (PGR) came to denote a world of its own. The worker-peasants on these farms were commonly referred to as *PGR-owcy* and the adjective *pegeerowski* covered the specificity of circumstances on these farms.

2.5.1. State-run farms in the Western territories

The history of Communist state-run farms in Poland began in 1944 with the foundation of the national land agency PNZ (*Państwowe Nieruchomści Ziemskie*). Its brief included running abandoned estates and preparing large holdings for future parcellation.[721] Estates larger than 100 hectares were expropriated during land reform and these holdings, together with abandoned German estates, comprised the largest share of land controlled by the PNZ.[722] Two years later, in 1949, the administration of state-run agriculture was reorganised under the banner of the PGR. The system established in the late 1940s continued to be in place until the 1970s when a new generation of PGR managers and agronomists prompted a series of reforms.[723]

During the immediate post-war years, the estates which were now under the new ownership of the state faced the same difficult material situation and highly limited resources as individual farmers. Labour shortage emerged as the single most crucial short and mid-term effect of the war. As a result Polish and Russian soldiers were drafted in as

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[721] Comp. Ewelina Szpak, *Między Osiedlem a Zagrodą: Życie Codzienne Mieszkańców PGR-Ów* (Warszawa: TRIO, 2005), 19ff.

[722] Jarosz, 'Konflikty Chłopów Z Władzą W Okresie "Planowego Skupu Zboża" W Latach 1950–1951', 152.

[723] Comp Szpak.

support workers, especially during harvest time, in 1945 and 1946.[724] Also, German farmers had worked on the estates before their expulsion was finalised and their departure further aggravated the labour shortage.[725]

The character, history and scale of the PGRs in the Western and Northern territories differed from those in the older Polish regions. As mentioned, the situation in the newly acquired regions was characterised by *ad hoc* decisions and frequent policy changes combined with a public administration in its infancy. Whereas the allocation (expropriation) of land to the PGR in Central Poland usually took place once – and often only concerned a share of a peasant's land – complete holdings were expropriated and re-allocated more than once in the Western regions.[726] As ownership claims had not yet been settled conclusively, land which had already been assigned to a farmer could revert to a state farm.[727]

In the case of the PGRs, the concept of collective ownership was executed in more than political terms. The state acted as proxy for Polish society as a whole in its role as owner-employer, thus covering the purely economic context in combination with social, physical and architectural aspects.[728] The state-run farms represented the new state in a local context, and its Polishness as well because

> the psychological and cultural otherness of the Western and Northern territories could be overcome by invoking the historical communion of the people as a whole. The aim was to give the material culture of these regions a visible Polish look. As a result the German aristocratic estates were turned into old-age homes, cultural centres and the administrations of agricultural state enterprises.[729]

The remarkable transition of buildings from German aristocratic estates to Polish Communist state-farms also took place in Krzyżowa.[730] However outwardly drastic this transition, it was not all-encompassing. The continued existence of the estates as economic units with land, buildings and demand for labour also meant that on a structural and social level they maintained some functions of the large pre-war estates. In many villages the state-run farms remained the largest employer and provider of housing. The elevated social

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724 Comp. Halicka, 220.
725 Comp. Ibid, 221.
726 Comp. Jarosz, 'Konflikty Chłopów Z Władzą W Okresie "Planowego Skupu Zboża" W Latach 1950–1951', 171.
727 Ibid
728 Bukraba-Rylska, 346.
729 Wolff-Poweska, 25. (Translation KMO).
730 The diplomatic background of this transition from German National-socialist to Polish Communist rule is covered extensively in Sebastian Siebel-Achenbach, *Lower Silesia From Nazi Germany To Communist Poland 1942-49* (Springer, 1994).

position of the managers spoke of the economic importance of the PGR and the manifold dependencies of the workers towards them. Just as the pre-war estate, state farms were often the main source of local and external news and a central point in the village for social interaction during working and leisure time.

Outwardly, however, the imagery of the new Communist society coalesced around the state farms. As the materialisation of Polish statehood outside the rural centres they were narrated as spaces of pioneering spirit, female emancipation, education as well as modern, efficient agriculture. The party-state produced projections of the new reality which were adapted by the *pegeerowcy* to their local conditions. The village society, of which the *pegeerowcy* were both part and separate, intently observed this microcosm and came to its own conclusions, also with regard to collective forms of farming.

This was also the case in Kreisau/ Krzyżowa which had been the residence of the Moltke family since the Prussian General Fieldmarshall Helmuth Karl Bernhard von Moltke had bought the estate after the victory in the Franco-Prussian War in 1871. The estate witnessed repeated financial crises in the following decades until Helmuth James von Moltke, and later his wife Freya, took over the running of the farm in the early 1930s. During the Second World War the *Kreisau Circle* held three clandestine meetings on the estate in 1942 and 1943 before the group was uncovered in the aftermath of the 20th July 1944 assassination attempt.[731] Due to its link to the history of the *Kreisau Circle*, the estate

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731 The *Kreisau Circle* was a German resistance group whose members came from diverse backgrounds and political orientations, including aristocrats, socialists, Catholic and Protestant intellectuals as well as social democrats. Although some members maintained loose ties to the 20th July group, the group concentrated on outlining the constitutional and philosophical basis for a new democratic order in Germany after the fall of National-socialism. Some members, including Helmuth James von Moltke, were arrested in the aftermath of the 20th July 1944 assassination attempt on Hitler and executed in 1944 and 1945. Freya von Moltke remained on the estate until the summer 1945 when she joined a trek towards Western Germany with her children. For earlier studies on the Kreisau Circle see Ger van; Roon, *Der Kreisauer Kreis zwischen Widerstand und Umbruch*, Beiträge zum Widerstand 1933 - 1945 ; 26 (Berlin: Gedenkstätte Dt. Widerstand, 1988), XXVI. Also, Levin von; Trott zu Solz, *Hans Peters und der Kreisauer Kreis / Staatslehre im Widerstand*, Rechts- und staatswissenschaftliche Veröffentlichungen der Görres-Gesellschaft ; N.F., 77 (Paderborn [u.a.]: Schöningh, 1997). *Deutscher Widerstand, Demokratie heute / Kirche, Kreisauer Kreis, Ethik, Militär und Gewerkschaften*, ed. by Huberta Engel and Kurt Finker (Bonn [u.a.]: Bouvier, 1992).For an appreciation of the Kreisau Circle in the German resistance see Friedrich Tomberg, *Weltordnungsvisionen Im Deutschen Widerstand: Kreisauer Kreis Mit Molkte - Goerdeler Gruppe - Honoratioren ; Stauffenbergs Weltanschauliche Motivation* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2005). On Helmuth James von Moltke specifically see Köhler's and Brakelmann's biographies: Günter Brakelmann, *Helmuth James von Moltke. 1907-1945. Eine Biographie* (München: C.H. Beck, 2007). Jochen Köhler and Gabriella Sarges-Köhler, *Helmuth James von Moltke: Geschichte einer Kindheit und Jugend*, 1st edn (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2008).Also, Helmuth James von Moltke, *Im Land Der Gottlosen. Tagebuch Und Briefe Aus Der Haft 1944/45* (München: C.h. Beck, 2009). Freya Moltke's memories of the Kreisau period have also been published in English. Freya von Moltke, *Memories of Kreisau and the German Resistance* (U of Nebraska Press, 2005).

The issue of forced labourers on the Moltke estate is hitherto only touched upon in a small publication of the *Kreisau Initiative*. Stefan Doyé and Ullrich Hilker, *Alltag in Kreisau/Krzyżowa - Fragen an Polen Und Deutsche. Teil I: Zeitzeugenberichte Ehemaliger Einwohner Kreisaus Und Seiner Nachbardörfer*

and the Moltke family have come to occupy an elevated position in the Federal German mnemonic canon of resistance to National-Socialism and since the late 1980s also in Poland following the renewal of German-Polish relations within a European context.[732]

After being occupied by the Red Army, the estate passed over into the ownership of the PNZ and was turned into a state-run farm. The estate was well suited as the base of a state-run farm, being centrally located in the village, large enough and with direct access to the fields around.[733] It was in many ways a typical state farm sharing the agricultural worries of local individual farmers. Administering the lack of labour, seeds, fertilisers, and machines, the PGR on the former Moltke estate took on many cultural features of the traditional Polish *folwark*.[734] Apart from the agricultural buildings, however, the overall architectural ensemble suffered increasing structural damages. The manor building especially was not maintained due to the scarcity of building materials. This was not only because it was the symbolically charged embodiment of German aristocratic rule. As such, the manor building itself ranked low on the list of priorities of villagers and PGR managers alike because it could not be brought to economic or political use in the new Polish state-socialist framework. This was less the case for its agricultural buildings, which were better maintained since they were used as stables, magazines and flats from the post-war period until the early 1990s. The ever-present lack of materials and funds, however, until the 1990s nevertheless saw both palace and farm buildings reduced to a state of dilapidation.[735]

Über Die Zeit Bis 1946. Ein Projekt Der Kreisau-Initiative Berlin e.V. in Zusammenarbeit Mit Der Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung e.V. Köln (Berlin-Halle: (Selbstverlag), 1997). A small memorial commemorates their presence in the village.

732 This special role in both the German and Polish official and civic memory canon resulted in heightened attention for the mental heritage of the *Kreisau Circle* from the early 1980s onwards. It ranged from Polish Catholic lay organisations like the KIK, to members of the East German civil rights movement like Ludwig Mehlhorn, to individual actors from the Federal Republic, the Netherlands, and the United States, including friends and members of the Moltke family. The special role of Kreisau/Krzyżowa for the rapprochement between Poland and Germany was a result of the concurrence of the civic initiatives and the political will on both sides, formulated in the Joint Declaration by Helmut Kohl and Tadeusz Mazowiecki on 14th November 1989. For a detailed discussion of the interplay between the various groups before the mass of reconciliation held in Krzyżowa, c.f. Annemarie Franke, 'Die Konferenz "Christ in Der Gesellschaft" vom 2.-4. Juni 1989 in Wrocław Und Krzyżowa', *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte*, 24.2 (2011), 460–77.

The importance of Kreisau/Krzyżowa as an outcome and symbol of German and Polish reconcilliation in Post-Communist Europe has been summed up by Ludwig Mehlhorn: 'The new Kreisau is a child of the central European upheaval of 1989. Between Elbe and Bug there is no comparable civil project of this dimension which derives its genesis from the spirit of this time.' Stiftung Kreisau für Europäische Verständigung, *Kreisau- Krzyżowa. Geschichts-Und Zukunftswerkstatt Für Europa*, ed. by Kreisau Initiative Berlin (Berlin; München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2010). (Translation KMO).

733 See Szpak, 29–48.

734 *Folwark*, derived from the German *Vorwerk*, is the Polish term for an agriculutral entreprise based on serf-labour, comparable to a grange or latifundium.

735 First renovation works on the estate took place in the run-up to the mass of reconciliation on 12.11.1989. The mass took place during Helmuth Kohl's visit to Poland and marked the renewal of German-Polish relations in the post-communist context. During the mass Kohl and the first Polish non-communist

In view of this local history, the following section also discusses in how far the post-communist discourse on the Kreisau Circle and the mass of reconciliation influenced the memories of the state-run farm.

2.6.2. Social relations around the PGR

In regard to the standard of living on this PGR, the widow of a manager in the 1950s was dismissive. Having lived on a state-farm in a larger village, she recalled being disappointed when she arrived in her new home: 'Here it wasn't nice.'[736] Many basic aspects were still provisional. The large farm yard had not yet been paved and the 'ground had been so broken-up by the horses. In autumn you couldn't cross because the mud would go above your ankles. Such mud!'[737] As with other aspects of the farm, the mud issue was dealt with as soon as the workload and resources permitted. The buildings were not the only things to be described as poorly. The workforce was similarly characterised:

> in Central Poland, where they came from, you had a little piece of land and you couldn't raise a family on that... so they came here and were given work and already some money was coming in. They kept a cow, some pigs and were glad.[738]

A diverse geographical but similar socio-economic background of the workers was remarked upon by many. Secondly, many speakers distinguished between long-term, residing workers at the PGR and itinerant workers who moved from farm to farm. As one man recalled of the early 1950s, 'the atmosphere was good. You know, there were thirty permanent workers and thirty seasonal labourers. They came form Central Poland for the season and everyone lived on the estate.'[739] He linked the short duration of stay of the migrant labourers to overall political insecurities: 'You know, they came here for one week, two weeks, everyone thought there would be a war.'[740] Yet another agreed that 'Mostly there was this big rotation of people, of migrant workers [*wędrowników*]. They arrived, took any work because what else is there to do in farming? No money, no nothing….'[741]

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president Tadeusz Mazowiecki embraced, the image of which became a symbol of the renewed relations. On the mass of reconciliation as a key element in the 'period of euphoria' in German-Polish relations in the 1990s see Mildenberger's article in Eberwein and Kerski. The ensemble was renovated in the 1990s in a series of workcamps with international youth. These and subsequent renovation works were funded by the German and Polish government as well as the EU.

736 Interview with M.C., 22.10.2015.
737 Ibid.
738 Interview with K.H., 10.09.2015.
739 Interview with H.R., 14.08.2015.
740 Ibid.
741 Interview with A.E., 22.10.2015.

The background of the *pegeerowcy* was generally described as rural while their motivation to work was presented as a consequence of their impoverished life, not unlike that of the Central Poles before them. For example, one woman explained, that 'they all had already worked [*on farms*] in the Cracow region, on small-holdings. But if there were many children, one left – as they say – for bread and for money and one pulled another after him.'[742] Many interview partners mentioned that the provision of living space and the regular – if very low wages[743] – were the main benefits of employment on the state farm. It appears that these benefits formed the basis of their life in the following decades: 'All their life! They were given flats by the PGR. And they worked here, lived here (…) That's what it was like with one's place of work. (…) Everyone lived here all the time until their retirement.'[744] That 'the sector's lack of workers was never solved effectively is not reflected in the narrations.'[745] Rather, this PGR is presented as an ambivalent space between strenuous work, reasonably good social relations and meagre, but reliable, material securities.

Images of PGR Managers

The success of some cooperatives in neighbouring villages was usually explained by the economic aptitude of their managers. In the case of the state-run farm, a similarly close focus on the manager is visible. For one woman, the largest difference between the collective farms and the state-run farm lay in the quality of the men who ran the latter as on 'the state-run farm there was always some manager who handled things well.'[746] Generally, the managers and other functionaries on a state farm were selected along political lines.[747] Agricultural understanding was of secondary interest when it came to hiring, so the literature suggests.

For understandable reasons, the widow of a manager in the early 1960s strove to present a positive image of her late husband. When asked about the political selection of the *kierownik*, she replied: 'No, because he was a good farmer. He knew about farming, about everything. He always got praised. When he went to the meeting of the combine [*kombinat*] in Ś., he was always praised.'[748] Not only was he agriculturally adept, she

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742 Interview with P.S., 14.08.2015.
743 As Bukraba-Rylska observed, the wages in the state agricultural sector were up to 40% lower than in other state-run sectors. Comp. Bukraba-Rylska, 350.
744 Interview with P.S., 10.09.2015.
745 Hofmann, 171. Comp. also Halicka, 220.
746 Interview with P.S., 14.08.2015.
747 Szpak, 82ff.
748 Interview with M.C., 22.10.2015.

suggests. She draws an image of him as a man who – in a rare feat – successfully balanced his relationships with his superiors in the state agricultural administration against his relations with his subordinates on the ground. For her, this worked because 'He was a good manager. He understood people.'[749] As proof for this, she mentioned that her husband had allowed one man to stay at home on account of his sick child.[750]

Her husband's successor is presented in a much less positive light. For her, this man was epitomised by his decision to dismantle the two neoclassical statues above the main gate to the farm. They had guarded the entrance 'completely naked'[751] for decades and the speaker suspects he did not want his five-year old daughter to grow up around this nakedness. As a result 'He told people to pull them down and that was it.'[752] It is noteworthy that the destruction of German decorative features is condemned here and that the speaker creates the impression that this condemnation took place at the time of the destruction of the statues; a presentation which is to be treated with caution.

For establishing the dichotomy between the two men she also used the voices of the workers. As long as her husband governed 'Life was good. I didn't hear them complaining about my husband or their work.'[753] With the successor, things do not remain as clear cut, and she herself appears to lose the overview of the story. Firstly, she claimed that: 'Later, when that other manager came, after my husband, some families quit, they complained that they were cheated on, that they earned too little. That they have more work, but less money.'[754] Four minutes later, an inverse account of the same situation was voiced by her. She stated that the change at the top had no effect on the ground: 'But people had been here since forever and it wasn't that some families quit. They all stayed.'[755] The source of these opposing statements is not to be easily determined. However, a mixture between an age-related lapse of concentration brought on by the tiring interview situation and the wish to record a sympathetic image of herself and her family, appears to be likely. The possibility also exists that she cannot readily recall this specific period and therefore narrates a story which at the moment of expression appears to be consistent.

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749 Interview with M.C., 22.10.2015.
750 Ibid.
751 Ibid.
752 Interview with M.C., 22.10.2015. In a different version of events told locally the same man dismantled the statues and sold them off as scrap metal.
753 Ibid.
754 Ibid.
755 Ibid.

During the interviews, all interview partners willingly spoke about the topic of the PGR and its people. Names, however, were not provided, either for reasons of privacy or as they had been forgotten. For this reason, it cannot be clarified if and to whom the following statement on a PGR's manager refers to. The man whose farm was situated closest to the PGR recalled that

> They had a good life on the state farm, all in all. But later other people showed up and the managers especially changed. One … Communist came with … different opinions. (…) He governed differently … and did not take care of the palace. The people who lived there had pulled up the floorboards, in winter.[756]

As so often with oral history, an exact chronological placement of the above is not possible. Standardised and therefore verifiable information such as names, place of birth or date were not – and often could not – be recalled. What might be perceived as primarily a lack of reliability and linearity, however, could also be an expression of the ordering of memories not according to modern time units (like years) or other categories of identification. Instead, this man remembered the quality of a particular episode in the past, its atmosphere and located it within his individual narration of the past. At the same time, the statement is far from being delivered without self-reflection. This is most visible when the Communist manager is introduced to the story. The narration slows down, the speaker pauses before deciding which word to use. The impression arises that the Communist's opinions differed from those of the speaker and those of the PGR workers but this is not stated explicitly. Instead, it is overlaid by the seeming neutrality of the words chosen (such as *communist, opinion, changed, differently*). The speaker's reference to the negligence is to be regarded as anachronistic. Following the developments in the village after the fall of state-socialism, the manor house and its historical associations has come to appear in a more positive light.

Before moving to the broader social landscape around the state farm, it should be noted that the managers are recalled, although at times somewhat incompletely, as individuals – few, if any of the PGR workers receive this treatment. Also, the criticism of the manager for not taking care of the palace appears to be motivated by present day concerns to match the present value of the estate for the village. It should therefore not be regarded as a purely mnemonic statement since the upkeep of this former German aristocratic building was only positively reevaluated after the mass of reconciliation.

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756 Interview with S.F., 16.08.2015.

Continuities in farming and perceptions of time

Within the overall difficult situation of the first immediate post-war years, many PGRs faced specific challenges. Frequently, they operated not on the basis of previously existing estates but 'without inventory, without machines and tools, in destroyed buildings'.[757] In Krzyżowa the situation – as introduced above – was different but nonetheless exacting. The physical aspect of farm labour remained predominant, even after the first post-war harvests had been mastered with the help of the army. Once set-up as a PGR, the daily and yearly rhythm of farming resumed its pace. In many ways it was similar to that on the temporal rhythm on pre-war manors. The fundamental changes in farming practice which industrialisation and modernisation drives would set in motion are no more than hinted at in the memories.

Traditional and manual farming methods were often mentioned as a defining characteristic of the PGR during the early years.[758] Farming techniques were not the only aspect where continuities between the pre-war and post-war are discernible. The daily rhythm of work and its timing remained firmly in set. The women who worked in the cow stables and were responsible for the dairy production 'complained because it was so hard... it always depends on who does what. (…) The work was divided up, cows and heifers, and everyone was responsible for their own.'[759] As in other stables all over Europe, the arrival of the milk tanker and the demands of milking determined the structure of a woman's day. The number of cows one worker had to take care of directly impacted on the amount of sleep she got and how early she got up in the morning. As one woman mentioned, 'if you milk cows by hand... they got up at three o'clock at night because one woman had twenty to thirty cows to milk. And I know, the lads who lived there, they also got up at the same time as my (female) friends, and went and helped them milk.'[760] The gesture of help by the young men is recognised as such because stable and field still retained their feminine respectively masculine connotation. The harvest season remained the most important interval throughout the year, followed by spring-time sowing.

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757 Bukraba-Rylska, 349.

758 Similarly, the reliance on horses as main source of power in the fields was frequently referred to: 'In the beginning there was maybe one tractor, one old *Ursus*, and the horses. I don't know exactly how many there were. Maybe (...) 16, 18.' (Interview with M.C., 22.10.2015). The workers 'did all by hand' (Ibid.) while 'the women did everything, they transported the sheaves on carts, and horses did all this. They ploughed the fields with horses in the 50s and 60s.' (Interview with K.H., 10.09.2015.)

759 Interview with P.S., 14.08.2015.

760 Ibid.

Villagers and Pegeerowcy

The economic importance of the PGR was based on its role as the largest local employer and provider of living space to its workers. In a time of commonly crowded living conditions the latter was a valuable asset, especially for younger couples and families, which counterbalanced the limited attraction of the work itself. Although people were generally reluctant to live on state-owned farms, the complimentary flats on this estate featured in all conversations about the PGR and were commonly referred to as 'nice' and 'beautiful'.[761] In the interviews, the social differentiation between both groups, as well as economic co-operation and conflict between the PGR and village were discussed at length.

After the fall of the PPR, the state farm and its workers were commonly remembered as inferior to the original villages in which they were situated. The propensity to depict the PGRs as spaces of misery, malpractice and decay arguably remains widespread in the discourse. In retrospect, the period of the emergence of this image cannot be determined.[762] The source for this depiction most likely lay in the low salaries, lack of equipment and mismanagement in the overall state agricultural sector.[763] When discussing the negative depiction of the PGR, it should also be noted that during the period of reconstruction many state farms were treated preferentially in terms of material and financial assistance, and were thus perceived as competition by individual farmers.

The good relations between the individual farmers and the staff of the PGR in the 1950s were commonly remarked upon. One man remembers how 'they still used to work hand-in-hand. I remember (…) one manager, I don't recall his name. Here the farmers, my dad as well, couldn't harvest everything. They asked him if he could help them because he had everything [*for harvesting*] in the barn.'[764] Things changed when the leadership of the state farm changed. A woman who arrived during the early 1960s in the village presents a picture of social contact but distinct economic domains which did not openly overlap:

> The PGR ... whoever worked there, they had a flat, earned money, (…)
> The villagers had nothing to do with it, nothing. Everyone did their
> own work. The PGR did theirs, and the villagers their own as well.(...)
> There was [contact] between them. They are all dead now, except one
> who is paralysed.[765]

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761 Mentioned by L.S. (22.10.2015.), P.S. (10.09.2015), and H.R., (14.08.2015). Szpak has noted that workers would rather continue to live outside the PGR not only because of the bad structural conditions but also because this move would have solidified their status as *pegeerowcy*. Comp. Szpak, 42f.

762 Comp. Szpak, 41f.

763 Ibid.

764 Interview with S.F., 16.08.2015.

765 Interview with K.H., 10.09.2015. Her neighbour was matter of fact about the workers on the PGR, 'people had to do something, no? (Interview with E.E., 14.08.2015). As she moved on, the motive of the

Generally, it is considered a truism that many peasants used the collective properties as a self-service spare parts depot during the Communist period. Within the setting of the state farm, 'the traditional stance towards ownerless objects, those truly "commonly" owned whose "taking" was not identified as "theft" was extended by even more specific attitudes.'[766] The emotional attachment to machines and the products of one's work fed a tendency to blur the lines of possession and assume special rights of use.[767] These aspects also featured in the memories, however, with a slightly different angle. The redistribution of possession from collective into private hands is linked more to the cooperatives than to the state-run farm. In addition, terms such as 'theft' or 'stealing' were frequently used to describe these moments of exchange:

> They stole a little of the property of the cooperative. (…) Took things from the cooperative. Liquidated, thieved. They stole from the old farmers. The sons took stuff. The sons got drunk again, and so they went crazy.[768]

By transactions such as this, the 'organic bond between 'the field' and 'the stable', disjointed as a result of the amalgamation of farms, was restored in the form of the complicated relations between collectively and individually owned farms.'[769] The former bookkeeper of the PGR recalled a decrease of mutual support as the 1950s progressed, again in relation to the cooperative. As he remembers, 'before the founding of the collective farms there was some solidarity here. Between people. Later as the collectives disbanded, the hunt for money began. Such amicable relations came to an end.'[770] One result of this, so he claimed, was a concentration of wealth as 'those who kept it up, kept it up. (…) The rest had to shut down. In the end, the others were richer than before.'[771]

Such fault-lines ran not only between independent farmers but also between the *pegeerowcy* and their fellow villagers. In contrast to the representations of relations between independent farmers, the social aspect looms much larger in stories concerned with both groups. Replies to the question of the existence and quality of the interaction between the *pegeerowcy* and the other villagers paint a peaceful image of coexistence: 'No,

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changing manager reappears, 'Well, bit by bit it got better, the various managers changed, led differently. The people also wanted this, they worked and began to keep pigs, cows, it was slow but they lived!' (Ibid.)

766 Bukraba-Rylska, 350.
767 Comp. Szpak, 57–60.
768 Interview with H.R., 14.08.2015.
769 Bukraba-Rylska, 339.
770 Interview with H.R., 14.08.2015.
771 '...jakaś solidarność była, ludzka.', Interview with H.R., 14.08.2016.

no. (…) They worked a lot, everyone went straight home from work, and then sat there.'[772] In another statement the impression of distinct social spheres is also evoked. This time, however, with a more positive connotation. Social contacts between both groups 'existed, indeed.'[773] Even more so, the speaker went on: 'They were good. A farmer in the village, he had this and he did his. And the PGR had theirs and also did theirs. Well, there was no.... no one begrudged the other.'[774]

Glass walls

With regard to the relations between the PGR and the other villagers, economic co-operation and/or conflict were voiced much more frequently than when speaking about the cooperatives. Many emphasised the normalcy of everyday relations. At the same time, processes of social distinction took place between the two groups. The daughter of a railway worker recalled that 'there were such quarrels, there were. Sometimes the farmers got drunk outside the village shop and insulted the *pegeerowcy*. This always happened.'[775] She then spoke of her personal feelings towards the workers of the PGR and how she perceived her family within the village's social landscape:

> We from the village were always something better, the better elite. The *pegeerowcy* were worse off, such poverty … what they call slums nowadays. (…) Because they were people gathered from all over Poland, from all ends of the world. (…) All the same, people liked each other, my friends were there, one socialised … but there was this glass wall, one you couldn't see. Couldn't breach it … but there it was. Stood there. There the PGR, here not. For example, they envied me because I was better dressed than them. I always had... my father was very intelligent, that was another thing.[776]

To this woman, the inferior status of the *pegeerowcy* was discernible in and caused by their poverty and alleged lack of social graces. As a group they are ascribed a lack of internal cohesion which is epitomised by their diverse geographical origins. Individual friendships and shared activities took place in light of this social gradient, at least from this woman's perspective. However, her narration is somewhat inconsistent. The causal relation between social inferiority and migration is here suggested by a member of an equally diverse group in terms of wealth and geographical origin – the first settlers to the village after the war.

The image of the glass wall points to a adjustment of her memories which is sensitive to the interview situation. A glass wall, by virtue of being see-through, is not as

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772 Interview with M.C., 22.10.2015.
773 Interview with K.H., 10.09.2015.
774 Interview with K.H., 10.09.2015.
775 Interview with P.S., 14.08.2016.
776 Ibid.

such perceptible to outsiders and therefore requires identification and explanation. By describing the social landscape in this way she emphasises her elevated position as a guide initiating the outsider to the undercurrents of the village. At the same time, ascriptions of social or moral inferiority of PGR workers have been noted by previous researchers. It is therefore possible that the social gradient was commonly thought to exist in the manner described above and that this woman faithfully recalls the consensus on the villagers' side while simultaneously wishing to appear in a positive light vis-a-vis the interviewer.

Depending on the amount of energy invested into the self-image of socially superior, this self-perception of the village's independent farmers as superior would be passed on to the following generation, as the following exchange illustrates:

> K.O.: Did your family cultivate contact with the local workers?
> A.E.: 'You mean my father? (…) To the new arrivals my father had no contact. No, nothing. He was simply closed off in this matter. Well, those migrant workers....' (derogative). [777]

From this exchange it emerges again how crucially important the time of arrival to the village was – not only in economic terms as discussed above, but also socially. It is noteworthy how the son of a former forced labourer today engages in social distinction towards his present-day neighbours, 'those migrant workers'. As before, the social status is linked to the length of a person's residence in one place. In the eyes of the speaker, it is clear that he is the social better to the PGR workers because his father arrived earlier. Other factors such as family background, education or social behaviour recede behind this very basic – and very arbitrary – fact.

2.7. Summary

In Lower Silesian villages, 'it was relevant whether someone had been a forced labourer, had fled or been expelled from Volhynia, came from Central Poland or had settled in the new territories more or less voluntarily.'[778] In the interviews as well, ascriptions of social status were shaped by factors such as economic success, geographical origins, the pre-history of settlement, and vocational spheres.

Not all groups which comprised Lower Silesian post-war society were mentioned by the interview partners: Jewish survivors who had settled in the region were not

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[777] Interview with A.E., 22.10. 2015.
[778] Halicka, 164.

mentioned, nor were Ukrainian DP who remained within the new Polish borders.[779] Instead, three groups featured prominently: migrants from Central Poland, expellees from the former Eastern Polish territories as well as former forced labourers (*Zwangsarbeiter*), many of whom had coercively been taken to work on German farms and had remained after the war ended. The respective size of the three groups in the village during the 1940s and 1950s is hard to estimate from the interviews. The expression of differences between Eastern expellees and central Polish migrants was a recurrent theme in the conversations – in terms of economic resources upon arrival, cultural habits and individual memory structures.

Of the interview partners, those who had been expelled from the former Eastern Polish territories painted a picture of this group in the village as homogeneous. Emphases on the cultural (especially culinary) differences to the so-called 'central Poles', however, varied strongly from person to person. While all speakers from the East came from a background in farming, the impression of a coherent group of Eastern Poles arriving should be treated with care. In spite of overall regional characteristics, the expellees nevertheless 'came from regions with different historical and cultural imprints, spoke various dialects, belonged to multiple confessions.'[780] The trauma of expulsion is still palpable with some members of this group and emerges from their tone of voice, their tears during the conversation as well as the length and depth of their descriptions of departing the *Kresy*.

Overall a greater willingness to speak about the following subjects could be observed: familial background, the actual arrival in the Western territories; the early years of settlement; the local state-run farm, cohabitation with the former, German villagers, the Moltke family and the current Krzyżowa Foundation running the estate today. These topics featured frequently and extensively, and were also commonly introduced by the

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779 On the short-lived Jewish revival in the Wrocław voivodeship see Robert L. Cohn, 'Israel in Poland: A Forgotten Moment in Postwar History', *European Judaism*, 44.2 (2011), 70–80. Further, Hana Shlomi, 'The Recetion and Settlement of Jewish Repatriants from the Soviet Union in Lower Silesia, 1946', *Gal-Ed: On the History & Culture of Polish Jewry*, 17 (2000), 85–104. Bozena Szaynok, 'The Beginnings of Jewish Settlement in Lower Silesia After World War Ii (May 1945-January 1946)', *Acta Poloniae Historica*, 1997, 171–95.
On the treatment of the Ukrainian minority, see Rosa Lehmann, 'From Ethnic Cleansing to Affirmative Action: Exploring Poland's Struggle with Its Ukrainian Minority (1944-48)', *Nations and Nationalism*, 16.2 (2010), 285–207. More generally on the nationality politics of the early PRL c.f. Fleming. Marcin Zaremba, *Komunizm, Legitymizacja, Nacjonalizm: Nacjonalistyczna Legitymizacja Władzy Komunistycznej W Polsce*, W Krainie PRL, Wyd. 2 (Warszawa: Trio : Instytut Studiów Politycznych PolskiejAkademii Nauk, 2005).
780 Halicka, 228. (Translation KMO).

interviewees themselves. The interview partners tended to be less forthcoming with comments about issues such as the state's attempts at female rural emancipation, minorities in Lower Silesia other than the Germans, or the presence of police and other authorities.

In this respect, the course of the interview was surely shaped by the design of the interview guideline and even more so, the introduction of the researcher by a local 'gatekeeper'. The presentation of the research topic ('interested in collective farming and everyday life in the village in the 1940s and 1950s') also shaped the focus of the respondents and their expectations as to what the researcher 'wanted' to hear.

From the conversations, it became clear that collectivisation as such occupies a subordinated role in the overall mnemonic landscape of the late 1940s and 1950s in Krzyżowa. Memories of the policy are mostly linked to the Polish October of 1956. The content and manner in which the interview partners spoke of collectivised farming, and the relation in which these narrations stand with other mnemonic topics, calls for some interpretative comments.

With regards to collectivised agriculture, memories of the PGR appear to be more pertinent than those of the period of collectivisation until 1956. The presence of PGR memories is explained by the long existence of the local state-run farm as well as its profound and continued impact on the village's social composition and income structure. In addition to this, the PGR as one episode in the history of the former Moltke estate enjoys a prominent role in the village's conscience.

By comparison, the subordinate role of the actual collectivization period is notable. Partly because of the shortness of the campaign, its abandonment and the long lapse of time until the interviews were conducted, this episode was recounted with less emotional involvement or detail than other. In order to better understand this relegated position – and the difference between the height of emotions at the time and today – a brief recourse to memory theory is expedient. Apart from other functions, memory effectively provides a 'route by which responsibility for past events is transmitted to the present, and thus to identify a locus of present responsibility for these events.'[781] By framing the past as a 'source of present responsibilities'[782] an immediacy between the bygone and the current is created because the latter makes this necessary or desirable. In the case of the attempted collectivisation, this

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781 Pole elaborates further: The role of memory is not, or not only, *epistemological*; that is, to supply us with information about the past that we need to make our way in the present. It is also *normative*; that is, it informs us of the obligations and responsibilities we have acquired in the past, and that ought to inform our behavior in the present.' (Original emphasis). Ross Poole, 'Memory, History, and the Claims of the Past', *Memory Studies*, 1 (2008), 149–66 (152).

782 Poole, 'Memory, History, and the Claims of the Past', 160.

reminder is apparently not needed. From the interviews the collectivisation policy emerges as a failed chapter from a long time ago which merely illustrated – and presaged – the overall failure of the Communist project.

In addition to this, the socio-economic consequences of this failed policy are also regarded as 'closed'. Again the lapse of time comes into play, together with the fact that effects of the policy on individually collectivised agriculture are marginal, having been overshadowed by more than thirty years of individual farming in the PRL and further post-communist reordering. Again, the socio-economic effects of the PGR system (for example on the labour market or land ownership) are observable until the present-day.[783] At the same time, the insinuation of many interview partners that *all* villagers opposed the collectivisation campaign to a similar degree is to be treated with extreme caution. If remembering the collectivisation policy is no longer serviceable in today's circumstances, this does 'not mean that no one knows about the acts: it is rather that this knowledge is now, not merely of but also in the past.'[784] I would argue that the interviews took place at the gradual phasing out into history of the immediate emotional knowledge of the collectivisation campaign until 1956.

Collectivisation is only remembered as more than a symbol of failure when it is linked to individual biography. Collectivisation in most cases does not constitute a mnemonic topic in its own right but acts as an example of the failed system as such. This is not the case when it comes to the PGR. Stories of work and life on the state farm are more 'infused with commitment and affect'[785] - one example would be the emphasis on the physical exhaustion of female workers. Although speech about the PGR system centres traditionally and currently on motives of hardship, and day-to-day contention with and application of the PGR system, this is also accompanied by positive references on the stability of life then as well as support for the new organisation of the estate as the Krzyżowa Foundation.

An extension of prior mnemonic content is also observable in the case of memories appertaining to the German history of the village. In contrast to collectivised agriculture, the importance of these memories *in* and *for* the present is palpable. As with memories of the PGR, 'not so much an annulment of a prior emotional content as its transformation'[786]

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783 Insert reference arbeits markt etc.

784 Ross Poole, 'Enacting Oblivion', *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*, 22 (2009), 149–57 (152).

785 Poole, 'Enacting Oblivion', 152.

786 Ibid.

can be observed. In light of the post-communist developments on the estate, especially the German-Polish reconciliation mass in 1989 and the establishment of an international youth meeting centre, the history of the PGR became re-framed as a subordinate, intermediary period between the Moltkes and the Krzyżowa Foundation. It is likely that the details of life on the PGR would have been forgotten like the local collective farms had Polish dissidents and members of the civil rights movement not become involved in the transformation of the estate in the late 1980s. With the renewed attention to Krzyżowa as a site of German resistance and German-Polish reconciliation, the process of forgetting of (some forms of) Communist agriculture was thus locally transformed and partially reversed.

Analyses of local memory narrations frequently discuss in which ways and for which reasons these stand in conflict with major, national and hegemonic interpretations of the past.[787] The discussion of memories relating to the departure of the German inhabitants of the village – and to the Moltke family – suggests that an adjustment of these memories has taken place to suit the changed circumstances in the village since the establishment of the Krzyżowa Foundation. Stories relating to return visits of the former owners already featured moments of reward, for example when chocolate and other rare consumer goods were exchanged for an old photograph of the Moltke estate's entrance.[788] With regards to this, it should also be borne in mind that the Foundation has provided local employment and education facilities over the past two decades.

This adaptation of memory to the present is hardly surprising if one accepts the strong relevance ('responsibility') of the present for the formulation of memories as introduced above. As the material and cultural conditions changed – for example by the support for the Foundation by the German and Polish governments, the renovation of the estate and the employment of locals – the content and importance of the memory streak relating to the German past have been transformed and collectively brought to the foreground.

In Krzyżowa, the memories of collectivisation compete with two mnemonic threads of narration. One is decidedly local and connected to the Krzyżowa Foundation and

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787 'In the long run, no state power can relinquish control over a society's memory. For this reason one form of resistance against a government is to remember that which this government wishes to forget, and to forget what it wishes to preserve in memory, or to differently remember what it wishes to recall.' (Own translation). Jaworski in Beata Szacka, 'Bohater Przekorny. Powstanie Warszawskie W Pamięci Społecznej Okresu PRL', *Polityka*, July 1994, 21.

788 Interview with M.C., 22.10.2015.

German Kreisau. The other narrative thread is national in its outlook. One impact of the Communist state on the Polish history and memory culture was that

> The social and spatial uprooting – in the form of expropriation, resettlement and expulsion and accompanied by varying degrees of coercion – was propagandistically and ideologically accompanied, disseminated and justified by something which could be called ahistorical memory culture. Thus a partially mythologised, national conception of history replaced a historical consciousness based on local and neighbourly relations and thus shaped by a sense of belonging and local patriotism.[789]

The strength of motives of expulsion from the East and the manifold hardships during the PPR derives from the fact that such narratives allow for the fused expression of national and personal victimhood as it became canonised in large parts of post-communist discourse in Poland.

A further reason for the relegation of collectivisation memories to the background lies in the post-communist discourse on the Polish People's Republic. As Kersten observed, the biggest controversies in Polish post-communist debates on the PPR touched upon the character of the state between 1944 and 1989, its sovereignty, rule or law, democratic credentials, and overall its meaning for Polish society.[790] This public evaluation after 1989 is arguably less concerned with single fields of politics like collectivisation. Rather, issues such as the Polish state's sovereignty and/or independence in relation to Moscow, its changing totalitarian nature, and the behaviour of its elites were and are widely and contentiously debated. The contemporary reworking of the Communist period is highly relevant to Polish society and politics today since the manner of the transformation in 1989 still has repercussions on socio-economic and political relations today. Regardless of their strong social and local outlook, the relative subordination of memories of collectivisation, their homogeneous character, and focus on the failure of the campaign, are also the offspring of the post-communist memory landscape in Poland.

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789 Hofmann, 10.

790 Krystyna Kersten and Jerzy Eisler, 'Dyskusja Nad Historia PRL', in *Polska 1944/45 -1989. Studia I Materiały (tom.1)* (Warszawa: Instytut Historii PAN, 1995), pp. 7–14.

3. Memories of Collectivisation in Saxony

3.1. Post-War Saxony

In contrast to Lower Silesia, Saxony did not witness a whole-scale exchange of population. From the later stages of the war, however, fleeing and expelled Germans traversed the region westwards, some settling in the villages and towns. In April 1945, the majority of people in Kemnitz trekked south towards the German-Czech mountains until they were overtaken by the front.[791] As the interview partners stated, most villagers returned after a couple of days. Some Polish and Soviet officers were billeted with local families during that year and the village's school stayed closed but the disruptions of everyday life was above all embodied by the passing treks of Silesians whose numbers increased in the summer. The village's population grew as expellees settled on the two abandoned estates which were later divided up during the land reform.

No interview partner recalled war-related damages to local buildings. It also emerged that on the farms everyone reverted quickly to their old routines. In comparison to the settlers, the inhabitants were better prepared to weather the ensuing transformations and difficult market situation because they were intimately familiar with the land they farmed and could rely on the close web of relations within a hitherto stable community. The new farmers on the former estates could potentially benefit from the experience and resources of the old-established families, depending on the progress of their integration which, however, in many places tended towards open conflict. Overall, the ever-present lack of consumer goods, a disrupted market, uncertainties over the future of Saxony and Germany, and the necessity to integrate the expellees were the main issues in Kemnitz in the late 1940s.

From this background the chapter proceeds chronologically. The first part is concerned with the agitation period of the second collectivisation drive in the spring of 1960. Following this, everyday work experiences in the collective farms is covered, as are female memories of the period. Lastly, memories relating to Lower Silesia and the socialist neighbour Poland are discussed before the conclusions are adressed.

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[791] In contrast to the rest of the territories which would later become the Soviet Occupation Zone, parts of Lower Silesia and Upper Lusatia were liberated by Polish and Red Army units alike. The Second Polish Army, led by General Karol Świerczewski, had been dispatched to the Oder region in March 1945 and moved forwards along the line Niesky-Bautzen-Dresden during the *Operation Lusatia*. They were accompanied by the First Ukrainian Front which engaged the Wehrmacht in a last major battle around Bautzen in April 1945. On Lower Silesia and Upper Lusatia als a theatre of war in 1945 c.f. Peter Barker, 'Refugees, Expellees and the Language Situation in Lusatia (1945-47)', *German Life and Letters*, 57.4 (2004), 391–400.

3.2. The Agitation Period Remembered

Most speakers referred to collectivisation as a series of events taking place in the spring in 1960. The first, abandoned attempt of 1952/53 is much less frequently recalled, although a type III LPG had been set up in the village at the time. This is due to the individual biographies of the interview partners – no narrator came from a family which had joined in 1952. As the first type III LPG was set up by a relatively small group of new settlers, so-called *Neusiedler*, the majority of the village was immediately affected only by the second wave.[792]

In the eyes of many, the autumn of 1959 marked the beginning of the 'pressure from the city'.[793] Industrial workers began to arrive in the countryside, as well as *Parteibonzen*[794] and other people with 'a function at the *Kreisrat*'.[795] Agitators feature most prominently in the stories, at times also called promoters (*Werber*) or enlighteners (*Aufklärer*). Descriptions of them always mark out their external origin and the fact that they arrived in groups, usually in buses.[796] Mentioning that they came from the factories or were sent by the county council is common. Their daily arrival was so noticeable that word quickly spread ('hat sich rumgesprochen'[797]) when they traversed the village like camel trains.[798] Although they were active only for a short period, according to one farmer 'about one week' in April 1960, the stories of encounters with them are recounted extensively.[799]

3.2.1. Competing Loyalties

That the agitation was carried out also by residents of the village is mentioned only by the two speakers who themselves took part. The teacher accompanying the promoters on visits to individual farmers, initially presents the whole affair as a straightforward matter:

> I was a teacher, a teacher employed by the workers' and peasants' state GDR. So I was the one who received money from the state. So I had to do something for the state. Sounds fancy (…). And then at times there was a phone call to the headmaster's office in the school, around noon time... 'Today in the afternoon there will be an agitation operation (*Agitationseinsatz*). Some people from the SED county leadership will

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[792] The absence of members of the 1952 LPG is due to the relatively small size of the initial group and the length of time between the historical event and the interviews.

[793] Interview with P.T., 15.4.2014.

[794] Interview with J.P., 10.4.2014. *Parteibonzen* translates approximately into party mandarins and big-wigs

[795] Interview with K.E., 20.5.2014. *Kreistag* translates as county council into English.

[796] Interview with P.T., 15.4.2014.

[797] Interview with N.K., 10.04.2014.

[798] 'Karawanenweise', comp. Interview L.T., 15.4.2014.

[799] Interview with B.D., 11.4.2014.

> come. And whose name is on the agitation list (*Agitationsliste*), or rather, on the target list (*Abschussliste*)? Who will have to listen to these people? Some farmers who still worked independently were put on this list and then it was said: 'Him arriving from L., he doesn't know where this farmer lives'. Or something like that. 'And now you are responsible.'[800]

As the narration progresses the demands of the state lead to the questionable aspects of this relationship between employee and his master. The structure of the sentences changes to become rhetorical questions as the conflict over the teacher's loyalties becomes clearer. As a recent arrival engaged to a local woman, this man had spent the last years integrating himself in the community. At the same time, in his eyes, it was perfectly clear that the party-state would call on his dedication outside the classroom. The conflict between both roles and his uneasiness with the agitation visits are evident, also in his reference to the target list. It is noteworthy that he does not speak of the actual visits to his neighbours. The story is anchored to the headmaster's office and the mediated communication through the phone. A direct encounter with his neighbours during an agitation remains outside the narration.

Another instance of this is told by a second teacher working at a school north of the *Kreisstadt*. Having described himself as pacifist, he recalled how he accompanied the county council representative on an agitation visit in the upper part of the village. As in the previous example, the narrator did not speak of what happened during the visit. Instead, he jumped in this story and moved to discuss the biography of the farmer they visited: 'Although a twelve-pounder (*Zwölfender*), he was knowledgeable about agriculture' and, in contrast to the rest of his family, literate.'[801] The previous emphasis on his pacifism is relevant here. The speaker relies on his identity as a teacher when evaluating the farmer's intellectual capacities.[802] Both can be regarded as narrative strategies to distance himself from the situation and the farmer.

The location and order of both men's loyalties were made evident during the agitation visits. Both teachers had spent the previous years integrating themselves in the village. Leaving out the actual agitation, judging the farmer, and highlighting their own closeness to farming all indicate that they were aware, even uncomfortable, with assisting the agitation. Agitating the neighbours represented a moment when their identities as sons

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800 Interview with G.K., 10.4.2014. Löbau is the county capital, approx. 25 km away from the village.

801 Interview with K.E., 20.5.2014. Twelve-pounder was the colloquial expression for a member of the military who had served a minimum of twelve-years in the *Wehrmacht,* that is since 1933, throughout the twelve years until 1945. Originally the term referred to an especially large set of antlers of deer.

802 He also emphasised his farming credentials. It was especially important to him that his family had been medium-sized farmers in Lower Silesia prior to expulsion and that his sister had married a large farmer, a *Großbauer,* in Lusatia after their arrival.

and husbands of farmers and as a teacher loyal to the new socialist state could not easily coexist.

3.2.2. Aggression and Evasion

The presence of the agitators in the village was accompanied by accounts of evasion and aggression on the side of many villagers. With the words 'I'm not having any discussions with you'[803] one father-in-law presented his not altogether genuine sick note to the visitors. Others 'shut their houses' (*Buden dicht*), 'barricaded their doors' (*Türen verrammelt*), and pretended they were not there.[804] Some clandestinely listened to radio *Freies Berlin* every evening, avoiding the official news on the successes of the campaign. The fact that every week 'twelve to fifteen hundred, whole villages' were reported to have left for West Germany that year stood out for one speaker especially.[805]

Some strategies of evasion became timed to the local public transport schedule. The workers on a family farm – including the narrator, her three sisters, their mother, and two other women – agreed amongst themselves that they would hurry:

> The agitators will be here at nine, we have to have finished feeding the cows and so on, because then we can shut the door and pretend we're not here. (…) You know, they arrived with the bus from Löbau and flocked down (*strömten*) the paths, by then we already knew 'The agitators are coming.' And so we tried to stop having to talk to them in the first place.[806]

One farmer in the neighbouring village of Alt-Bernsdorf, is remembered to have left a conversation with the agitators altogether:

> A farmer let them in and they were talking and then he went outside. Said, 'excuse me but I have to shortly go outside', went out and they never saw him again. Now they wanted to leave because he did not come back. There was a big dog lying outside the door and prevented them from leaving.[807]

The arguments and slogans voiced by the agitators are still readily recalled today, even verbatim: 'From the I to the We', 'How it would be better to work collectively', 'The land belongs to all of us'.[808] A young man shovelling dung was told modern technology would take away the strenuous labour – and his sweat.[809] Another remembers being promised that life would become 'better and easier', with less work. The cows would no

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803 Interview with J.P., 10.4.2014.
804 Comp. Interview with G.K. and N.K. 10.04.2014.
805 Interview with D.B., 11.4.2014.
806 Interview with P.T., 15.4.2014.
807 Interview with M.D., 16.4.2014.
808 Taken from interviews of G.K., P.T., and N.K. respectively.
809 Interview with V.B., 19.5.2014.

longer have to be milked at home, the work in the field would ease and with it everything else as well.[810]

As to be expected, scepticism accompanied much of the above. Nowadays it is impossible to distinguish contemporary scepticism from attitudes shaped by knowledge gained afterwards. As a supporter of the campaign remembered 'something else was behind this, well....'[811] What exactly motived the state to engage in the collectivisation campaign is not elucidated. One farmer recalls being told '"The farmers don't lose anything. The only thing they lose are the shackles of their hard labour." But the shackles afterwards (…) were in no way lighter, rather heavier'.[812] This is one example of how the memory of the agitation period becomes recast as a motive for the memories of collectivised farming later. The lightness or heavyness of the shackles before and after is compared because of the agitator's claims which themselves have been weighed and found wanting.

The narrators here are recalling *hidden transcripts* in James Scott's sense. The term denotes activities and speech acts taking place 'beyond (the) direct observation by power holders'.[813] Instead, they are directed towards one's peers 'under different constraints of power' than communication with representatives of power.[814] The public transcript of the farmer's meeting in Alt-Bernsdorf contains politeness ('excuse me') and deference: he explains what he will do, and for how long. Meanwhile, another transcript is enacted by him. Only later, the agitators – and we – infer that the farmer left the conversation once and for all. His intention to avoid the conversation and its consequences sets in motion an ultimate act of evasion – disappearance – which seemingly leaves no doubts. During the situation itself, this second layer is known only to the farmer, not the agitators. Similarly, as the story is retold, the uninformed listener (interviewer) only learns of this second layer towards the end, and through the explaining words of the narrator.

By 'manipulating a realm of *ordinary* activity that was open to them and coding it with (…) meaning'[815] subordinates could demonstrate their (political) point of view. The family hurrying up with the feeding of their cows did exactly that. The otherwise onerous and mundane chore becomes invested with political meaning. It is intended to be perceived by the representatives of power travelling to the village at the same time. Its motivation,

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810 Comp. Interview with N.R., 14.5.2014.
811 Ibid.
812 Interview with M.D. and B.D., 11.4.2014.
813 Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 4.
814 Ibid, p.5.
815 Ibid, p. 140. My emphasis.

however, is not expressed directly or even verbally. The agitators see the farms as they drive by but they are not spoken to.

For Istvan Rév the fact that all, especially non-official, actions 'can be suspected of *secret* political connotations'[816] is generic to the state-socialist system:

> all possibility of political action has been eliminated, where there is no formal framework of political expression left, then everything becomes a potential political issue. Instead of having been liquidated, politics becomes dispersed, hidden but present everywhere. If there is no open formal, confinable arena for political discourse, if there is no open political talk, then all talk can acquire a political meaning.[817]

The interpretation that all talk, and all behaviour, can take on political meaning is especially relevant to the agitation period when (official) discursive frameworks of political debate like LPG assemblies had not yet been established by the party. During the agitation period even these party-dominated outlets were absent, and the rumours and experiences of violence added to the unwillingness to explicitly and verbally interact with the brigades unless necessary. The political intention of the farmer from Alt-Bernsdorf hiding indoors, turning himself and his family into phantoms before the eyes of the agitators, was not only understood by his peers in Kemnitz but also considered relevant enough to be remembered.[818]

The peasants' unwillingness to perform their subordination – by participating in the public transcript with its stabilising and euphemistic effects – charged the everyday labour on a farm – feeding, tilling, transport, slaughtering, breeding, harvesting, sowing – with additional, resistive meaning. Of course, these transcripts could be simultaneously hidden from and understood by party-state representatives. At least this is suggested in the memories. As one woman recalls 'Most of the time they came in the evening. Then the peasants were indoors. During the day we were out, so they usually came in the early evening.'[819]

The most unremarkable action – peasants tending to their fields – during the agitation period is seen as already carrying in it the possibility of suspicious political intentions. What is more, the narrator re-enacted this possibility by repeating it to the interviewer. In this situation the question is, as it was sixty years before, why else would they have timed their visits to the evening?

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816 Rév, 341. (My emphasis).
817 Ibid.
818 This understanding of the public transcript is based on Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance*, 52ff.
819 Interview with M.D., 11.04.2014.

As it turned out, the presence of the agitators on the farm could not be put off indefinitely by hiding. 'Around 1960 they came. "Is the father there?" "No". Our father was really far away, cutting grass or something like that. And we had to feed the cows. They fed the cows with us. They stayed so long, until finally, father came back from the field. Well, and then the discussions started again.'[820]

One gains a sense of the girl's discomfort and balancing of both layers by the way the old woman recounts the scene. At first direct speech is used to set the outward scene. The explanation where the father is– offered to the interviewer, not the agitator – follows this. That not all might be as calm as it appears is indicated through 'finally' and 'so long' when speaking of the offered help. A drama heavy with silences is acted out in this story. The agitators waiting, assisting, perhaps internally rehearsing their arguments, perhaps suspecting the father of evasion or opposition. The children, their mother and the other farm hands waiting as well, accepting assistance, and hiding their opinions and dread of what might follow. The phantom father on his way back to the farm, perhaps delaying his return, perhaps oblivious. To the agitators and to the historian today it is not discernible if this farmer, in fulfilling this non-event of returning home, is already resisting.

3.2.3. Hidden Transcripts of the Agitation Period

Moments where the subdued surface of the public transcript is rippled or broken are remembered as well. The official discourse of the East German farmers being convinced – only – by the well-reasoned, rational arguments of their working-class brothers-in-arms is questioned in the narrations. The agitators are remembered as being 'brutal'.[821] In other words, 'the reds... they understood how to pester people.'[822] At the same time, instances where evasion tilts to aggression are also recounted. For example, one family set their guard dog on the agitators, another let loose their family bull. These actions, although understood today as resisting, could still be explained as accidents or misfortunes afterwards as they were not accompanied with speech.

Speaking of hidden transcripts and their resistive potential must include the matter of the expected consequences of non-conforming behaviour. Refusing membership to the LPG, delaying or reducing the delivery of one's quota's or illegal slaughter were commonly understood eliciting potentially dangerous reactions from the authorities.

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820 Interview with P.T., 15.4.2014.
821 Ibid.
822 Ibid.

In the late spring in 1960, 'Towards the end they stood around together and consulted, the farmers amongst themselves. "And, what will we do?" "What do we do?" Well, at last they joined so that no one was imprisoned (*eingeknastet*)'[823]. More than one farmer was 'fetched' (*abgeholt*), and returned after any amount of time between four weeks and one year. This seems to have occurred more than once. For one farmer the imprisonment of two of his neighbours was clearly linked to conflict over the quotas: 'because of the raising of the quotas many farmers could no longer … and then, as it was called, they were called on their responsibility. (...) The next neighbour, he was doing well and could have managed but they simply picked him up.'[824] Another was imprisoned for four weeks while his wife was pressurised to join the LPG. Her refusal to do so was only made possible by the New Course of 11th June 1953 which eased the push to create collectives. The old farmer W., a migrant from the West but respectable, was gone for a year and said to have returned an old man. He never spoke of his time in prison and was believed to 'have said something' on collectivisation on one of his return visits to the West.[825]

Burning barns – not uncommon on the countryside – in Kemnitz and the surrounding villages were also listed as examples of the increasing pressure on farmers.

> They tried to get some by doing criminal things. In the next village S. there was a farmer who was doing well, they torched his barn. In Kemnitz this happened too, the N. was torched, with settlers inside, that burnt down in '54. (…) It was never solved who did it. (…) They though that those who had nowhere to stay or had no farm buildings would, they thought, join the LPG.[826]

Flight to the West was frequent and one family had to live in the nearby large forest after having been expropriated.[827] Fiddling with the quotas on a smaller lever required vigilance from the farmers, as controls were frequent and the consequences 'hefty'.[828] Lastly, in the same narration an age-old weariness in the face of power is expressed 'and so one has to submit oneself'.[829]

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823 Ibid.
824 Interview with B.D. and M.D., 11.4.2014.
825 Comp. Interview with P.T., 15.4.2014. It is noteworthy that the speaker remains vague on this point. Either he is not familiar with what the old farmer had said, or his euphemistic 'something' repeats the careful manner of speaking at the time when even repeating the dangerous statements of others could become a danger in itself.
826 Interview with B.D., 11.4.2014.
827 Interview with M.D., 11.4.2014.
828 Interview with J.P., 10.4.2014.
829 Ibid.

The interviews collected portray a number of narrative points-of-view which fit Scott's concept of hidden transcripts. Rather than being specially marked or emphasised, they constitute an undertone of the stories. The sick note presented to the agitators, the competing loyalties of the teachers and the politicised, resistive non-events of farm life have been discussed as examples. The suspicion of meanings beyond the public transcript were looked at as well. It should be noted that the inconspicuousness of the hidden transcripts means that they can remain outside the awareness of the interviewer as well. In this aspect the researcher arriving in the village is a distant cousin of the agitators. Elements of intrusion and forcing external interpretation onto hitherto unobserved realities occur in both situations. In the memories, the group of agitators and party functionaries was neither described or contextualised in any detail.[830]

This schematic representation is hardly surprising as it allows the speakers to enforce their position as victims, or at least uninvolved, in the collectivisation campaign. The trope of the village forced to deal with problems brought on by external sources forms the basis of this. It is noteworthy that all speakers engage in this, even those who explicitly support or defend the collectivisation campaign. By contrast, the conflicting loyalties of some village members involved in the agitation either went unperceived at the time or have subsequently been neglected as mnemonic content in order to preserve the integrity of the above.

3. 3. Contextualising LPG Membership

For a former SED member who did not work in agriculture the decision to collectivise was first and foremost an economic matter:

> Which form of production brings the highest yields, the most profit? (…) And here I say, one has to look at this from the side of economics. And here only that company, be it a one-man show or a collective, stands a chance that can draw upon the large, the fullest. The small doesn't work … that only the large stands a chance to establish itself and, more importantly, to be profitable... to be profitable for the family chest.[831]

This reasoning is strongly reminiscent of the official party line on collectivisation. The conviction that only large-scale production, be it industrial or agricultural, could be

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830 They are characterised as being alien (*fremd*) to the village, and always referred to in the plural. The instance where one agitator is described as a 'dog' for his strictness constitutes the only exception. (Interview with N.K., date). The mixed vocational and biographical background of the agitators and party functionaries alike was not alluded to.

831 Interview with G.K., 6.5.2014.

successful featured prominently in Marxist, and later Leninist, economic writing. The narrator would have been familiar with this argument at the time and it is not unlikely he resorted to it himself. As a local functionary, he was repeatedly called upon to support visiting agitators through to the village.

How unobtrusive the reasoning for size was for him can also be inferred from its seamless integration into present-day, capitalist speech. As he says, the overall goal of any economic endeavour is profit and its maximisation. Collectivisation is presented as a policy in accordance with this reasoning. Based on the conviction that rising profit was a result of size expansion, not to implement this reasoning would have meant contradicting common sense The actual mode of production, individual or collective, is of secondary interest. The expansion of the producing unit – in this case a farm – becomes a self-suggesting procedure without alternative.

The repeated invocation of collectivisation as a quintessentially economic or even technocratic matter is to be noted. Collectivisation is represented as a policy governed by necessity and dispassionate reasoning. If the decision to maximise output via collective farms was conceived of as political, the claim to inevitability could be challenged. By contrast, political issues *per se* belong to a sphere where alternative strategies compete while being equally valid. Situating the campaign within an economic discourse, a field commonly presented as governed by rational decision-making, is also a rhetorical strategy employed by the speaker. His personal involvement in this controversial campaign might be considered much more sceptically if the matter was discussed as a political one. This retroactive and almost pre-emptive defensiveness is most likely rooted in the speaker's biography and the conflicting loyalties that shaped it.

Economic Performance before Collectivisation

One farmer remembered that 'those always joined who were economically weak, until '59. Until '59. And we joined, until '59 we continued by ourselves here.'[832] In this representation membership to the LPG is linked to previous economic performance, expressed through the binary of strength and weakness. For the speaker it made little sense that those whose overall situation was difficult – because of bad harvests or previous loans – continued struggling if the LPG offered better (financial) prospects.

Land reform from 1945-48 had transferred land ownership to landless farm workers or expellees from the former German territories. The family received five hectares during

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832 Interview with N.R., 14.5.2014.

this period. The aim of the speaker is to establish that despite precarious beginnings – five hectares being the minimum with which a family could be supported – his family managed to perform well enough to join the LPG when it became inevitable. The late date is repeated three times as proof of such economic acumen. The narrator proceeded to speak about his peers in more detail,

> there were good and bad conversations. I mean, it was this, one was quick but there were others, I don't want to say it … they were glad, they could not go on. I always say: as I drove along the village street and looked at the fields everyone had; lets say there were good and less good fields, and those were always the first to say 'Yes, I do it'. They were more easily convinced. More difficult were those who were economically strong, they were harder to convince.[833]

Again, the story structured as a dichotomy. On one side the successful, quick, strong farmers whose good fields fuel their steadfastness and scepticism. On the other side those weaker, slower, with 'less good' fields who joined sooner to join to be rid of the financial burden of independent farming. Clearly, he counts himself to the first group. The hierarchical gradient, and obligations towards smooth social relations in the village cause his reluctance to express his verdict: 'I don't want to say it.'[834] An element of not wanting (to be seen) to engage in malicious gossip arguably also features.

The motif of incompetence is expounded upon as well: 'those who did not understand it [farming] properly, they had no success, no money, that then is such a consequence'[835] and 'for the new ones, those who started anew, there were some who had no professional preconditions'[836] and so had to join up. For the speaker, the causal progression from economic struggles to the collective farm are propelled by such lack of knowledge. This motif is observable in other narrations as well. For example, another male farmer characterised the first members to the LPG in 1952: 'They didn't know how'.[837]

While the former LPG chairman had not explicitly named the supposedly weak farmers some conclusions can be drawn as to who was referred to. Bearing in mind his background, it is probable that he was speaking of the Lower Silesian expellees who had received land as so-called new settlers or *Neusiedler*. Their lower social status as recent arrivals comes to be expressed by ascriptions of their incompetence and unfamiliarity with farming. Indeed, agriculture as a way of supporting the family in the immediate post-war years had been taken up by many expelles to various degrees of success. This is echoed in

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833 Interview with N.R., 14.5.2014.
834 Ibid.
835 Ibid.
836 Ibid.
837 Interview with L.T., 15.4.2014

another statement on this first LPG, founded by new settlers in 1952, '… it wasn't integrated.'[838] The daughter of a widowed female farmer recalls this somewhat differently:

> Those who had lost everything in Silesia because of the war *and who came from farming*, those were the *Neusiedler*. And in the middle of the village, they had been given land and these were the first who formed a collective.[839]

Leaving aside the diverging descriptions of the background of the settlers, both speakers narrate limited resources, structured as a dichotomy of strength and weakness, as intricately linked to early LPG membership.

Farm Inheritance and freie Spitzen[840]

The view that farmers yielded to the external pressure to collectivise and acted out of a precarious position is common to most stories. However, the narratives diverge when it comes to describing who joined first and why. This point was important to those interview partners who came from farming families. Their stories focus on the old-established farms and their insecurities. As one person remembers 'the old-established owners, those who had heirs who wanted to continue the estate, they regarded the whole matter very sceptically.'[841] She insinuated that those whose own position regards the future was settled could afford to maintain a distance to the collective farm. The stability derived from the presence of a – male – heir and his intent to take over.

One farmer had inherited the family's 30 hectare farm in 1952, after his father's death. Unmarried and with his only brother in Tehran, the then 18-year old relied heavily on the help of one woman expelled from Lower Silesia, also living on the farm. When asked about the decision to join, in late April 1960, his wife spoke directly to him: 'Well, you were completely on your own. He could not have done it all by himself anyway.'[842] Economic vulnerability – exemplified here as lack of experience and marital status – is evoked. Membership to the LPG at the time was understood to ease the chronic lack of farm hands and provided some stability. Still, the couple repeatedly expressed their opposition to collective farming in the course of the interviews. Apart from their self-image as free peasants and later experiences with the LPG, the wish of the young heir to live up to his inheritance motivated this representations. The narration of a daughter of a larger farm in the village was similarly concerned with inheritance,

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838 Interview with N.R., 14.5.2014.
839 Interview with N.K., 10.04.2014.
840 *Freie Spitzen*, literally translating as *free peaks*, denote quota surpluses which could be sold for the individual farmer's profit.
841 Interview with N.K., 10.4.2014.
842 Interview with B.D. and M.D.,11.4.2014.

of the larger farms, down at B's farm, and … what's their name? L., their sons went to the West. And there they were, and the farms where no one was left or no one wanted to take on... Where no one was there, the owner was forced. But they were gone and the farms were suddenly without masters. That is how it started.[843]

The missing young, male heirs make the older owners susceptible to pressure. Speaking about the early 1950s, she returned to this topic again: 'those farms where the people really … were old and could not manage it any more, those were the first in the first LPG'.[844] Advancing age here is not the primary source of insecurity but rather the looming abandonment (*Herrenlosigkeit*) of the farms. The farmers' inability to project stability in the future, rooted in the absence of the heirs, is reflected in the narrative structure. First the sons leave, then the ageing parents join the LPG, itself a great unknown.

In V.B.'s representation this order of cause and effect is inverted. 'And because I said: 'Well, I'll look for something else', the father (…) gave away the cattle and joined the type III.'[845] At this stage his parents were already retired. The order of these decisions cannot be fully established from the narrative as they are recounted taking place simultaneously. The outcome, however, is clear: the son leaves and the father joins.

Yet succession to the farm was not the only perceived source of vulnerability of the farming families' position. A daughter and wife of small-scale farmers stressed that 'all' farmers were 'fundamentally opposed'[846] to collectivisation. 'Apart from the large farms, which could no longer... which did not have enough labourers and which struggled to make ends meet... they were the ones most likely to say Yes.'[847] Farm size and respective demand for labour were also invoked by the couple mentioned above. According to them, economic stability was a lot more common among small farms. Their quotas per hectare were considerably lower which meant more quota surplusses could be sold for a higher price. This additional income in turn was crucial to build up capital for future purchases or penalty payments.

For one man, his personal vulnerability as lone heir was exacerbated by the quota system and its underlying political considerations. In his eyes, the main opposition to collectivisation came from the small farms, which made more profit and thus had more to lose: 'they, were of course, most opposed to it … Generally the smaller farms.'[848]

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843 Interview with L.T. and P.T., 15.4.2014.
844 Ibid.
845 Interview with V.B. and U.B., 15.4.2014.
846 Interview with J.P., 10.4.2014.
847 Ibid.
848 Interview with M.D., 11.4.2014.

Speaking about the agitators' strategy to collectivise the village another woman reasoned differently about small-scale farmers:

> Ach, they were easy catch. Firstly, not as much land was there.
> We had ten hectares. And she was on her own, all by herself.
> And they were the good, cheap fodder. That's how it... They
> tried to get the easy ones first, and then crack the tough nuts.
> And here there were quite a few of those.[849]

Again, the situation of the owners before collectivisation form the primary point of reference. Similarly, this position is defined as being precarious. In this case a single mother running a farm with very little additional labour is shown to have limited resources to withstand the agitation pressure for long. The agitators in turn are seen as understanding this as well and organising their campaign accordingly. As another woman remembers the very first weeks of her parents' membership to the LPG, 'Other than that the men did their work, but I think those who could think for themselves, they would rather have continued individually. (…) the women all were glad that the heavy work was over'.[850] Limited resources, this time of cognitive faculty, are invoked again to explain the men's silent return to work.

'A born farmer' – Farm inheritance after 1989

It was mentioned frequently in the interviews how few of the younger generations went to work on the collective farms. Even less reverted to independently running the family farm after 1989. One mother spoke at length of the inevitability and impossibility of the son becoming an independent farmer. To this woman her son was a 'born farmer'[851] who as a child had grown wheat in small pots on the window still. As a school-child he spent the weekends walking the boundaries of fields which used to be in the family's name, wanting to see 'what they sowed and how it grows.'[852] The son's mindset was and is no small paradox for this mother. At the time, she struggled to accommodate her son's sense of security in speaking about his own future with the reality of the situation after the state had fundamentally changed her previous projections of the furture.

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849 Interview with N.K., 10.4.2014.
850 Interview with L.T. and P.T., 15.4.2014.
851 Interview with M.D., 16.04.2014.
852 Ibid.

She especially remembered a scene at her son's confirmation. After church, the extended family returned home to celebrate over coffee and cake. The son was asked which profession he would like to chose after school. She remembers how

> He replied naively "large-scale farmer" (*Großbauer*). How we all laughed! I said that's unthinkable, it's an … an impossibility, I said, how can you imagine... you could be such a thing when we haven't a square meter or anything else, how can you become that?[853]

The amusement of the relatives, their surprise, and the mother's indignation stem from the improbability of the son's wish. The term *Großbauer* had become increasingly negatively connoted from 1952 onwards.[854] And in the mid-1970s, when this scene took place, the system of collectivised farming, just as the existence of the GDR, was firmly in place and a reversal to small-scale, privately owned farms more than unlikely.

The generational factor also makes this example so rewarding. The disjunction between the son's and the mother's expectations is a sign of how differently each assimilated 'experiences which could no longer be inferred from previous experience'.[855] The son engages in 'the formulation of expectations'[856] which stand in conflict not only with his own experiences but also those of his parents. For those who had lived through collectivisation, 'the previous world of social and political experience, still bound up in the sequence of generations, was blown apart', to quote Koselleck.[857] For the mother, collectivisation meant that the succession of farm ownership from one generation to another was interrupted for good. As a result of this, she is so amazed at the son's determination to project his future onto the farm and the land. His attention to 'our wheat' and intimate knowledge of the boundaries of the fields continue to arouse the mother's pride, which is all the greater because such traditional farm succession could no longer be expected. That the son took over the farm after 1989 is central to the construction of the self-image of the family as free peasants to whom collectivisation was but an interlude. In this of course, the family has to be seen as the exception from the rule. After all, the majority of children from the village went to work in other sectors and often moved to the industrial and administrative centres.[858]

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853 German original: 'Er sagte treudoof: Großbauer.'

854 Comp. Scherstjanoi.

855 Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time; Translated by Keith Tribe* (Ann Arbour: MIT Press, 1985), 282.

856 Ibid.

857 Ibid.

858 The current structure of land ownership in post-communist societies also points into this direction. Family-based farming has not been reintroduced to previously collectivised regions. According to the soil atlas published by the Heinrich-Böll Foundation in cooperation with Le Monde Diplomatique, the Institute for Advanced Sustainability studies and BUND, in 2015 more than 90% of arable land in East

Collectivisation beyond the village

Before turning to the memories of everyday life after the spring of 1960, one comment on the spatial frames of reference of the memories is called for. Bar two exceptions, no references beyond the immediate village setting are made. One narrator remembered the 'forced collectivisation' as 'breaking over Kemnitz' almost like a force of nature:

> Up north, from the Baltic Sea, it came like a rolling barrel down on the eastern countries (*Ostländer*). In April '60, I'd say, it was here, where they had the so-called enlighteners (*Aufklärer*), the industrial workers and functionaries and so on, they came to the countryside.[859]

The language used here is that of describing weather phenomena (*hereinbrechen*, *Walze*, *überkommen*). The quote begins with a myth-like invocation of the source of collectivisation: it originates from the coastal area, 'up north'. Irrespective of its actual speed and progress, the imagery here suggests a linear, forceful path crossing the whole GDR before lastly arriving in the very south-eastern corner where Kemnitz is located. Its arrival is not to be stopped. Just like a natural catastrophe, the event is beyond the reach of man, to this speaker at least.

The second reflection on collectivisation that extended beyond the village realm was made by a former teacher. In this instance, the context of national political strategy is in the foreground. 'First agriculture gets cashed in, first the *LPG*, first complete collectivisation and once this is finished, then one can peacefully, peacefully in inverted commas, build the wall. That was the path they took.'[860] The emphasis here rests with the planned, predictable, and above all strategic aspects of the policy. It is presented as a harbinger of fundamental changes of the regime's character which occurred in 1961. Although the speaker does not state this explicitly, it appears highly probable that he is referring to the building of the Berlin wall in August 1961. The link to the fundamental transformations of the year 1961 in turn endows collectivisation with historical relevance.

Two provisional findings can be derived from the above. When remembered in the national context, collectivisation is invested with connotations of forceful advance and almost extra-human characteristics. The second speaker emphasises his view of the

Germany was cultivated by companies farming more than 100 ha. For a European comparison comp. 'Strukturwandel. Die Neuen Grossgrundbesitzer', *Bodenatlas. Daten Und Fakten Über Acker, Land Und Erde*, 2015, 28–29.
859 Interview with V.B., 19.5.2014.
860 Interview with G.K., 10.4.2014.

strategic background of the policy. It remains to be seen whether these aspects emerge as well from narrations whose frame of reference is defined by the village borders.

3.4. Experiences on the Collective Farm

During the interviews it became clear that the term 'collectivisation' was understood to refer both to the period of establishing collective farms and the period of their existence. As it emerged, the memories of the collectivising process, mostly concerned with the months between autumn 1959 and spring 1960, made up a relatively small share of the narratives about everyday life in the 1950s and 1960s.

The turbulences of the agitation period, most interview partners said, did not spill over into the new reality of the LPGs. One woman recalled her husband and father-in-law being most reluctant to join. Once work was taken up, however, they and the other families who were LPG members 'slowly grew together'.[861] Work as well, in her words, 'quite slowly developed.'[862] For her, the reasons for this lay in the relationships established before spring 1960: 'We all were good neighbours. I have to say, sometimes it actually was fun. We celebrated birthdays together, sometimes out in the fields. (…) We got along well.'[863] Her husband eventually became the chairman of this LPG and was conscientious about running it.[864]

Acceptance of the irreversibility of the transformation is commonly evoked alongside such representations, 'he didn't baulk, it wouldn't have made any sense anyway'.[865] Another mentioned that although he was opposed before 'once the cut was made and all was thrown into one, the decision was taken: We have to make the best of it. And that's what we tried (…) Oh, I could not say that I had reasons to complain. Not at all. Worked very well together, all of us'.[866] Returning to this period later in the conversation, he again emphasised the fact that 'there was no going back' and the good co-operation between the members: 'can't bethink (…) that one had quarrels with them or so. Not at all. No, wasn't an issue.'[867] Other statements ran along the lines of 'We always said, together

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861 Interview with J.P., 10.4.2014.
862 Ibid.
863 Ibid.
864 'He saw that it worked.' Ibid.
865 Ibid.
866 Interview with N.R., 14.5.2014.
867 Ibid.

and not against each other' and 'if someone wanted to stand on the side, we dragged him along.'[868]

The sense of discontinuity – expressed above via the metaphor of the cut – is repeatedly narrated alongside images of a functioning community. During the interviews, the impression that the latter sense of community was seen to have mitigated the challenges of adaptation to the new order. It is noteworthy, that this is underlined by members of type I and type III farms. Apparently, to the memories the various graduations of collectivity are not central, but rather the fact of collectivity itself and how this was dealt with. A conversation between spouses who had both worked at a type I LPG exemplifies this:

> B.D.: At first, we thought 'it has to work somehow' but of
> course there were differences of opinion.'
> M.D. (to her husband): But amongst ourselves, between us, it was
> still alright. When I think, we went on an LPG-excursion every year,
> all of us in one bus. It was always wonderful.(...) There was a strong
> cohesion. Birthdays were always celebrated together.
> B.D.: Sympathy was there. (...)
> M.D.: No one could change anything. Why fight it. Would have
> been pointless. Pointless.[869]

That a gradual improvement in the general atmosphere is mentioned by other couples as well. One husband spoke of how initial grumbling turned into contentment with most of his colleagues.[870] For his wife this was due to a mixture of an easing of the heavy labour – thanks to the introduction of new machinery – and the members being able, for the first time, to go on holidays, even in summer.[871] She also mentioned the gradual acceptance of her father who had not wanted to join. In the beginning, leaving his farm to *go to work* in the morning caused resentment and anger. After a while, he became partnered with another senior farmer. Together with the two horses which had remained on the farm, both spent their days mowing and delivering green fodder for the cattle on the collective farms. As the other man was 'an equally good-natured fellow'[872] neither interview partner recalled the old farmer returning upset or disgruntled in the evening as he got used to his new role.

The examples listed above so far were all gathered from former LPG employees. A woman with no ties to agriculture presented an external view, still from within the village. To her: 'many were very pleased that it had come as it did. Well, some, yes, if one had

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868 Ibid.
869 Interview 11.4.2014. Celebrating one's birthday with the colleagues from the LPG was another minute change in the habits of farmers. Before the farms were merged, holidays and anniversaries would have been celebrated with family and a few personal friends only.
870 Interview with V.B., 19.5.2014.
871 Interview with U.B., 19.5.2014.
872 Ibid.

grown up there and now had to give it away... but generally...'.[873] The reasons for people being 'wholly for it', in her view, were the more regulated and decreasing working hours, and that the animals were taken care of.[874]

When asked whether she remembered any talk of conflicts, the same speaker back-tracked somewhat. Her late husband had worked as a brick-layer in a couple of LPGs, and 'if (he) knows, knew anything he did not speak of it. They sorted that amongst themselves, somehow and of course some probably did not like what they were doing'.[875] Various causes of conflict in the new collectives were mentioned. Most were related to the day-to-day organisation of the work: decisions about where and when the cattle were to graze, the timing and organisation of their return to the stables, the distribution of the fodder, working hours, and salaries were all mentioned as contentious topics. The financial performance of the collectives were also represented in a critical light. In the early years, wages were so low that those without additional incomes struggled especially during the winter.[876]

The new monetary stratification among LPG employees was similarly pointed out. Some chairmen, instructors and engineers where seen to do very well, while the workers earned considerably less. One woman explained that she had to work throughout the winter. As both herself and her husband had arrived to the village as part of the industrial workers campaign (*Industriearbeiter aufs Land*), they had no additional sources of income or food. Consequently, both were available to their LPG in each season. Former individual farmers and their wives, could afford to only work for the LPG episodically, usually in summer when work, and thus pay, was best.[877]

The availability of machinery and services – both extremely limited resources until well into the 1960s – was also repeatedly mentioned as a field of conflict. One woman described how her own parents were always 'the last in line' during harvest and threshing time because the machines were deployed to better connected farmers first. New farmers who had already joined the LPG received support from the state *and* were favoured by the MTS to an unjust degree in the eyes of long-established families: 'Only when the thunderstorm was brewing, then they worked for the others.'[878]

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873 Interview with E.V., 10.4.2014.
874 Ibid.
875 Ibid.
876 Interview with N.K., 6.5.2014.
877 Comp. Interview with V.X., 5.5.2014.
878 Interview with N.K., 10.4.2014. The MTS (*Maschinen-Traktor-Stationen*) were places where farm machinery was pooled for the use of the surrounding farmers. Usually, but not always, drivers and machines were dispatched together.

After the *socialist spring* the battles over the allotment of the rare machines and labour were carried out between the various LPGs and no longer by individuals. As a former tractor driver of the local MTS explained the type III farm was to be preferred, especially in harvest time. In doing so, he was to be 'flexible' in the use of his arguments. The ripeness of the crop, or location of the fields were to be advanced as arguments, even when this was debatable.

Just as before, trickery and hidden transcripts continued as strategies within the LPGs. In the lower part of the village the existence of the LPG was hardly felt in the everyday running of the farms in the first 18 months for those who had come to an agreement with their neighbours. One farmer remembers 'we said, we'll sow our fields, we will make them a bit larger so they are satisfied'[879] because then the fields outwardly appeared to have been merged. Under this cover, each family continued to farm independently. He emphasises that 'it wasn't just us here who did this, other farms did the same!'[880] The whole arrangement came to the knowledge of the authorities in 1962 as controls increased and a large assembly was called in to also publicly enforce the implementation of the contracts. In his view, 'an informer' disclosed everything to the people in Löbau, the *Kreisstadt*.

Trickery was also undertaken by individuals to whom the LPG had outsourced labour. The keeping and breeding of cattle was often spread among the farms as the new, industrial-sizes stables were not yet built. In the words of one woman:

> Those who also had farms at home (…), they kept pigs for the LPG, to feed them. And of course they always had plenty of fodder. So they could feed their individual animals with this as well. Which was forbidden but it was still done. And not just a little! Later it was said that 'those who keep collective animals cannot keep individual'. But that was later. (...) Of course they had more work, Saturdays, Sundays. Cattle always has to eat. But they earned well. (…) Whereas people like my mother who worked on the fields, got far less.[881]

3.5. Female Memories of the Collectives

As mentioned before, half of the narrators were women, of whom many had worked in the LPG. Both male and female interview partners mentioned the sense of community at work when asked about the first years of the LPG. For women without a background in farming, the togetherness of the women brigades in the fields was a new

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879 Interview with B.D., 11.4.2014.
880 Ibid.
881 Interview with N.K., 6.5.2014.

thing.[882] One woman recalled above all how she and her co-workers together 'ranted like sparrows' about difficulties at the farm, often lack of fodder.[883] Apart from this she emphasised how well the group got along and that they 'laughed as well. We had our fun. That's true, we had fun as well.'[884] Similarly, another speaker made clear that conversation in her group revolved mainly about private matters during work and that they 'always tried to have a laugh'.[885]

Open conflicts in the brigades tended to be down-played. Most argued that 'misunderstandings' occurred but these, in the words of one woman, happened 'just as they happen in any marriage'.[886] At the same time, a competitive streak with regards work output formed a repetitive motif in the narratives. During a potato harvest of a type I farm the workers had been supported by a young man who was physically handicapped. As he was slower and inexperienced, the speaker remembers, some women helped him finish his patch so that the brigade could move to the next part of the field. This, however, was not well received by all:

> Oh, that was an argument! Oh, there was trouble. 'Has to try harder', well. There were quite a few who had already finished their patches and were waiting (…) and how the farmer's women fought with each other. And we, the older kids, stood around watching and I thought: 'Oh, dear'.[887]

The patronising, less than emphatic attitude towards the young man is noteworthy. The insistence of some that each remained on their own patch, was due to them wanting their individual work, and speed, to be visible and thus recognised by their peers. Arguably, this points to the intention/will to retain some form of non-collective sense of work. If everyone 'helped' everyone and allowed the boundaries between the patches to become blurry, the recognition of their skills would become blurred as well.

One woman working on the fields remembered a similar atmosphere in her brigade when it came to harvesting potatoes as well: 'You were ambitious, of course, in this group of ten women, none of us wanted to be the last. So everyone watched how the rest was doing. That was difficult.'[888] Here, the group pressure is presented as having been much more strenuous than the physical aspects of the labour. The women spent much of the day, at least 'from lunch to evening', crouching in the field, to gather the potatoes into buckets

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882 Interview with B.S.
883 Interview with M.D., 16.4.2014.
884 Ibid.
885 Interview with N.K., 6.5.2014.
886 Interview with J.P., 10.4.2014.
887 Interview with P.T., 15.4.2014.
888 Interview with J.P., 10.4.2014.

which the men then emptied.[889] This manual harvesting, however tiring, was well known to the speaker as this method was the standard before mechanisation, and therefore nothing special to her. The fact that there suddenly was an audience, and that everyone's labour was compared immediately to others, was new.

The correlation between womens' emancipation and modern forms of (industrialised) labour in the 20th century has been extensively remarked upon.[890] Similarly, the emancipatory discourse of the state-socialist regimes, their (non-) reception by various social groups, as well as female strategies of combining reproductive and productive labour have been discussed. In this context it has been argued that the SED's discourse of emancipation was not intended to 'remove the divisions between household work and careers for men and women but merely tried to help women combine their careers and family duties'.[891]

The lion's share of the reproductive labour and organisation of the family's daily routine, including shopping trips, remained, as ever, tasks for the women. Arguably, the memories of the women support this argument. It should be borne in mind that for many rural women working on an LPG was the first instance of earning a living outside the private sphere of the family farm. This access to the labour market brought with it new demands of organisation but also access to education offers, and payment in the form of money. Before collectivisation, leaving the agricultural sector and the family farm often meant leaving the village.

Daily Routines

Both aspects, access to education and the need to keep the family routines going, were mentioned by the interview partners. For one woman, moving the family's cattle to the type III farm created persistent problems when shopping: 'We were outside on the fields all day and only returned in the evenings. And it happened many times to me that I could not get any milk in the shop on a Friday evening. No milk and nothing. So many times I had not a drop of milk for the kids'.[892] Most speakers mentioned the chronic difficulties in sourcing consumer goods and food stuffs. They also recounted their daily

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889 Ibid.

890 Leonore Ansorg and Renate Hürtgen, 'The Myth of Female Emancipation: Contradictions in Women's Lives', in *Dictatorship as Experience. Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR* (Oxford, New York: Berghahn, 1999),165.

891 Dagmar Langenhahn and Sabine Roß, 'The Socialist Glass Ceiling: Limits to Female Careers', in *Dictatorship as Experience. Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR* (Oxford, New York: Berghahn, 1999), 189.

892 Interview with M.D., 16.4.2015.

schedules with precision: Leave for work at seven am., return at eleven for two hours of household work and cooking. Then return to work until six o'clock, usually longer in summer and during harvest time. After work, the preparation of dinner, preserving fruits or shopping trips to the surrounding towns, usually took place. The new organisation of labour demanded more extensive adaptation from the women than for the men, whose daily routines involved less factors which had to be balanced against each other. The women lost more time as they moved back and forth between the collective and their home. In addition, an external institution determined when the household work was done, for example after the milking shift which started between two and three in the morning.

For one narrator, the LPG meant that the older women for the first time 'had a nice old age'.[893] Before collectivisation, her grandmother had continued working as long as she had been able, often indoors.[894] With the LPG, so the woman said, this became increasingly less necessary. By contrast, retirement from a collective farm caused some anxiety to the mother of another interview partner. Although she could have stopped working with 60, the mother did not want to, despite severe health issues, as this would have meant that 'outsiders', other members of the LPG coming to the farm to tend to the collective cattle.[895]

Experiences of Young and Single Women

The narrative of a wife of an industrial worker dispatched to the countryside in the wake of the 'socialist spring' offers an outsider's perspective, as she came from a retail background and previously had lived in a small town 30 km away. As a 22-year old, she remembers, she found both the work and her new co-workers daunting: 'in the first time I struggled a lot, a lot. I had no clue of anything. When I remember today how I held the pitchfork….'[896] She characterised relations in her brigade as problematic. Being the youngest by a margin of ten years, and inexperienced, she felt the older women patronised her while taking advantage of the age gap: 'and then they always said: "Oh the younger ones, they can do it all." It used to disgust me. And then I thought "where shall I go to if I leave?"'[897]. The distinction between herself and the older locals is also recounted in

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893 Interview with J.P., 10.4.2014.
894 Ibid.
895 The mother felt that she would have to hide herself lest she was seen by other workers. Interview with P.T., 15.4.2014.
896 Expressing amazement at still living in Kemnitz, she pointed out that the village itself had had all the amenities she had been used to in her home town: a hairdresser, a bakery, a butcher, and a shop. Interview with V.X., 5.5.2014.
897 Ibid.

financial terms. In contrast to those who came from farms, she could not afford to stay at home during the winter.

For her, the atmosphere at work was defined by the complaining and grumbling of the elder women during the first years who agreed that 'they took everything away'. This grumbling is also recalled to have driven other workers away: 'I could understand the women, most of them stayed a year, some not even that long, and then they left.'[898] That younger women agreed that although the more experienced wives would copy her recipes and at times gave her advice on house-keeping, the feeling of being an outsider prevailed.[899] In contrast, interview partners from local families portrayed the older generation in a more positive light and stressed their function as role models when it came to diligence, care and work effort in the new context of socialist work.[900]

Her narration of the more easy going moments at work also fits with this overall narrative tone: 'The older ones, more than once they had a bottle of S*chnaps* on them, and I was not used to that. (…) The men too, but we didn't mix much with them…. More us women together, when we bagged the grains.' Since she was not used to drinking during the day she came up with her own strategy of avoiding the alcohol and ingratiating herself with the older women: 'Oh well, I'll serve the drink to you.'[901] Interestingly, once this generation of women had retired, the sense of companionship in the brigade improved, in later years they 'did a lot together'. When speaking of later instances of alcohol during work, her description slipped into the plural: 'Well, on the combine [harvester] we sometimes drank a lot. I have to say… later we said "We won't do this any more."'[902]

A distinct representation of the gendered spheres of work emerges from these memories. Furthermore, the pre-existing social stratification amongst the women continued to be acted out in the new working environment. Just as in other areas of village life, relations were complex and shaped more along these social lines than along political or religious ones. The strategy of a younger brigade member to rather submit herself and pour the *schnaps* than openly expressing her wish of non-participation and distance is indicative of this.

During the later period at the LPG, descriptions of the mood amongst the women were similarly differentiated: 'There were some who gave out a lot, about everything, any

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898 Ibid.
899 Ibid.
900 Mentioned by P.T. (15.4.2014) and J.P. (10.4.2014).
901 Interview with P.T., 15.4.2014.
902 Ibid.

kind of work was a problem for them. But nowadays some people are just that as well.'[903] Her summary of everyday life on the LPG until the late 1980s is interwoven with positive aspects; both work and colleagues 'were actually bearable'.[904] Overall, explicit reflections on the political attitudes of female colleagues were absent in the interviews while references to the social relationships took precedence.

Among these female narratives, one deserves special mention. One woman spoke at length of her mother's experiences at the time of collectivisation. The mother found herself in the rare situation of running a medium-sized farm, inherited from her mother, after the death of her husband in 1941. As her five siblings had either moved away or died during the Second World War, she ran the farm independently until she joined an LPG in 1960. In these years, three generations of women ran the farm, intermittently supported by hired labour. The immediate post-war years were defined for the narrator by the unhappiness of the mother and her struggles to provide for the family. Yet her mother's capability in maintaining the family business – the mother 'could always deal well with money' – is still a source of pride for the daughter.[905]

The lack of money, however, was chronic and the three women 'were left to deal with the farm. That was hard, very hard.' To make things worse the men who had returned from the war were not considered proper husband material – let alone farmers: 'the few that came back, they were damaged, either in the head or physically… not a great choice.'The mother, 'in her best years', was often 'frustrated' because work was never-ending and no long-term perspective of support and companionship was to be seen.

The mother, however, became involved in a number of problematic affairs. The first one her daughter recalled was with a hired manager during the 1950s. She characterised him as competent, educated, and opposed to the new socio-political system, and collectivisation in general. Although the two of them went to village dances together, their situation was defined by silence. He had been married in Lower Silesia before 1945, lost contact with his wife and children during the summer 1945, perhaps deliberately. None of this was known to his new environment. His wife found him while he lived on the farm, and he left a short while afterwards. During this time, as well as during later affairs, everyone on the farm – grandmother, mother, neighbours and the manager – were 'silent

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903 Ibid.
904 Ibid.
905 Amongst the three women, relations were not always straightforward. The young daughter spent most of her time with the grandmother who was responsible for the household and smaller animals. The two older women fought frequently. Interview with N.K., 10.06.2014 and 06.05.2014. Unless specified, the following quotations are taken from these two interviews.

when talking about love' and never spoke openly with the narrator about this issue. Another affair is recounted to have taken place after the collective farms had been set up and having been more than anything else, a unfortunate matter:

> when the LPGs were set up, a chairman arrived, and my mother, well, fell for him. And there was a lot of trouble, as there usually is. The man was married as well. And then there was trouble in that department as well. Somehow she got through all that.

This time the problems doubled as the manager was married and a staunch supporter of the new rural order. The mother, in contrast, was 'not happy in the beginning' of her membership to the LPG. Since her self-image was based on ownership and economic independence, 'she did suffer pretty badly' when membership became an economic necessity: 'Now, I am just a farm labourer too.' It was more the attitude of her peers than the effects on her own life that pre-occupied her. As the daughter explained,

> people looked down on them somewhat … well they didn't own anything anymore. They had all been owners, and in the moment when everything left – the land, the animals, you did not own anything anymore. And even though it all sounds nice, everything belongs to everyone, it was a big cut at first. But she got used to it. The community in the LPG, being free of the responsibilities, no more quotas, the money. She knew "I get so and so much at the end of the month, if I work so many units." (…) And she knew what she could make on the side with the cow, how much milk there would be.

Membership to the LPG became imbued with positive aspects in later years: 'Sometimes she said "I am just happy that everything came as it did, that I got rid of that burden. Having to organise the labour that wasn't here. And we had no machines, only the old stuff. As a child, I remember, how we always had to get everything done (…) There was nothing like meeting friends in the afternoon.'

In the daughter's narration, the mother is depicted usually in the company of male farmers, more so than in the presence of other women, before and after collectivisation. She is remembered to have been popular with them because 'she had something about her that drew people to her'. Later, in the LPG, her strong character meant that 'she spoke openly. When things annoyed her. Not just women's gossip. And it was clear that those who worked, could openly say something. Me and my husband, we had no influence. But she had!' The last point indicates a continuity of pre-socialist relations which carried on into the new collective farms. Ability and diligence in physical labour, in other words that someone was a good worker, was reflected in the respect and good esteem of the other farmers. This basis for a good reputation was not linked to individual ownership but applied to male and female worker's in the LPG alike

3.6. Memories of Lower Silesia and References to Poland

During each interview two sets of questions were asked in relation to Lower Silesia and the Polish People's Republic. If the narrator had a background of expulsion, it was asked if he or she remembered leaving and if they returned for visits. All were asked if they recalled hearing of or speaking about Polish peasants, especially with regard to collectivisation. The majority of interlocutors without family history in Lower Silesia had very little or nothing to say about their Polish neighbours. A reply like 'No, no. I didn't. I have to say I don't' have anything to say and wouldn't know what happened in Poland. No.'[906] only stands out in the vehemence with which the speaker replies, not the content. One farmer spoke of his 'high regard for the Poles'[907] when speaking informally about the halted collectivisation in 1956. He did not expand on this statement and declined to go into detail during the next interview. Asked about Poland, one interview partner began to speak but became increasingly unclear as she went on:

> At the time, I can't say one spoke about it. We liked going there but the borders were closed before the *Wende*. There were many controls, especially after 1961 because many had tried to leave through that sector. And the Poles, how do I say it, for them Germany was … they did not see things like we did. We left for Germany, but the Poles… and so many thought that you could leave via Poland… and then across Slovakia and Hungary.[908]

In the German original, the vagueness is pronounced to a degree that makes it almost impossible to infer the matter at hand or the speaker's attitude towards it. Socialist Poland, or the former German territories do not figure here. Similarly, it does not become clear what she thought/thinks about the Poles as she quickly turns to the much safer topic of the escape routes used by East Germans via Slovakia and Hungary.

Exactly how fragile the mnemonic ground upon the narrator threads is, emerged when the conversation turned to 1956 in Poland. At first, this woman mixed up 1953 and 1956, saying that in Poland 'in '56 there was this 17th June too'.[909]

> Yes, but towards the end it all slowed down. But there were model *kolchoze*s too, those who assented to do it [collectivisation] ...and they always were looking for people, who had no choice, where the children had left, where the elderly were left on their own, where people though "Ok, then we do it like this, we participate a bit and hand over our units". Sure, it was similar but not to the extent … here

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906 Interview with N.R., 14.5.2014.
907 Interview with B.D., date?
908 Interview with N.K., 6.5.
909 Ibid.

> things were pushed through. There was a date and until that day the
> village had to be completely collectivised.[910]

The 17th June 1953 constitutes a prominent date in other interviews as well, although not on the basis of personal or local experiences (no demonstrations took place in the village). Rather, a mixture of contemporary anxieties, excitement, and the centrality of the 1953 uprising in the commemorative landscape in the unified Federal Republic is the cause of this prominence. The mixing up of the dates with the Polish October is telling in so far as it exemplifies the asymmetrical relation between Polish and German attention and knowledge of the respective neighbour.[911] In this context, it is also noteworthy that the speaker uses motives from the history in Kemnitz, applies them to her vision of Polish collectivisation and fuses them with traditional German notions of superiority and prejudice, in this case contrasting German organisation to alleged Polish laxness.

Just like the majority of the long-established villagers, those with an expellee background did not remember speaking of Polish experiences with collectivisation at the time. Poland, or rather, Lower Silesia, as the space of their expulsion was spoken about in some detail. All expellees had been on visits to the villages they had left 1945. Since all of them were born in the 1940s, everyday memories before the expulsion were scarce.

Memories of flight, in contrast, featured prominently in the narrations of both expellees and long-established villagers. In the context of this thesis it is relevant that most Silesians only recalled snapshots of being on the road like, for example that 'we slept on straw then. That I remember but other than that … of course, the tanks and then the horses.'[912] As a result, she explained, she never attended any (informal) meetings of expellees, also because she had no personal contacts to other Silesians. Consequently, she regarded Kemnitz as her *Heimat*, although her relationship with this village was far from straightforward. She mentioned one visit in the 1970s and one recently to the village but did not go into any detail, except that her family house no longer stood. When asked about Poland she spoke much longer of her visits to Wrocław, Kraków, the Tatra mountains and her other holidays in Warsaw Pact states.

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910 Ibid.
911 Breuer argues that Germany and Poland share 'a similarly multifaceted as conflict ridden relationship which is fundamentally shaped by asymmetry: Poles refer to Germany much more often than Germans engage with Poland.' Lars Breuer, *Kommunikative Erinnerung in Deutschland und Polen: Täter- und Opferbilder in Gesprächen über den Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Springer-Verlag, 2014), 17.
912 Interview with V.X., 5.5.2014.

Another narrator was very precise about the itinerary of the family's flight, 'I left on the tenth of April'.[913] He returned to this topic later again in the conversation. Asked at the beginning of his career whether he would join the border police, he recalled to have replied: 'No way. (…) I can look across the border to my home, and I know the misfortune which fell on everyone, how many killed themselves, and how many from my village, how many rich farmers who had lived there for generations...'.[914] Interestingly, his pacifism is not based on the recognition of German guilt over war crimes of the *Wehrmacht* and the SS, or the German attack of 1939 which initiated the war. Instead, experiences of German victimhood are the basis of his statement. Events before 1945 is not mentioned, only the loss of lives to suicide and the loss of wealth of rich farmers after May 1945 are referred to.

Such a narration is far from uncommon in present-day German discourse on the Second World War. The mnemonic culture of identifying Germans as victims of war and dictatorship is, however, not a recent development. Rather,

> the alleged taboo about German suffering never existed. In fact, Germans have talked about and actively commemorated their wartime experiences throughout the post-war period. What needs explaining instead, is the persistence of the claim that there was such a taboo that needs dismantling. This "forgetting of a remembering" served to legitimize precisely the continuance of the discourse itself.[915]

As has been observed in the literature, to some the 'wish to identify oneself with victims appears to have become the mnemonic standard' with regards to the National-Socialist dictatorship and the Second World War.[916] The silence on pre-history exhibited above – but also in other conversations – successfully engages in obfuscating the causal links between the Nazi war of aggression and the forced migration of Germans'.[917] During a conversation, it also effectively hinders a probing into the possible financial or social benefits brought on by the war effort and whole-scale persecution of Jews, Roma or political dissenters. The deliberate silences in many memories of expellees and local Saxons alike maintain a representation of victim hood at the hands of a 'metaphysical evil'[918] which in some stories formed the cause for post-war hardships and victimisation at the hands of the new Communist state.

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913 Interview with K.E., 20.5.2014.

914 Ibid.

915 *Narratives of Trauma: Discourses of German Wartime Suffering in National and International Perspectives*, ed. by Helmut Schmitz and Annette Seidel-Arpacı, German Monitor, no. 73 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011), 4.

916 Ulrike Jureit and Christian Schneider, *Gefühlte Opfer: Illusionen der Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, 1. Aufl. (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 2010), 10.

917 Schmitz and Seidel-Arpacı, 93.

918 Jureit and Schneider, 204.

3.7. Summary

From the above, a number of findings can be noted. Firstly, narrations of the agitation periods showed an inclination by the speakers to open a dichotomy between external agitators and the village population. The variety of evasive and adaptive, occasionally aggressive, reactions of the farmers towards the agitators has been traced in the narrations and set in relation to Scott's theory of *hidden transcripts*. Most speakers strove to explain the background of people's decision to join the collectives. Both timing and reasons for LPG membership are presented as signifying the respective farmer's capabilities as well as moral and economic strength. A pluralist image emerged as to the economic and familial imponderables of farming families which stood behind the decision to join. Former party members and functionaries of the LPG propose diverging narratives, as do the children of large and small-scale farmers. Just as expellees, teachers and housewives, they recounted a number of pressure points.

Secondly, the social orientation of the memories is indicated by the continuous reference to the situation and behaviour of other families, for example when the young heir of the 30 hectare farm concentrated on the toll the quotas took on him, implying that his neighbours with smaller farms were better off. With regards to this aspect, two rhetorical strategies are observable. In the first, emphasis lies on the burden as experienced by the narrator. In the second, the lack of various resources of others is presented. Both seek to contextualise, and arguably justify, the eventual decision to join the LPG in a manner that leaves some agency on the side of the villagers. The respective moment of joining the LPG is important to both strategies. All strategies of contextualisation expressed the speakers' self-perception within the village community.

Thirdly, the tendency to downplay conflicts on the new farms can be observed. An unwillingness to wash dirty linen in public and the lapsed time between the events and the interviews are possible reasons for this. The plurality of memories of everyday life on the LPG is to be stressed. Also, (previous) political opposition to collectivisation does not exclude the narrative acknowledgement of positive aspects and instances of success within the new framework, and vice versa. Many speakers pointed to the forced foundation of the LPGs while also stressing their successful adaptation afterwards.

Fourthly, the complexities of mutual assessments and (hierarchical) social relations during and after the foundation of the collectives have emerged clearly from the

conversations. Membership to an LPG, or the party for that matter, are recalled as one aspect influencing the differentiated social hierarchies in and around the farms.

Fifthly, the specificities of female memories has been worked out. While not necessary bringing up other topics than their male counterparts, female perceptions of collectivisation varied from those of their male peers. Areas such as reproductive labour, daily routines in family life and work on the farm are recalled in greatly more detail in comparison to male speakers. Relations within the working brigades – for example between older, local women and recent younger arrivals – as well as the positive and negative side effects – like financial stability, education prospects, longer working hours, and a changed working environment – are key points to this. As in conversations with male narrators, pre-socialist ascriptions and characterisations were continued and rephrased in the language and images linked to collectivisation.

Lastly, Lower Silesia played a distinct if somewhat minor role during the interviews. References to the new Polish, socialist reality across the border were vague in comparison to the strong local focus of the interview partners when speaking about their area. The (abandoned) collectivisation of Polish agriculture was mentioned only by two interview partners while the rest related holiday episodes, if at all.

Conclusion

Perspectives of Collectivisation

The aim of this PhD project was to analyse and compare historical and contemporary perceptions of collectivisation – by individuals – in Saxony and Lower Silesia. It expanded the current academic literature on this central, yet often overlooked, aspect of the establishment of the state-socialist regimes in central and eastern Europe. The ensuing conclusion provides a comparative discussion of the Lower Silesian and the Saxon case studies. It links this comparison to the two overarching themes of this study: the discourse on the modernity of the peasantry and the topos of collectivisation in the post-communist era. In a final step, the original contribution of the thesis to the cultural history of the GDR and PRL is outlined, its limitations explained, and recommendations for further research are laid down.

1. From Popular Opinion to Memory - Comparisons

In Saxony and Lower Silesia alike farmers moved between submission, silence, adaptation and various degrees of criticism when encountering party-state functionaries, often simultaneously. Two outcomes of the theoretical chapter at the beginning of this thesis have remained relevant for the discussion of the primary sources. Representations of popular opinion were two-directional: they were shaped and created by the regime functionaries whose task it was to monitor and record these attitudes. These representations furthermore circulated within and outside spheres controlled by the party-state. The verbal formulation and content of popular opinion was highly diverse in both regions. Outspoken complaints about economic and administrative malpractice were tolerated, even encouraged, as long as they did not openly challenge the overarching narrative of the socialist transformation of the East German and Polish countryside. Topics off-limits in both regions were the modernisation and increase of quota levels, the friendship between the GDR, VRP, and the Soviet Union, as well as the idealised antifascist struggle. Nevertheless, evocations of the difficult conditions on collective farms in the Soviet Union, scarcity of food and building materials, and conflicts within the collectives featured in Saxon and Lower Silesian reports.

The farmers attending public meetings and assemblies of collective also expressed loyal criticism – remarks that highlighted specific problems but remained within the

discursive framework of the socialist transformation. These statements balanced the speaker's wish to mitigate effects of policies such as differentiation or increased quotas against the expectation of negative consequences which less specific and more fundamental criticism would have provoked. These (semi-) public meetings were also occasions where mechanisms of generating discursive control and affirmation from below took place. In both regions debates about collectivisation and about specific collective farms were not restricted to ideological arguments, although these too were recorded and swiftly branded as proof of enemy activity and consciousness. Rather, a mixture of local and economic aspects dominated the discussions amongst and between peasants and party-state agents.

In both regions, the topos of collectivisation covered more than the transition from individual to collective ownership. Analysing documents from the period after collective farms were founded has proven to be just as, or even more rewarding, than concentrating on the transition period. On the collective farms, the opinions of peasants on socialist agriculture were based on local and economic circumstances which eventually condensed into a mosaic of personal attitudes which were context-bound and diverse. Saxon and Lower Silesian villagers and functionaries were heteroglossic and constantly engaged in the expression of statements whose meanings were similarly pluralist.[919]

This plurality, however, did not travel well within the party apparatus. With the moment of their written fixation, the local and verbal complexities were simplified to fit the logic of the party-state so that higher party members could make sense of it within a very specific context.[920] For this reason, it is sensible to speak of multiple popular opinions: the local, verbal representations and the written, administrative versions which became increasingly de-contextualised within each party level. Similarly, the identity and interpretations of individual authors receded. Although the reports 'have individual authors, those authors are not always clearly indicated; the documents' ritualized form and circulation collectivize them.'[921] The inward gaze of the functionaries, their concerns over their sufficient internalisation of the Communist world-view and discipline have been discussed in detail on the basis of the East German and Polish reports.

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[919] As was shown, the interpretation of the every-day interaction on collective farms needs to take the respective pre-histories of settlement and land ownership into account while also moving between the micro to the meso level.

[920] Arguably these complexities can only be depicted if one embraces the limited interpretative value of the perspective of the sure decline (*Perspektive des sicheren Untergangs*) of the state-socialist regimes. If Communism was pre-determined to fail, the details of the regimes' history are rendered meaningless.

[921] Kligman and Verdery, 156f.

Plurality of meanings and local conditions also characterises the memories of collectivisation gathered for this PhD. The social similarities between both groups justified a comparative research. Firstly, all interview partners had a family background in agriculture. Both the Saxon and Lower Silesian interview partners did not participate in the large-scale migration to other sectors and urban areas which began in the 1950s. While not all continued to be active in agriculture during their working life, they stayed in the villages and often retained connections to farming, either as full- or part-time farmers, or running a small-holding in order to supplement the family income.[922]

Secondly, representations of everyday life in the 1940s and 1950s in both interview groups emphasised the physicality of farm labour and the scarcity of farm workers and agricultural resources. The mechanisation and modernisation of farming were welcomed and usually exemplified with the arrival of tractors and harvesters. In both places, pre-socialist structures of large scale farming persisted on collective and state farms – for example in the higher status and payment of work in the stables compared to field work. In the first decades daily and yearly working cycles and rhythms continued until the onset of further industrialisation in the late 1960s and 1970s.

Thirdly, all interview partners spoke at length about the scarcity of consumer goods and hard physical labour in post-war years. The Communist agricultural policies – for example collectivisation but also soil classification or taxation – were in both places presented as external interventions without local support. However, some interview partners in Saxony spoke openly of their allegiance/connection to the regime, e.g. teachers who were party members. In the Lower Silesian village, individual political allegiances of the past or present emerged only indirectly as no narrators openly discussed these beyond establishing their distance to the regime vis-a-vis the interviewer.

Fourthly, the memories share a biographical orientation in the sense that historical events were frequently framed in relation to an individual's biography. Historical developments like the post-war redrawing of German and Polish borders or the adaptation of collectivisation as the main agricultural policy were discussed through the lens of their implications for the reality of life of the interview partners. In line with this, the memories

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922 Another similarity between the interview groups is the fact that the majority of (grand-)children of most interview partners are no longer occupied in the sector. Some (grand-)children continue to run the family farms after individual ownership was restored in the 1990s, often on a part-time basis. The others have moved away to regional towns (like Świdnica or Görlitz) and larger cities (like Dresden or Wrocław). On the various reasons of the persistence of traditional farming structures, comp. Hofmann, 160.

in both groups portrayed a pre-occupation with the local and, especially, the social dimension of rural life in the first post-war decades.

The presence of the national sphere in the memories marks a point of divergence. In Kemnitz, the memories with a few exceptions remained within the perimeter of the village. In Krzyżowa, the national perspective was much more present and frequently constituted an integral element of autobiographical narrations. Amongst the strongest elements were the expulsion from Eastern Poland, linked to the Soviet occupation of these territories. Other war-related experiences and the depiction of post-war dearth and hardships established the interlacing of individual and national victim-hood as the dominant feature of these memories.

The case study from Krzyżowa thus serves as an example of how 'fundamentally the post-Communist memory culture is tied to the Soviet era' in central and eastern Europe.[923] The national outlook has been a constant – and arguably the most stable feature – in Polish conceptions and politics of history since the partitions of the 18th and 19th century.[924] In the late 20th century, nationalist interpretations of Polish history – including tropes of Polish victim-hood – were intrinsic to Communist and Post-Communist discourses of statehood and self-description and were continuously reconfigured as a result of this. After 1945, the Communist regime engaged in a multifaceted legitimisation of their rule under Soviet auspices. This 'national-communist reconfiguration' of history is characterised by the uneasy coexistence of unresolved internal contradictions:

> The party-state's propaganda line of ethnic nationalism stood in an unresolved contradiction to the invented friendship to the Soviet Union. The official relation to Germany was equally ambivalent: the Polish Communists legitimised their power with fears of a German revenge. The Soviet Union, they claimed, was the only guarantor of the Oder-Neisse border. Yet in 1950, they had to follow the official imagery of Germany of the Soviet empire. As a result the decreed friendship to the GDR co-existed with the image of West Germany as enemy, which was closely linked to the topoi of anti-fascism and anti-Americanism.[925]

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923 Troebst, 382. (Translation KMO).

924 Long tradition in Polish thinking, since the partitions of Poland. Literary Romanticism, Adam Mickiewicz most prominent representative of this school of thought, which did not go wholly unchallenged. For an introduction to Polish Messianic thought and the potency of this imagery at the middle of the 20th century comp. J Herlth, 'The Polish Messianism and the Rhetoric of Catastrophe', *Poetica - Zeitschrift Für Sprach-undLiteraturwissenschaft*, 39.1–2 (2007), 135–57. Bradley Fels, 'Polish Messianism "Redivivus": The Use of Sacrificial Imagery to Gain American Support for Poland During World War Ii', *The Polish Review*, 46.2 (2001), 195–207.

925 Behrends, 'Jan Józef Lipskis Europäischer Traum Zur Geschichtskultur in Polen, Russland Und Deutschland Nach 1989', 1. (Translation KMO).

As Marcin Zaremba has pointed out, every 'time the system experienced a crisis, the rulers resorted to nationalistic argumentation and made efforts of legitimisation in order to create a symbolic communion with society, a communion of which the axis was the idea of nationhood.'[926] The contradictory narrative which emerged in the Warsaw pact states

> spoke of an anti-fascist war and a Nazi Germany that had fought for capitalist and imperialist objectives, noted widespread communist resistance in all of Eastern Europe, celebrated liberation by the Red Army and mourned victims of the war simply as citizens of a national state (rather than specific groups – for example Jews).[927]

Just as in other post-communist countries in central and eastern Europe this conceptualisation of history was reworked after 1989 in Poland. The national dimension remained in place, albeit under changed ideological conditions. The new politics of history and memory were now

> determined by a central objective: to integrate the supporters of the new establishment and stigmatise the followers of the pre-1989 communist regimes. This process varied from nation to nation, but a visible pattern occurred in each state: the nationalisation of the past was achieved by utilising traditions of independence, drawing on a sense of victimhood and endorsing a national martyrology, with the identity of victim, collaborator or oppressor defined along strict ethno-national lines.[928]

The local evaluation of the German past in the Krzyżowan memories has to be considered as a reversal of the above. Instead of the tropes of Polish victim-hood at the hands of Russian and German aggression and abandonment by its Western allies, the interview partners (positively) recalled members of the German resistance movement and represented Germans not as Nazi perpetrators but as victims of plunderers and the new border. The latter elements were originally neither a part of the national Communist nor of the post-Communist canon.[929]

The Krzyżowan memories constitute the rural manifestation of the prevalence of nationalist imagery in Polish historical and mnemonic culture, and the partial reversal of the same. The national orientation is phrased in the language of new rural inhabitants of Silesia, including their background as settlers and expellees, and their current situation as

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926 Zaremba, 38. (Translation KMO). Marcin Zaremba's monograph on the discourse of nationalist legitimation in the PRL

927 Ewa Ochman, *Post-Communist Poland: Contested Pasts and Future Identities*, BASEES/Routledge Series on Russian and East European Studies, v. 88 (London: Routledge, 2013), 2.

928 Ochman, 1.

929 Of course this is not to argue that the other are absent, merely that they were not discussed with the interviewer. Sufficiently familiar with this reading of Polish-German history to perform during an interview situation.

inhabitants of a village which has acquired the status of a symbol for German-Polish reconciliation.

2. Collectivisation in the Mnemonic Landscapes of Saxony and Lower Silesia

The most profound difference between the Saxon and Lower Silesian interviews lies in the relative position afforded to memories of collectivisation. In the Lower Silesian memories, experiences of collective farming do not occupy a prominent position and have already been transformed into historical knowledge. By contrast, the Saxon experiences of collectivised agriculture constitute an integral part in the autobiographies of the speakers. These experiences, and the topic of collectivisation, were thus more relevant for the present than in Lower Silesia. One reason for this is surely the current structure of farming in Kemnitz which did not revert to small and medium-scale family-run farms.[930] The long existence of the LPG is another factor as the social and economic relationships formed during a working life are an integral part of many biographies. The transformation in the early 1990s – which was critically reflected upon by most interview partners as the onset of their economic marginalisation and impoverishment – is another aspect to be borne in mind; since the outcomes of the change of the economic system are experienced by the speakers today, the previous status is still a part of the narration of the past.

The interview groups differ in the scope and importance assigned to the pre-histories of collectivisation. Individual experiences of war, occupation and migration occupy a central role in the memories of the Polish interview partners. Even more so, these episodes are presented by the interview partners as crucial elements for understanding the story of everyday life under Communism. The mutuality of individual and national ascriptions of victimhood (of various agents) emerged as a shared feature from the Lower Silesian interviews.

The mnemonic landscape of Krzyżowa is characterised by three aspects: the prominence of individual and national victimhood in the (pre-)Communist period; the local transformation of memories relating to Germans in line with the post-Communist memory politics of the Krzyżowa foundation; the representation of early Communist decades as

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930 Today the majority of the land is tilled by a few full-time farmers who work the same large fields as the collective farm did since most families which were returned ownership of their land did not revert to individual farming but lease or sold their land to the few large-scale farmers. Structure of land ownership

defined by lack, destruction, and hardship. In all this, collectivisation occupies the minor role as a corollary argument supporting the overall image of a failed Communist episode in Polish history. Other experiences of individual farmers before the collectivisation campaign are narrated along similar lines.

If the Lower Silesian memories of collectivisation have themselves become historicised, in the Saxon memories this issue is much more present. In the GDR collectivisation was an event which forced those who experienced it to rephrase their position in relation to their farm's future. The question of farm inheritance was central to this as it ordered the shape in which the past would carry on into the future. With the spring of 1960 the children and grand-children of independent farmers became workers of a farm with no history. In the decades afterwards it then emerged that the children of these peasants-turned-workers saw no future in agriculture themselves. In Lower Silesia, this familial reordering took place to a much lesser degree since collectivisation was only one aspect of the manifold transformations of their lives which had been set in motion by the outbreak of war. Positive evocations of the pre-war period could be observed more frequently. Arguably, the rupture between experiences and expectation had already taken place during the war in Poland, but in the Saxon villages only occurred in the 1950s and 1960s.

It should be noted that neither Lower Silesia nor Saxon interview partners engaged in romanticised depictions of farming before collectivisation. Rather, they emphasised the practical challenges to farming after the Second World War and the pragmatic necessities of economic survival.

3. Heteroglossic Memories and Pragmatic Modernisation

This PhD project was undertaken against the backdrop of long-lasting contentions about characterisations of farmers as (un-)modern. The doubled stereotyping of peasants as post-Communist and rural subjects of a peripheral region is but the most recent episode in the history of rural central and eastern Europe. This thesis also investigated how new approaches to the collectivisation can add to the critical discussion of this history in a post-Communist context.

The Communist takeover of power – including collectivisation – in the GDR and the PPR ordered the historical experience of the peasants into a clearly distinguishable before and after. This reordering was visible both in the memories and the statements recorded by regime.[931] Farmers actively adapted the disjunctions between previous experience and expectations which the Communist takeover had brought on to their specific, local reality. The echoes of this work on their biographies and fields are audible in their present-day memories. That some farmers at times reacted critically and violently to collectivisation is but one aspect of the plethora of strategies of adaptation, negotiation and dissociation. To concentrate on the latter aspects would support a representation of Communist and post-Communist experiences in agriculture as examples of the delayed modernity of the eastern European periphery.

From the sources, collectivisation has above all emerged as a local and economic affair between villagers and regional agents of the Communist transformation. In the memories and reports the local perspective – the complexities of specific social, geographical, and historical constellations – was pre-dominant. Farmers criticised collectivisation as a combination of state control with insufficient support, lacking perspectives of economic viability, and reduced autonomy.

As mentioned in the introduction, collectivisation was not merely a tool for the industrialisation of agricultural production and for uplifting farm workers to a brighter existence. It was also a major step for the expansion of state control to the countryside, regardless of its Communist ideology, by means of administrative oversight and statistical classification. As Caldwell remarked, the state socialist

> discussion of the transition to socialism in the 1950s, even if resplendent with ideological phrases, contained a number of economic goals that are rational from the point of capitalist modernization theorists: the development of a functional and growing economy, of usable channels of information from bottom to top to facilitate planning, of a disciplined and self-disciplined workforce paid according to individual performance and of stable institutional and legal structures compatible with rapid change.[932]

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931 For example when comparisons to the preceding or subsequent periods were drawn or when terms were linked to a specific period. This was the case when new farmers (*Neubauern*) of the land reform were later characterised by their membership to 'type III' collectives where land, machinery and cattle were jointly owned.

932 Caldwell continues to argue that 'These are the goals of contemporary liberal reformers in Eastern Europe as well. And it is notable that the discussion of economic modernization in the capitalist world has not been free from anti-democratic tendencies – what some economists have called, for example, the "Pinochet model" of modernization through dictatorship.' Caldwell, 11.

These aims are and were not self-evident to those farming the land. Farmers took issue not exclusively with Communist ideology or the aims of the respective Communist parties – many of which, like reconstruction, economic growth and redistribution of wealth enjoyed wide-spread support. Farmers reacted defensively against the encroaching of the state and its way of controlling spheres of life which had hitherto been unregistered and therefore less visible to centralist planning and state oversight. Peasants and functionaries negotiated not only Communism but also how far the logic of the state was to penetrate work on the farms. Previously farming had only been partially integrated into a national administrative economy and the necessity of centralised oversight was by no means self-suggesting or even conditional to the activity of farming itself. This aspect was possibly just as, or even more, contentious than the implementation of the proletarian dictatorship. As the post-Communist transformation of the country-side has shown, the processes set in train with collectivisation were not reversible: the demand for industrial, large-scale production was first administered by the socialist state and later by the market.

In other words, Saxon and Lower Silesian farmers were not more or less modern than their Russian or French counterparts. One should be careful not to over-ideolgise their actions so as not to inadvertently take on the perspective of the Communist state – or the capitalist market – which interpreted 'routine acts of survival changed to acts of political resistance; apolitical peasants changed to political enemies; politics became equivalent to cheating, dissimulation, and suspicion.'[933] As Jan Plamper pointed out, neither the revisionist nor the totalitarian school of Soviet historiography readily acknowledged the 'coexistence of multiple attitudes in a single subject within short windows of time'.[934] The preceding discussion of both mood reports and memories has shown that it was possible for a person to praise the advancement of the collective farm at lunch time, evade work in the afternoon, and fiercely argue against the new quotas in the evening just as Plamper's Soviet citizen could cry during Stalin's funeral and laugh at a dissident joke in the course of one day. Plamper termed this simultaneous co-existence of apparently conflicting emotions and opinions as heteroglossic. This heterglossia is also discernible in the memories of collectivisation. Attitudes and representations conflict and overlap in the narrations of the interview partners.

With regards to popular opinion this hereoglossia is not as discernible as in the memories. This is due to the of binary structuring of opinion statements into positive and

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933 Rév, 345.
934 See Plamper, 'Beyond Binaries: Popular Opinion in Stalinism', 66.

negative which was characteristic of the Communist world-view. However, whenever debates and discussions were depicted in detail and chronology – this plurality emerges.[935]

4. Original Contribution and Limitations of the Thesis

This thesis has worked out two major original contributions to the historiography of collectivisation in central and eastern Europe after the Second World War. Firstly, it has provided a new conceptualisation of popular opinion which is sensitive to the historical setting of the so-called second generation regimes established after 1945. In addition, the theoretical framework and research design – resting on the combination of memory studies and popular opinion studies – has proven to be a valuable approach to charting the discursive histories of state-socialism in the 20th century. Secondly, memories of collectivisation were for the first time analysed in a comparative framework. In addition, the thorough contextualisation of the memories allowed for the overdue placement of the topos of collectivisation in the respective mnemonic canon of East German/Saxon and Lower Silesian/ Polish memories of early state-socialism.

As a study into the history of an academically under-represented people, Communist rural subjects, this thesis was, however, based on a limited source body for organisational and theoretical reasons: media and propaganda representations, autobiographical texts and mood reports from more than one party have not been included. This project can therefore only constitute an initial investigation towards a more pluralist and context-sensitive historiography of rural Communism and its aftermath. Bearing this in mind, some avenues of future research suggest themselves.

With regards to popular opinion, the dynamics between public and popular opinion, as well as their transmission and transformation in different public and private spheres, merits further research. The mnemonic treatment of the transformations after 1989 in the countryside also constitutes a promising field of future research. A comparison of the memories of (post-)Communist farmers with those of their western European counterparts The hypothesis here would be that comparable developments of mechanisation and industrialisation took place under different political models. Therefore, local adaptations to

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935 It also becomes clear that statements which were classified as positive or negative only carried these attributes *on stage* but possessed additional meanings *off stage*; these meanings were not recorded and arguably not always noticeable for an external visitor. The language was the language of the system but the meanings depended on the context.

modernization and increasing state/market control were similar and thus would find their corresponding expression in the memories. Lastly, a comparison of memories of collectivisation and the transition to capitalism in the former Warsaw-pact states appears to be equally promising.

All these avenues of research share an interest in charting how individuals working in agriculture made sense of their place in society, politics and history after the political change of 1989. They thus aim at expanding Lynne Viola's interest in the 'internal politics within working class and peasant societies' from the Stalinist period to the second half of the 20th century.[936] Paying close attention to the politics which 'were embedded in the everyday life of village and factory, [fed] into the play of hierarchies of gender, generation, and local authority structures that rent societies in multiple directions' can lead to a critical and historically grounded reappraisal of representations of those working and farming on the socio-economic, geographical, and cultural margins of post-Communism.

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936 Lynne Viola

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Perspectives of Collectivisation – Abstract

The collectivisation of the East German and Polish agriculture in the 1950s and 1960s stands at the centre of this thesis. The diverging experiences of collectivisation in East Germany and Poland are investigated through contemporary party reports and present-day memories. The thesis aims to open new perspectives on the history of collectivisation in both countries by studying two hitherto neglected aspects: the every-day, standardised negotiation of popular opinion on the farms and the present-day memories of the period.

Collectivisation in a transnational and comparative framework has so far only been rarely studies. Most work concentrates on the political and economic history of the policy. Contemporary memories of collectivisation also remain understudied while no attempt at placing (the memories of) collectivisation in the post-Communist discourse in central and eastern Europe has been undertaken so far. This PhD thesis fills this gap in the academic literature by combining the analysis of memories of collectivisation with the close reading of contemporary party and mood reports.

On the collective farms, the opinions of peasants on socialist agriculture were based on local and economic circumstances which eventually condensed into a mosaic of personal attitudes which were context-bound and diverse. Saxon and Lower Silesian villagers and functionaries were heteroglossic and constantly engaged in the expression of statements whose meanings were similarly pluralist and context-sensitive.

The most profound difference between the Saxon and Lower Silesian interviews lies in the relative position afforded to memories of collectivisation. In the Lower Silesian memories, experiences of collective farming do not occupy a prominent position and could be described as already transformed into historical knowledge. By contrast, the Saxon experiences of collectivised agriculture constitute an integral part in the autobiographies of the speakers.