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Critical Responses

Edited by
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RUDOLF BAHRO

Critical Responses

Rudolf Bahro, then a functionary in the party-state apparatus of the German Democratic Republic, captured worldwide attention in 1977 when his book *The Alternative: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Socialism* was published in the West. Bahro was arrested by state security forces, charged with espionage, and sentenced to an eight-year term of imprisonment.

An "International Congress on and for Rudolf Bahro," organized by a broad spectrum of European leftists who called for Bahro's release, met in West Berlin in November 1978 to discuss the ideas put forth in *The Alternative*. The papers collected here in translation were written for the Congress. They reflect not only the lively critical discussion sparked by Bahro's book but also the perplexed and perplexing condition of the European left, both Old and New. Today Bahro—released in the amnesty that marked the GDR's thirtieth anniversary and now residing in the West—is himself a participant in the ongoing debate.

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Contents

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HERMANN WEBER

The Third Way: Bahro's Place in the Tradition of Anti-Stalinist Opposition

In his critique of real socialism, Rudolf Bahro can be said to have emphasized political economy (to use the categories of Marxism-Leninism as is usual in Soviet communism), whereas Robert Havemann, for example, focused on philosophy. Certainly Bahro's critique is comprehensive; indeed, what is notable in his study is its universality. However, inasmuch as Bahro proceeds systematically, historical lines of development are not empirically examined, or only marginally so. Thus, in his methodological approach Bahro seems at first glance to take a position quite distinct from that of earlier members of the communist opposition. The latter sought to ascertain those factors that led to the transformation of Russia's revolutionary regime into Stalinism. It was Bahro's purpose to analyze "actually existing socialism as a unique kind of social formation,"[1] hence he takes as his focus the economic foundations of the system. However, Bahro also wants to create political instruments for altering real socialism (indeed, he proposes to spell out the programmatic positions of a new communist league, which in his opinion is necessary).[2] This is quite within the tradition of previous Marxist critiques in communist-governed systems.

And it is no accident that Bahro not only turns immediately to the historical dimension of his critique in his book *The Alternative*,[3] but also in his *Lectures* points up the problematic of earlier communist heresy. Here too he is within the tradition.

> However, we must free ourselves from the old orthodox Marxist sectarianism. We cannot learn the way from that opposition, which at one time lost its struggle against the rise of the Stalinist despotism as its own irritation grew. In a certain phase of breaking away from the domination of the apparatus, every revolutionary communist after 1917 has felt himself

> to be Trotskyist. However, this position is actually historically futile. We do not wish to restore old norms, but create new ones. We need no longer confine ourselves to intra-Party constellations; rather we must consciously derive our support from broad social forces . . .[4]

While this self-evaluation shows a critical distance from the earlier intra-Party opposition, it cannot conceal the fact that Bahro too remains within the tradition of the intracommunist opposition. The core of this opposition has always rested with a criticism of, and struggle against, the existing communist-governed systems from Marxist positions; it has attempted to surmount the historical reality by making use of the theoretical conceptions and emancipatory demands of Marxism. Bahro proceeds from the position of democratic communism; he goes further in the conclusions he draws, but that is only a logical development.

Typically too, Bahro contrasts the goal of the 1917 revolution with its results. One of his initial theses states: "Since 1917, a quite different social order has emerged from the revolutionary process than that which its champions had expected."[5] Official communist historiography and conservative historiography alike reject this position, both postulating a linear development for the Russian Revolution. For the intracommunist opposition, however, that there was a break in Soviet development has always been the keystone of their attitude (although the precise time at which this break is said to have occurred has varied considerably depending on the particular position). In the following we shall outline some communist oppositionist tendencies that are relevant to the GDR, and will elucidate Bahro's position within the tradition.

Opposition in the German Democratic Republic

Twenty years ago an (anonymous) author called attention to the distinctions, the contradictions even, within the opposition in the GDR. Even at that time he felt that the opposition of the bourgeoisie should not be overestimated: "The remainder of the bourgeoisie and the independent farmers are indeed opponents of the regime, but they possess neither political organizational forms nor economic means of power." On the other hand, he saw "the most active forces of opposition among the intellectuals and the workers," but stressed that these "challenged the system from a left-wing platform," since this opposition "proposed to realize a de-Stalinized Marxism."[6]

Since then the significance of this opposition has been much discussed.[7] While the classification of a bourgeois, a social democratic, and a communist opposition in the history of the GDR may simplify reality, it is nonetheless usable for our context. It should be remarked that the notion that the bourgeois opposition is necessarily without any significance underestimates the influence of the example of the German Federal Republic (FRG); but what is at issue here is the ultimate objective of *any* opposition. Bourgeois opposition in the GDR embraces a general rejection of the social system, including its forms of property. The social-democratic position (with which broad circles seem to sympathize[8]) is opposed to the political system and the ideology; it too of course looks to the Federal Republic, but more especially to its welfare-state aspecs. In contrast, the communist opposition in the GDR, since its emergence from the groundsoil of the existing economic and social order, has aimed for a democratization, i.e., above all a change in the political system and the steering mechanisms of the society and the economy. This opposition saw itself as anti-Stalinist, not anti-communist, and thus continued the line of the anti-Stalinists in the world communist movement of the twenties and thirties.

We cannot here retrace the path taken by communist opponents of Stalin.[9] Let us but note that even during the period of Leninism there was a communist opposition (the Workers' Opposition and the Democratic Centralists in Russia, left radicalism in Germany, Holland, etc.).[10] And with the emergence of Stalinism came an opposition that saw itself as Leninist and for the first time put forth the thesis that Russian praxis was departing from the objectives of the October Revolution. Accordingly, this opposition contrasted the realities in Russia with the theory of Marxism and Leninism as a contrary conception. The reproach that the new bureaucracy had abandoned communist principles and betrayed the revolution was first voiced in 1923 by the Trotskyist and left opposition in international communism.[11] After Stalin's left turn in 1928 a right opposition developed as well, whose criticism was of course more moderate.

The anti-Stalinist opposition emerged from the political situation of the time and as a consequence was of course divided into several tendencies. Initially the points of difference were almost always only of a tactical nature. The struggle of the left communists against the right communists stood in the forefront of the disputes

within communism, and for this reason the apparatus was able to split the anti-Stalinist forces, play them off against one another, and drive them out of the movement. Even after the anti-Stalinist opposition had assumed definite contours at the beginning of the 1930s, its evaluation of Stalinism varied considerably, extending from criticism of Russian hegemony in the Comintern, its methods of control, and Stalin's mistakes (right wing); through the thesis of a degenerated workers' state and the domination of the bureaucracy (Trotskyist); down finally to an objection to the "rule of the kulaks" and to "red imperialism" (the ultra-left, Karl Korsch, etc.).[12]

The Stalinist purges of 1936-38 and the extermination of the old Bolsheviks led to a radicalization of the old anti-Stalinist opposition, which at the same time, however, saw its importance in world communism waning steadily. Gone were views that Stalinism was capable of reform; political revolution was regarded as indispensable, especially in the eyes of the Trotskyist opposition.

The defeat of fascism and the formation of the people's democracies in Eastern Europe led to a new situation within world communism. In Germany many communists who had earlier been in opposition returned to the ranks of the Communist Party of Germany. When the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED) was founded in the Soviet occupation zone, many former members of anti-Stalinist groups found a political base. But the very first purges within the SED were directed not only against former Social Democrats, but also against former members of the communist opposition. In August 1949 there was a call for struggle against "Trotskyist views" since "Troskyism was nothing more than a camouflaged fascism"; and likewise the danger of "right opportunism," which showed up in "labor unionism and conciliationism with the Schumacher ideology, an offshoot of American imperialism."[13] After the Third Party Congress of the Socialist Unity Party in July 1950, it became apparent that the SED was repeating the process of Stalinization which the Communist Party of Germany (KPD) had already been through in 1924-29.[14]

After 1947, as today, the SED leadership carried on the struggle against the communist opposition with coercive state measures rather than ideological means. The earlier right-wing communist opposition (the KPO, active as the Workers' Politics Group after 1945[15]) had initially had functions within the SED. For example

Alfred Schmidt, a former Prussian parliamentary delegate who was Regional Director of the Foods, Luxuries, and Restaurants Union in Thüringen, was expelled from the SED for his criticism. In 1948 a Soviet court condemned him to death, but later the sentence was changed to 25 years in prison. Other right-wing communists were forced to flee to the Federal Republic.[16] Known former right-wing communists were attacked increasingly bitterly as enemies of the Party and the people.[17] The earlier KPO leader Walcher and the former Saxon MP Lieberasch were expelled from the SED in 1951 and not rehabilitated until the period of de-Stalinization.[18] Thus the repressive measures against the earlier oppositional communists[19] reached considerable dimensions.

After Tito's break the national-communist, Titoist opposition came under the fire of the leadership, alongside the Trotskyist and right-wing communist deviations.[20] As was customary with all Stalinist purges, many functionaries who had been faithful to the line found themselves tossed in together with actual oppositional elements; but again, we are unable to investigate these purges here.[21]

What is important is that the anti-Stalinist opposition of the twenties was resuscitated briefly in the SED but was quickly suppressed. The positions taken were themselves not original, not derived from the special situation of the GDR, but rather matched the earlier views of the anti-Stalinist communists. These left-wing or right-wing communist tendencies developed further in the West, and had only an indirect influence on the GDR.[22] Nonetheless, the SED continued to have difficulties with this traditional opposition far into the fifties. In the 1951 examination of the Party ranks alone, over 150,000 members and functionaries were expelled from the SED. It further became evident that the deviations extended into the top levels of leadership. As a Stalinist party the SED tolerated no opposition in its ranks, to say nothing of the formation of factions. However, since the Party had by that time assumed a position of political monopoly, and hence was the only political forum, the contradictions within the society were reflected in it. The dissatisfaction of broad circles of the Party (at that time there were about 600,000 workers in the SED) provided the basis for the oppositional currents. The three crises of leadership—in 1949, 1953, and 1957—reflected this situation within the Party.

On August 24, 1949, a member of the Politburo, Paul Merker, was dropped from its ranks; Leo Bauer, Lex Ende, Willi Kreike-

meyer, and other functionaries were expelled. The wave of purges was a consequence of the Budapest trial against Rajk; all the functionaries were accused of contacts with Noel H. Field. The purge was aimed at old communists who had worked independently in Western emigration and were seen as potential opponents. Bauer and Kreikemeyer were immediately arrested (Kreikemeyer died), and most of the other accused were arrested in 1952. The purge was an attempt by the Ulbricht leadership to carry out a show trial in Germany and to intimidate and nip in the bud any opposition.

The GDR workers' rebellion of June 17, 1953, once again revealed the instability within the SED. Not a few members and even functionaries were on the side of the workers and against the regime on June 17, 1953. Once again conflicts emerged within the top-level leadership. At the Fifteenth Meeting of the Central Committee in July 1953, Wilhelm Zaisser and Rudolf Herrnstadt were expelled from the Politburo and the Central Committee, and in January 1954 from the SED as well, as an anti-Party faction. Anton Ackermann, Hans Jendretzky, and Elli Schmidt lost their functions in the Politburo and the Central Committee. In January 1954 Franz Dahlem, Ulbricht's strongest opponent, was removed from the ranks of Party officials. A thorough cleansing of the Party apparatus took place at the same time, and over 60 percent of the members of the SED regional leaderships were forced to resign their posts. The purges among the top-level leadership were not against former Social Democrats (who had long since been expelled), but against communist functionaries. The points of difference concerned the political line (Ulbricht's hard line was being attacked), or reflected differences within the Soviet leadership.

The last major purge of top-level leaders, in 1957-58, had the same basis. At that time the second man in the SED after Ulbricht, Karl Schirdewan, along with Ernst Wollweber, former head of the State Security Agency, and Fred Oelssner, former Party ideologue, were disciplined.

The leadership crises were not only the expression of the contradictions within the system at the time; they also aroused hopes of changes in policy. The hierarchical organization of the Party and state were such that changes in general could only take place if changes took place in the leadership as well (as later developments in Czechoslovakia showed). Thus reform notions of oppositional members within the Party during the early fifties corre-

sponded with the deviations within the top-level leadership.

The third way

Like the remaining vestiges of the left and right communist opposition, these oppositional currents, in accordance with their origin and historical development, saw themselves as a part of "the Party." They were all fundamentally opponents of capitalism, and wanted only to improve the policies of the SED on the basis of the existing order. These oppositional elements still saw the Stalinist dictatorship as a "deformed workers' state," and the "socialistic" basis of the property relations was for them the decisive criterion. As an independent communist opposition grew in the GDR (as in the other socialist countries), a more clear-cut and fundamental delimitation from Stalinism ensued: the notion of a third way was directed equally against Western capitalism and the Eastern Stalinist dictatorship.[23] The notion of a third way[24] was premised on the one hand on a spread of theoretical Marxism, and on the other hand on a dissatisfaction with the purportedly "Marxist" realities of the GDR.

The ideological influence had left traces in the fifties, and a relatively broad intracommunist opposition began to develop among Party and university intellectuals, and especially the youth. It was the working-class children above all who were promoted through the transformed educational system, and a strong ideological indoctrination had begun in the schools and the universities. Broad circles of youth began to think in Marxist categories. Like the Party leaders, the young generation too had been raised to think in categories that implied that the struggle against exploitation and repression, and activity for the liberation of the working class and for the revolutionary movement, were just as worthy goals as solidarity with the repressed peoples. The great revolutionaries were put up as examples worthy of imitation, beginning with Spartacus, leader of the historic slave revolt in Rome, through Thomas Münzer in the Peasant War, Babeuf in the French Revolution, down to Marx and Lenin. The leadership of the SED hoped to fortify its position by spreading the Marxist view of history, and wanted to demonstrate that the Party was the legitimate heir of all progressive tendencies in history and especially the labor movement. But with this view of history, the struggle of the labor

movement for social justice and for emancipation and freedom became the focus of ideological education, and this had some portentous consequences.

The realities of the GDR looked completely different from the ideals of theory: exploitation and repression continued to exist, as did lies and careerism; there were incentives enough for revolution. The fact that the reality of the GDR corresponded so little to revolutionary theories could not but shake the idealism of many supporters of the system. To be sure, this was presumably only the reaction of a minority, for the majority was rather politically indifferent or responded to reality with conformism or cynicism. Nonetheless the effects were considerable. Like their prototypes, the communists who had come into opposition wanted to change practice and adapt it to their (i.e., but also the official) ideals. Thus in 1956 and 1957 among the younger generation the voices multiplied demanding a democratic development on the basis of an appeal to Marx. And indeed this was not least due to the fact that many of them had come from working-class backgrounds, where the contradictions were especially drastically in evidence. Thus the opposition of the third way evolved as an ideological conception, independently of (and presumably without any precise knowledge of) the earlier internal communist opposition. This new opposition, anti-Stalinist but not anticommunist, rejected capitalism as well as the structures of domination of the GDR. They wanted to create a humane socialism by reforms and democratization. Thus Marxist education in the GDR had created not only faithful supporters of the system but also Marxist rebels, who even worked within the SED.

However, that this development did not remain limited to only a few individuals, but grew into a political current, was due to a sudden shock. This took place in the GDR as a result of the revelations at the Twentieth Party Congress of the CPSU in 1956 about Stalin's role.[25] The Twentieth Party Congress (as would the invasion of Czechoslovakia to a much greater degree in 1968) not only released forces of criticism, but also shook up numerous faithful and true supporters of the system. The renunciation of Stalin and the revelation of his crimes came as a shock to many convinced Stalinist intellectuals and youth, who then had to seek out new pathways. For the majority of the intelligentsia, the beginnings of de-Stalinization in 1956 provided an incentive for opposing the

primitive and dogmatic methods of the leadership of the Party apparatus. In the universities especially, the discussion in 1956-58 went far beyond the limits set for it by the SED, and was coming close to the conception of a third way. (We should point out in passing that Rudolf Bahro was studying philosophy at Berlin University in just these years, from 1954 through 1959.)

Although their critical opinions varied considerably, the intellectual supporters of the third way represented the following demands: 1) purging of Stalinist dogma and falsifications from Marxism and Leninism; 2) no interference of the Party apparatus in questions of science; 3) the right to free and creative discussion without having to fear coercive measures; and 4) abolition of the dogmatic leading role of dialectical materialism in the specialized sciences, and the institution of scientific objectivity.

Overall the idea of a third way was hardly concrete and tangible; it was reduced to a verbal criticism of the existing situation. This was due first and foremost to the fact that the discussion was primarily carried out in the individual disciplines, and hence focused on specialized problems. Nonetheless, for the SED leadership these discussions represented a warning signal; the basic conception of the communist oppositionists could ultimately be dangerous for the system, as for example the developments in Hungary and Poland, which had begun similarly, demonstrated.

In July 1956 Robert Havemann started off a discussion in philosophy when he called for an abolition of the Stalinist thesis that the dialectical approach was the measure of questions of natural science research. Martin Strauss even criticized Lenin's "Materialism and Empirio-criticism." The influence of Ernst Bloch, who at that time taught in Leipzig, was even greater. His students drew political conclusions from his teachings. Richard Lorenz, who later fled to avoid arrest,[26] demanded: "The cult of personality must be seen as a social phenomenon, and the alien structures to which it has given rise within socialism must be investigated concretely."[27]

The discussion soon extended from philosophy into other sciences, and economists, literary critics, jurists, and historians took up a more or less oppositional position.[28] Naturally, given the many different levels of the oppositional currents, no well-rounded conception emerged, and the consistency and logic of the scientific discussion varied considerably. Finally, the political climate and the

measures of the state security agency induced many critics to retreat again quickly.

The Harich group

But there was a group that attempted to work out an overall concept of opposition for the third way: the Harich group.

Wolfgang Harich had a critical integrative significance for the anti-Stalinist opposition in 1956-57.[29] Born in 1921, Harich had been in the communist movement since 1945 and had an important function in the Party intelligentsia as a Professor of Philosophy, editor-in-chief of the *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, and reader for the Aufbau Publishing House; further, he was a leading SED ideologue. After extensive discussion in the Aufbau Publishing House, Harich worked out the basic features of an oppositional conception together with the secretary of the editorial board of the *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, Manfred Hertwig,[30] the director of the Aufbau Publishing House, Walter Janka (old communist and Spanish Civil War writer), the editor-in-chief of the cultural magazine *Sonntag*, Heinz Zöger,[31] and his representative Gustav Just. It later became the platform of the group. The economic analysis was provided by Bernhard Steinberger, member of the Academy of Sciences (who from 1949 to 1955 had been imprisoned in the USSR, presumably on suspicion of espionage; however he had been rehabilitated in July 1956 and fully admitted into the ranks of the SED). The group (with which Richard Wolf of Berlin Radio would also be convicted) attempted to make contact with prominent opponents of Ulbricht such as Franz Dahlem, and communist leaders such as Paul Wandel and Fred Oelssner; they also established connections with the former Politburo member Paul Merker.

To be sure, in its platform the group said that it did not have the intention of causing a rupture with the Communist Party,[32] but it did consider forming a league of communists or even an organized SED opposition.[33] Since there was no possibility in the GDR of conducting open propaganda for the ideas of a third way, the possibility of spreading the objectives of the group from bases within the Federal Republic or from Poland (where de-Stalinization at that time seemed to have proceeded apace) was discussed. Harich therefore journeyed to the Federal Republic and to Poland,

and even took up contacts with the Social Democratic Party (SPD) in West Berlin. But the group did have hopes of supporting their views themselves within the SED, given the situation of turmoil after the Twentieth Party Congress of the CPSU. Harich presented the basic features of his reform program to the Soviet Ambassador then in the GDR, and even had a talk with Ulbricht. The Party group in the Aufbau Publishing House encouraged Harich to bring together his ideas in an article, which the Party group wished to discuss. Later Manfred Hertwig reported on this:

> Thus Harich wrote down his reform proposals. Before he presented them in the Aufbau Publishing House, he wished to discuss them with me and the economist Bernhard Steinberger, whom he had met through me. On November 22 we three met in Harich's house. We had come together to discuss legally compiled reform proposals on the behest of a Party group. Later, in the accusations and in the sentence, this November 22 was transformed into a day of conspiracy. . . .
>
> What were the main thoughts we discussed? We felt the following problems were in need of immediate solution: dismissal of those members of the Party leadership and state apparatus who were mainly responsible for the consistent importation of the Stalinist line into the GDR; creation of internal Party democracy; transformation of the Volkskammer into a democratic parliament; the restoration of legal guarantees; abolition of the state security agency; democratization of cultural life; decentralization of the direction of the economy; abolition of superfluous ministries; a switch to general long-term planning; a reorientation of the middle-stratum policy; cessation of all forced collectivization.
>
> After Harich read off these principal ideas—with which Steinberger and I agreed—we discussed quite freely, in the form of a nonbinding conversation, the possible future political developments in the GDR and in Germany as a whole, as well as questions of our attitude toward these developments. Out of this the state security agency later constructed the various plans for insurrection that appeared in the statement of charges.
>
> Actually our estimate of the situation on November 22 was still that a legal opposition against Ulbricht was possible without coming into conflict with the state security agency. We only revised our appraisal a few days later when Molotov became the Minister of State Control.[34]

Under these circumstances the hurriedly prepared platform could only discuss the most important political ideas of the third way cursorily and in summary form, and hence was not without its contradictions (quite unlike Bahro's study, which was systematically worked out over the years). Of course, Harich's political and

even philosophical positions (which he had already published and had later developed further[35]) played a role, but at this point we shall only discuss the platform which articulated the "revisionism" (as the SED leadership called it) that was already widespread among Party intellectuals, even if only as a general mood. The platform spelled out its own place within the intra-Party opposition in this way:

> We wish to discuss legally and to implement within the Party and the GDR our conception of a special German way to socialism and our platform for a Marxism-Leninism freed of Stalinism.
>
> However, this legality has its limits, and it ends where the present Party leadership itself leaves the field of legality. In our opinion, the Party leadership has already left this field of legality. The foundations of our oppositional work are the Party Statutes of the SED, the Twentieth Party Congress of the CPSU, and the resolutions of the Twenty-eighth Plenary Session of the Central Committee of the SED. We wish to carry out our oppositional work fully legally on these foundations; however, we shall also take up the methods of faction formation and conspiracy if the Stalinist apparatus forces us to do so.
>
> We shall establish ties with oppositional forces within the people's democracies in order to effect a mutual exchange of our experiences. The oppositional SED comrades must forge close contacts with the population of the GDR, criticize the policies of the Party leadership among the population, deepen the schism between the population and the present Party leadership, but at the same time prevent a popular rebellion in the GDR.

The theoretical and ideological views were described as follows:

> In Eastern Europe, economic structures have emerged that—if radical reforms are effected and their degenerate aspects are overcome—are capable of realizing socialism in the Eastern countries sooner than this will be possible in the Western European countries with their predominant capitalistic economic structures. A radically de-Stalinized Eastern economic structure in the USSR and in the people's democracies will gradually influence the capitalist West as it develops further. . . . At the same time the West will influence the East with democratic and libertarian ideas and views, and force the East to dismantle step by step its totalitarian and despotic political system. . . . We wish to reform the Party from within. We want to remain on the positions of Marxism-Leninism. However, we want to move away from Stalinism.

Elsewhere we read:

> We don't wish to break with Marxism-Leninism; but we want to free it

from Stalinism and dogmatism and restore it to its humanistic and undogmatic ways of thinking.

The USSR was regarded as the first socialist nation of the world, and in the statements of the platform even Stalinism could alter nothing of this fact. Of course it was denied that Soviet socialism represented a model, since in its present-day form it had become even "an obstacle to further socialist development in the USSR."

The concrete reforms the Harich group platform demanded for the GDR were the abolition of the hegemony of the bureaucratic apparatus over Party members, expulsion of the Stalinists from the SED, the restoration of absolute legal guarantees, the abolition of the state security agency and the secret court, workers' shares in the profits in factories, and an end to collectivization in agriculture. Further demands were that the parliament should be sovereign and that there should be elections with several candidates as in the Polish model, although "the reformed SED was to remain at the top." On the question of Germany's reunification, the Harich group envisioned free elections throughout all of Germany, the result of which was expected to be a majority for the Social Democratic Party, which the SED had to respect. The prospect was a unified pan-German workers' movement.

We have dwelt so extensively on the Harich viewpoint because, despite the many contradictions in its basic features, it shows the main demands of the internal communist opposition in the GDR in the fifties, and because even then the SED responded with the same repressive methods as it did to Bahro's theory: Harich and his friends were sentenced to between two and ten years in prison.[36]

The views of the Harich group corresponded to the wishes and demands of many intellectuals in the SED, and showed a tendency of a partly open, partly latent, oppositional current. They also, however, reflected the dissatisfaction of broad layers, especially the workers, with the system of domination in the GDR.[37] Now as then the platform has been variously appraised: on the one hand it has been called "typical and especially significant for the development of reform communism,"[38] while elsewhere the "programmatic contradictions" have been stressed, and the quest for theoretical foundations called a "total failure" because of the "motley mixture"[39] of philosophical and historical arguments.[40]

A comparison of Bahro's theoretical views with those of Harich does indeed bear out this critical conclusion. But a formal study

should take into account that the platform was an *ad hoc* outline of political ideas that developed under quite different temporal conditions. The basic questions and the problems taken up are in just as much agreement as the effect and function of the communist opposition in its time.

Havemann

For the 1960s Robert Havemann developed much further the theoretical formation of the anti-Stalinist opposition in the GDR. After speaking out in 1956 against dogmatism in philosophical discussion, in 1963 he carried his criticism further into the domain of political theory when he took up the problem of the freedom of the individual in communist-governed society.

Born in 1910, Robert Havemann entered the Communist Party of Germany in 1932.[41] As an active antifascist in 1943 (the year he received his doctoral diploma), he was condemned to death by the infamous People's Court. However, he survived the Third Reich in Brandenburg Prison, where of course Erich Honecker too was incarcerated, and in 1946 became Professor in the Berlin Humboldt University. In 1950 the esteemed scientist entered the Volkskammer as a delegate. Havemann's critical lectures on philosophical problems[42] in 1963 were before packed halls, especially because his philosophical critique took into account the concrete reality of the GDR. This accounted for its "unique impact."[43] Havemann took a position against deformations in the GDR regime and spoke out for a socialist democracy, which, as he said, could not exist without open criticism and relevant debate and discussion. He therefore demanded "more freedom in the GDR" than even the Western democracies could give to their citizens. The GDR leadership also took repressive measures against Havemann; these were at first restricted to denying him the right to practice his profession, but later he was isolated. Havemann's reply was a critique that shifted increasingly from philosophy to politics. In 1968 he wrote in a Prague magazine:

> Democratic control of the government from below is crucial for democracy. This means the right of opposition in public, in the press, on the radio, and on television, as well as in the parliament and in popular representative bodies whose members are determined by free and secret ballots. This also means that judges must be independent and that