

PART I 

CONSOLIDATION AND CONTROL: COLLECTIVISATION AND ITS MALCONTENTS

1

STEPS TOWARDS FULL COLLECTIVISATION OF AGRICULTURE

There was once the Kaiser's empire, there was once Hitler's empire and yet everything changed again. We just want to hold on and wait for what's going on next year!¹

(One of the farmers' arguments against joining the LPG when faced with an agitation brigade in the vicinity of Görmar, *Kreis Mühlhausen* in December 1959.)

There is no doubt that despite claiming the title of 'the workers' and peasants' state' in 1949, it was the former not the latter who were central to the identity of the GDR as both carriers of the revolution and models of the socialist personality. The extent and depth to which the SED had penetrated rural society was correspondingly limited. The advancement of collective farming during the 1950s was in large part the beginnings of an attempt to remedy this glaring deficiency. The completion of the collectivisation campaign in 1960, while being an administrative success, revealed, however, just how deficient the permanent structures of control and communication between the SED leadership and rural communities were and how little certainty there was in the countryside of a future under the SED.

During the 1950s, the campaign for collectivisation of agriculture sought to undertake the most radical transformation of the conditions of rural existence since the land reforms. It entailed a massive mobilisation of the regime's apparatus for publicising its policies, persuading people of their value and suppressing hostility. In so doing it placed the effectiveness of the local, district and regional administration of agriculture and rural communities under close scrutiny, exposing the extent and limitations of this apparatus. At the same time, with the formation of the new LPGs, collectivisation forced farmers and local functionaries to accept new roles and responsibilities and in so doing began to change the basis on which the SED regime communicated with and transmitted its authority to farmers and rural communities at large. The manner of the campaign, which caused in the short term such fear, anger and hostility towards the SED, had long-term consequences, setting

the parameters within which future policies were conceived, communicated and received in the next decade and beyond.

The Campaign for Collectivisation

The pace of the SED-directed transformation of society since the end of the war had been far slower in the countryside than it had been in the towns for a number of reasons. The central role of the church in village life, the complex networks of familial relations in the village, the lack of anonymity and the essential interdependency of the inhabitants of small communities were important factors in preserving the established social order. Moreover, the simple geographical isolation of many communities meant the ideological as well as purely organisational capacity for change in the villages was lacking.

By the early 1950s the self-confidence of the SED leadership under Walter Ulbricht had risen sufficiently that it was willing to place more pressure on the population in the implementation of the socialist transformation of society and increased norms of production. At the II SED Party Congress in 1952, the phase 'the construction of socialism' (*Aufbau des Sozialismus*) was announced and the SED thus began the next step in its socioeconomic transformation of the countryside following the land reforms of the postwar period. Having parcelled out the larger estates in the late 1940s, the goal was now to re-establish large-scale production units through the amalgamation of farms into socialist collectives organised according to a uniform pattern. Where before organised co-operation between farmers had been quashed by the SED, material and practical support (and with it state interference) was now given to the 'spontaneous' formation of farming collectives in some selected villages and the SED leadership advanced a campaign for the formation of agricultural collectives more widely, despite the lack of suitable conditions for widespread large-scale collective production.²

Although aspects of the Soviet model were adopted during the drive for collectivisation, this was by no means to be a simple Sovietisation of agriculture: the land brought into the collective remained legally, albeit with numerous restrictions, in the ownership of the farmer, while the range of types of collective farm organisation enabled farmers to maintain, if they chose, individual control of livestock and/or farm machinery.³ In the LPG Type I only the use of the land was managed in common; in Type II (which relatively few farmers ever adopted) the land, tools and machinery were to be held collectively; and in Type III the livestock were also included. The majority of farmers, however, continued

to resist collectivisation even as the state offered greater incentives to those who would join – through privileged access to machinery, seed and fertiliser, lifting of debts and extension of credit – and more severe sanctions to those who would not or could not: high taxes and the setting of impossibly high production quotas, which effectively meant jail terms and the confiscation of property as punishment for alleged sabotage. Under such duress a large proportion of *Großbauern* (wealthy farmers: defined as those owning 20 hectares of land or involved in capitalist enterprise) chose flight from the GDR or abandoned their farms during the course of 1952 and 1953, which in turn exacerbated deficiencies in the supply of food to the population.⁴

In the towns, the ultimate results of the more hard-line policies of the *Aufbau des Sozialismus* and the increased production norms were the demonstrations of 17 June 1953. Despite great opposition to the beginnings of a campaign for collectivisation and punitively high production quotas along with false charges of economic sabotage for non-compliant farmers, participation in the uprisings remained limited in the countryside, though not for want of disgruntlement with the state's policies. Notable exceptions in *Bezirk* Erfurt were demonstrations and open opposition to the SED led in part by village pastors in Bad Tennstedt, Kreis Langensalza and in Eckolstädt, Kreis Apolda, in the latter's case ending only with the deployment of Soviet tanks. In *Bezirk* Erfurt, private farmers were involved too in demonstrations on 17 June in four (out of thirteen) district capitals during which some of those imprisoned during the 'class struggle' in the countryside were forcibly released. The most notable of these actions occurred in Mühlhausen, where 5,000–6,000 farmers who had been attending a farmers' assembly in Oberdorla on 17 June marched through the town and occupied the court buildings, demanding the return of a free market and the release of imprisoned farmers.⁵ The date 17 June, however, while gaining symbolic value – and it continued to be referred to by disgruntled farmers in the *Bezirk* in subsequent years⁶ – was not directly experienced by the vast majority of the rural population. Rather, in subsequent months, as the SED implemented the 'New Course' designed to defuse the most serious causes of dissatisfaction among East Germans, farmers took the opportunity to reassert themselves and reverse measures forced upon them. Thus LPGs formed under duress disbanded and farmers withdrew to harvest independently during 1953. By the following year, however, pressure and material incentives were again being brought to bear on farmers and farm labourers to form and re-form collective farms.

For much of the 1950s an uneasy situation developed in rural communities. Many LPGs remained economically unstable, lacking both

the quality of land and livestock and the degree of expertise, dedication and social cohesion among members to function efficiently.⁷ Private farmers faced with punitive production quotas found themselves unable to continue in agriculture and, in some cases fearing draconian punishments, abandoned the GDR altogether. While it is clear that the majority of private farmers in the GDR managed to survive and in many cases even profit from the system of production quotas and '*freie Spitzen*' ('free peaks': i.e. excess production beyond the state quota for which the state was willing to pay a higher price), a basic antagonism remained between much of the rural population and the representatives of the SED regime, demonstrated repeatedly in minor acts of resistance. In June 1957 farmers in Kreis Apolda were reported to have called openly for the return of the free market and the abolition of quotas.⁸ Minor acts of sabotage also took place to undermine existing collective farms. In early 1958 in an LPG in Kreis Mühlhausen, for example, several pigs were reported to have been stabbed. The strength of opposition to the LPG in the village also meant that those who joined could be seen as traitors and thus faced social isolation. Various incidents were reported in which LPG members were insulted and their children bullied. In a case in a village in Kreis Gotha, a woman was reportedly spat at while in the village shop for having become a member of the LPG.⁹

Paradoxically, more serious for the regime than these episodes of 'class conflict' was the lack of any confrontations whatsoever with the 'class enemy' in some rural communities during the later 1950s. Village SED party secretaries, local mayors and police constables as well as representatives of the various mass organisations were widely and repeatedly criticised for the leniency of their approach to the class situation in the communities for which they were supposedly the responsible officials of the socialist state. There was widespread reluctance among such local functionaries to campaign against or denounce those farmers whose relative wealth and inherited status in the village marked them out – on paper at least – as the 'class enemy'. At the same time, local functionaries were criticised for the lack of effort they put into promoting potentially controversial policies. Local mayors and village councillors, particularly where they were not themselves members of the SED, showed themselves to be less than enthusiastic in support of collectivisation for most of the 1950s.

Independent farmers formed a large part of the membership of the bloc parties in rural constituencies – particularly the farmers' party (*Demokratische Bauernpartei Deutschlands* or DBD) but also the CDU (*Christlich-Demokratische Union*) and in certain areas the liberal party (*Liberal-Demokratische Partei Deutschlands* or LDPD). Consequently there

was considerable pressure on local officials from within their own local party groups at the very least to avoid confronting unpopular issues such as collectivisation. Even if they did not make any arguments against collective farming in principle, mayors and village councillors expressed strong reservations against its implementation in practice in the particular circumstances of their locality. Similarly the chairmen of the local boards of the state-run Farmers' Mutual Aid Union (*Verein der gegenseitigen Bauernhilfe* or VdGB) were known to drag their feet when called upon to persuade farmers of the benefits of the LPG. Rather they tended to sympathise with the unwillingness of particularly smaller farmers and Neubauern to give up individual use of the farms that they had so laboriously established since the end of the war.¹⁰ Even the tractor drivers of the Machine and Tractor Stations (*Maschinen-Traktoren-Stationen* or MTS) were not necessarily reliable. Manned in part by workers recruited from industry, the MTS were in theory to function as progressive proletarian bulwarks in the otherwise ideologically backward countryside, casting their influence over several surrounding villages. It was clear, however, that in a number of cases the MTS workers – showing a lack of 'class consciousness' – enjoyed better relations with independent farmers than with the chairmen of the LPG.¹¹

The continuing importance of the church as an alternative source of authority in the village was part of the problem as far as the SED leadership was concerned. That clergy were occasionally seen to be active in warning against the LPG was considered a serious obstacle to persuading all those in the rural community to consider collective farming seriously.¹² Belief in the prospect of reunification with West Germany in the none too distant future gave people the confidence to retain openly their links with the church despite the atheism of the SED regime. There remained, too, a strong commitment to the local pastor as a central and long-standing figure of rural life – one who had in many cases played a vital role in representing the interests of the community during the end of the war and the hardships and injustices of the Soviet occupation and early years of SED rule.¹³ Thus, in the villages, adherence to the church and respect for the opinions of the pastor – whether Catholic, Lutheran or Reformed Protestant – remained strong during the 1950s, even as the state began to win battles over religious education and the state youth confirmation ceremony (*Jugendweihe*).¹⁴ Meanwhile, local representatives of the state were not always sufficiently motivated by zeal for the socialist cause to condemn the continuing willingness of villagers to work on the local church board and support even a controversial local pastor. Investigations into rural policing in a number of districts in the Bezirk at the end of 1957 found that strong connections

with one or other of the Christian churches had impaired the effectiveness of village police officers and SED party organisations.¹⁵

During the 1950s the pressure on farmers to commit themselves to joining or forming an LPG was by no means applied comprehensively in the GDR, or even in Bezirk Erfurt, with a consistent degree of urgency or with a consistent set of methods and arguments. It is in the context of this inconsistency that the behaviour and actions of private and collective farmers and the various participants in the regime's apparatus for agitation, when the drive for full collectivisation of agriculture began, need to be understood.

The confusion of the situation established in 1960 with the rapid completion, on paper, of full collectivisation was born out of the variety of attitudes among both farmers and agitators as to what should or would be created by collectivisation in practice, and what would be or should be preserved of the structures and practices of independent farming and private ownership. Collectivisation took place in an atmosphere of uncertainty with regard to the future organisation of agriculture, leaving a lasting element of unpredictability as to the status and future of the LPG.

In line with the 'New Course' introduced by the SED leadership in 1953, a set of administrative and economic incentives and pressures had replaced the crude threats of imprisonment and confiscation which had been used to force collectivisation prior to the popular unrest across the GDR in June of that year. Although from 1954 onwards the number of LPGs, the proportion of land farmed collectively and the number of LPG members in Bezirk Erfurt increased, this was a gradual process, driven less by the successful persuasion of independent farmers or landowners, than by the abandonment of land and the recruitment of industrial workers or landless labourers to the collective farms. It was not until 1958 that the rate of formation of new collectives increased significantly, with the participation of formerly independent farmers. The decision taken at the 33rd Session of the SED's Central Committee (*Zentralkomitee* or ZK) in the autumn of the previous year to step up the campaign for collectivisation led to attempts at LPG recruitment aimed primarily at those private farmers who were politically organised in either a party or a mass organisation.¹⁶ From the middle of 1958, at the V SED Party Congress, the focus of the campaign was expanded to encompass all private farmers, including those so-called 'Großbauern' who had previously been prevented from forming or joining LPGs.¹⁷ Nevertheless during the course of that year the amount of land in the Bezirk farmed collectively reached only 17.7 per cent.¹⁸ The vast majority of independent farmers felt themselves able to resist the LPG and the agitators for the time being, if not for ever.

Popular Responses to Collectivisation

Opposition to the formation of collective farms was based on a number of objections, not least unwillingness on the part of traditionally independent farmers to lose private control over their own finances.¹⁹ The effectiveness of economic levers such as high delivery quotas to encourage collectivisation had been balanced out by the incentives for making as much production available as possible for purchase by the state. Successful farmers could certainly double their incomes through the sale of excess produce bought up by the state at higher prices. The prospect of such forms of additional income being restricted as a result of membership in a collective was a strong disincentive for joining. From a purely practical point of view the parlous state of many of the collectives in existence did little to persuade farmers of the value of collective farming either. Although the financial situation of the LPGs did gradually improve over the years, at the end of 1959 50 per cent of Type III LPGs in the Bezirk were nonetheless officially categorised as 'financially weak'.²⁰ A minority of elite LPGs were able to pay high wages and easily exceed their plans. Others managed to get by with some success, taking advantage of the preferential treatment given to LPGs in terms of reduced quotas and access to machinery and fertiliser. The majority, however, lagged behind. All too often inefficiency, poor work organisation and a lack of commitment to the LPG from its members compounded natural obstacles to improved production levels. The lack of financial success in LPGs inevitably led in some cases to a sour atmosphere among the members. Certainly personal conflicts between members of an LPG put private farmers off joining collective farms. It was enough to live in close proximity to one another without having to work together as well. A report on the problems facing agitators operating in an MTS area in Kreis Mühlhausen in December 1959 described the situation in one village thus: 'no one wants to join the existing LPG in Diedorf because there are always conflicts and people say: "we're not getting involved in that mess"'.²¹

A report by a Stasi informant on the LPG Type II in Wahlhausen, Kreis Heiligenstadt in November 1958 underlines the mutual antagonism felt between private farmers and the LPG. As a private farmer himself, he reported on the anger among farmers who were constantly being called upon to pick their fields again for more potatoes even though they had fulfilled their quotas. In contrast, he pointed out that the LPG had actually allowed potatoes to go to waste in its own fields. This and other incidences of shoddy practice or mismanagement of the LPG had hardened his attitude against the actual prospect of joining this collective.²² In a further report the informant noted that a leading

figure in the LPG had openly proposed that remaining private farmers should be treated more severely in order to make them enter the collective.²³ For many farmers, the LPG represented nothing so much as being forced into the hands of those who would destroy them.

In the late 1950s the prospect of joining one such LPG did not appeal to either the economic or the social interests of farmers. Rather the LPG was seen at best as a last resort for those unable any longer to run their farms profitably.²⁴ LPGs founded prior to the intensified agitation campaigns of 1960 were thus seldom formed by the most successful and experienced farmers.²⁵ Rather, the membership of the LPGs tended to consist of industrial workers, landless farm labourers and small farmers who lacked the wherewithal to run a large enterprise effectively. Some of the more severe cases came under the scrutiny of the District Party Control Commission of the SED (*Kreisparteikontrollkommission* or KPKK). For example, the KPKK carried out an investigation into the LPG Type III in Kindelbrück in 1958, which had been formed largely from abandoned land left in the inexperienced care of the village council (*Rat der Gemeinde* or RdG). The members of the LPG were exclusively former agricultural labourers and thus while not new to agriculture, had no experience between them of running a farm as a whole. No less significantly, they had little livestock or draft animals let alone machinery with which to work on fields that had been allowed to grow thick with weeds. State subsidies were thus absolutely vital over a number of years to enable the LPG to construct a collective livestock shed. Even with this support, however, members were scarcely able to raise enough profits to give themselves sufficient income, causing serious disgruntlement with the whole project of collective farming.²⁶

Even as the drive towards full collectivisation was picking up speed, previously formed LPGs began to implode, unable to give their members a sufficient income to live on. In the LPG Type I Grossmonra, Kreis Sömmerda nineteen members of the LPG resigned, sending official notice to the LPG board, some of whom (to the outrage of the KPKK) even consulted a lawyer. In addition the SED party secretary in the LPG made clear his intention to hand in his party document. Of the nineteen, thirteen were ultimately persuaded to return to the LPG by the district state authorities, two were denied the chance to rejoin the LPG and four were allowed to remain uncollectivised.²⁷

Lacking the means to employ a sufficient workforce or children who would run the farm, older farmers often found no other way to cope with the oppressive demands placed upon them by the state than by forming or joining an LPG. Here the question of access to machinery was in many cases decisive. From the beginning of 1958 the MTS were di-

rected to serve primarily the LPGs rather than allow their machinery to be rented by private farmers. In practice this did not occur everywhere, with MTS workers often preferring, whether out of conviction or financial incentive, to continue to serve private farmers (in some cases to the detriment of the LPGs).²⁸ It was easier, for example, for an MTS worker to fulfil his quota of fields harvested or ploughed if he did not have to move his tractor to a different valley halfway through the day. However, the preference given to the LPGs on the whole in terms of access to new machinery (reinforced by the decision announced at the 6th LPG Conference in February 1959 that at first only LPG Type IIIs in fully collectivised villages with over 500 hectares should receive the machinery of the MTS on long-term loan) encouraged private farmers to join up.²⁹ Faced with the possibility of being denied access to machinery and with too little money to purchase their own, some of the less wealthy farmers were moved to join or form LPGs. However, this did little to change the image of the agricultural collectives among the more successful independent farmers as being the last resort for the desperate.

At this stage the attainment of full collectivisation remained remote for all concerned. If some independent farmers expected German reunification, a third world war or the state's financial dire straits to intervene before collectivisation was completed, as far as the SED leadership was concerned, full collectivisation would not be possible for several years yet either. The State Planning Commission had initially decided on 1963 and then 1965 as attainable deadlines for full collectivisation.³⁰ Given the potential damage to the economy and to the ability of the GDR to supply itself with food at a time when the SED leadership explicitly sought to demonstrate superior living standards in comparison with the Federal Republic, progress in the formation of LPGs remained gradual and incremental. Successful private farmers were well aware of the weakness of the LPGs and their own importance to the maintenance of production levels and dismissed the prospect of collectivisation accordingly. Functionaries throughout the administration of agriculture and the government of rural communities were aware of this too, and were reluctant to agitate for collectivisation when farmers remained so clearly opposed to it. Even the most dedicated to the socialist cause or the class conflict were wary of compromising the supply of food to the population.

The Limits of Local Agitation

In Bezirk Erfurt the rate of collectivisation in 1959 had sunk below that of the previous year, with a total of fifty-nine new LPGs founded that

added only a further 4.9 per cent of the agricultural land in the Bezirk to the amount farmed in collectives. This slow progress was put down, quite simply, to the unwillingness of independent farmers to join the LPGs. Nevertheless it was also clear that at a local level not enough was being done to win them over. Old antagonisms had led existing LPGs to refuse to accept new members from among those who had long rejected the collective. More generally, consensus had by no means been achieved as to whether collectivisation could or should be achieved in the near future among the functionaries of those local institutions on which the SED leadership relied to exert its influence over farmers – from the village SED organisation, the bloc party groups, the mass organisations as well as the village and district state administration, the MTS and any nearby factories.

Assessments of opinion in SED organisations in the countryside uncovered a number of individual SED members, party secretaries as well as entire party organisations who were unsupportive of the current progress of collectivisation. Given the lack of SED members among the farming population, the local organisations of the Farmers' Mutual Aid Union (VdGB) provided a network through which the regime sought to exert its influence on private farmers and rural communities in general. However, it was widely recognised that local VdGB organisations could not always be relied upon to espouse the party line with regard to agriculture, particularly on such a divisive issue as full collectivisation. In January and February 1960, the Stasi Bezirk administration sought to rectify this by instructing their district offices to see that those farmers standing for election to local VdGB governing boards were politically and ideologically suitable.³¹ Regardless of these instructions, it was clear in early 1960 that in the majority of villages, the local VdGB organisations could not be relied upon to act in accordance with SED policy.³² In March 1960 at least twenty-six chairmen of local VdGB organisations in Kreis Arnstadt were dismissed from their posts for failing to support 'the socialist transformation of agriculture'.³³

The unreliability of those charged with driving forward the collectivisation process on the ground is in many respects wholly explicable given the choices with which they were faced. Up until 1960, unless one believed in the importance of collectivisation in itself, there was little reason actively to campaign on its behalf. Joining an LPG had not been made obligatory by law, most farmers opposed the idea and the potential for success was limited by the ease with which rural communities could close ranks against the small numbers of activists who were prepared to advocate the policies of the SED regime. The secretary of the SED organisation and pub landlord in a village in Kreis Mühlhausen

explained his inaction quite simply, with the reasoning that if he were to make his support for socialism known – ‘no one will drink a glass of beer in his pub anymore’.³⁴ The difficulty of winning over farmers was particularly acute in those communities where the church and religion still played a major role in the attitudes of the community as a whole to the latest moves by the SED. In the Eichsfeld districts based around the small towns of Worbis and Heiligenstadt, where Catholicism predominated, the functionaries charged with advocating collectivisation tended either to lack the conviction themselves or simply had insufficient authority within the community to make a convincing case.³⁵ Consequently almost no progress was made in the development of LPGs here. In districts where the Reformed Protestant Church predominated, pastors in a number of villages undermined potential support for the LPG by speaking out against collectivisation. Their views were not opposed even by the functionaries of local government and members of the SED and bloc parties who themselves had in some cases remained practising Christians.³⁶ Given the resolve of farmers and rural communities to resist collectivisation, and the lack of resolve among rural functionaries to campaign for it, there appeared in most villages to be no coordinated or coherent strategy for overcoming opposition to full collectivisation.

After a difficult harvest in 1959 across the GDR owing to a long period without rain and even greater need for rapid increases in production in order to keep pace with higher consumption levels, it was clear to the SED leadership that more would have to be done quickly to achieve a leap forward in productivity. Despite the intention to create at least one LPG in every village by the end of 1959, on 31 December, 114 separate communities were recorded in Bezirk Erfurt without any LPGs at all, while in other parts of the country there had been even less success.³⁷ The replacement of Erich Mückenberger as Agriculture Secretary in the Central Committee by Gerhard Grüneberg³⁸ during the seventh session of the Central Committee in December 1959 signalled a change to a higher-risk policy of rapid collectivisation despite the short-term economic shortfalls this was likely to inflict.³⁹ Brigades of agitators had already been deployed around the Bezirk charged with persuading farmers to form LPGs, establishing bridgeheads from which to move the campaign in the districts forward. However, their impact on farmers remained limited. With relatively few qualified personnel available to staff the brigades, the amount of time each brigade was able to spend in a single village was not limitless. Farmers who had no desire to join an LPG could thus effectively resist outside interference by weathering the storm and awaiting the brigade’s departure. The strategy of rely-

ing on the propaganda impact of the media, the persuasive efforts of village functionaries and the deployment of occasional brigades of agitators alongside the usual tactics of economic pressure and incentive lacked the required level of 'continuous confrontation'. The SED Central Committee thus charged the SED *Bezirksleitungen* with developing a programme of intensive campaigns in the villages.

The Campaign Intensified

Thus far the basic weakness of the SED's influence over the rural population and the basic unreliability of the network of functionaries operating at a district and local level in agriculture and rural society had been all too clearly demonstrated. At the same time, many farmers had exposed themselves as opponents of the socialist regime who were willing to resist as far as they could any change in the organisation of agriculture. As such they appeared too to be forces of reaction standing in the way of the social transformation of rural society. Seen in these terms, the value to the SED regime of a more rigorous approach towards resistant farmers was clear. A campaign which mobilised large numbers of supporters of SED policy and placed rural and agricultural functionaries under close scrutiny would be a telling reminder of the SED leadership's strength as well as a useful means of testing loyalty and exposing opposition in the countryside. The move then in early 1960 to accelerate the process and race towards full collectivisation, even if decided much in advance by the SED leadership, was met with considerable trepidation by functionaries operating in rural communities themselves and at lower levels in the administration of agriculture. At the same time, farmers were shocked by the virulence with which they were being 'persuaded' to join or form LPGs, prompting equally radical responses, not least of which was flight westwards to the Federal Republic.

From the end of January 1960 the number of brigades of agitators arguing for collectivisation in the villages was greatly increased. The personnel of the brigades was made up of politically reliable citizens drawn from a number of urban and rural institutions: staff and students from universities and polytechnics, MTS and State Owned Farm (*Volkseigenes Gut* or VEG) officials as well as functionaries of all political parties and mass organisations were called upon to promote the 'socialist transformation' of the countryside. Once these had been briefed on the arguments in favour of collectivisation and the benefits of the LPG, they were sent into the countryside to liaise with local functionaries and party members, visit farmers in their homes and arrange public

meetings, staying in a single rural community for a number of days if necessary.

The success of these brigades varied according to their own competence, leadership and organisation as well as the receptiveness of the communities they entered. The poor behaviour of certain brigade members and the lack of technical agricultural knowledge of urban students and functionaries certainly aggravated the resistance among villagers, who resented being bullied by what they saw as a group of ignorant 'townies' into acting against their will and common sense.⁴⁰ With agitation brigades staying for days at a time in the villages, local functionaries were given the task of ensuring they were provided with food and accommodation, as well as the requisite information about the locality. While the brigades appear in most cases to have received sufficient support, the work of the brigades was hampered in some cases by either the incompetence or the hostility of local officials. For example, in Niedersynstedt, in Kreis Weimar, the accommodation provided had been locked when the brigade arrived and the members of the one existing LPG in the village refused to let any brigade members stay in their houses. In another instance in Kreis Weimar, the deputy mayor responded to the claim by members of the agitation brigade that they intended to remain as long as it would take for them to achieve their goal, with the disparaging remark: 'Let's see who's going to last longer.'⁴¹

Nevertheless some brigades were able to make an impact in the villages, especially if they had been effectively briefed with information on the local circumstances – a task that largely fell to the local police officer (*Abschnittsbevollmächtigter* or ABV). Despite broad resistance to the idea of collectivisation, invariably some village inhabitants saw the advantages of the collective farm, not least if they were at a disadvantage in the existing social structure. The brigades thus sought to make use of potential splits between generations, contrasting the low wages of a family member on a private farm with possible earnings in the collective. Similarly they sought to highlight the freedom of small landholders, particularly single women, from obligation to the larger farmers in the village which supposedly the collective would bring. Attention was also focused on the wives of private farmers.⁴² The alleviation of their heavy workload in the fields and in the home which the LPG promised to provide, as well as the opportunity to gain qualifications, certainly appealed to some women, (although many farmers' wives remained among the staunchest of opponents to the LPG).⁴³

In the village of Wandersleben in Kreis Gotha, the prospects for a successful collectivisation were quite good. Much of the farming com-

munity had benefited from socialist policy in rural areas over the years. Four hundred hectares had been made available during the land reforms in the late 1940s, an LPG Type III had been in existence since 1952 and had managed to raise its grain production levels higher even than the average in West Germany. Furthermore it was claimed that the LPG's mastery of maize production in accordance with a much-disputed SED policy had enabled it to avoid the feed problems suffered by many other farms. Meanwhile Wandersleben itself had developed into a local centre of commerce as well as education with an expanded school population and the establishment of an agricultural vocational school. Within the village there were organisations of the SED, CDU and DBD as well as the major mass organisations – the Free German Youth (*Freie Deutsche Jugend* or FDJ), the Democratic Women's Union (*Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands* or DFD) and the Free German Trade Union Association (*Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund* or FDGB). The regime was also represented in local sport in the Society for Sport and Technology (*Gesellschaft für Sport und Technik* or GST) and the German Athletics and Sports Union (*Deutscher Turn- und Sportbund* or DTSB); and in care for the elderly with the People's Solidarity Organisation (*Volkssolidarität*). Private farmers, too, were organised in a local organisation of the VdGB, though the lack of a chairman rendered the organisation ineffective. Importantly the state village assembly contained a mixture of collective and private farmers as well as industrial workers.

Nonetheless, by the end of 1959, 50 per cent of farmers based around Wandersleben had still not been persuaded to join or form an LPG. Some private farmers who had high yields from livestock production – producing double their state quotas – expected collectivisation to cut their profits. Others claimed simply: 'At the end of the day, I don't want to become an estate farm labourer.' In order to bolster the impetus of the campaign, a brigade of agitators organised by the Bezirk committee of the National Front – with representatives from the SED's district administration (*Kreisleitung*), the District State Council (*Rat des Kreises* or RdK) and the VdGB and CDU district leaderships – joined members of the local committee to canvass support across all the sections of the community in the village. Railway workers, many of whom owned and farmed small plots but were exempt from delivery quotas, were to be persuaded to get involved with the LPG or at least lease their land to the collective. Christian leaders and young people were targeted to persuade them to participate in the campaign for collectivisation, while visits were organised to see a functioning LPG and to view Soviet technology in action. In addition the members of the brigade were armed

with information on how much each private farmer was profiting from their current state quotas in order to shame people for exploiting the system.⁴⁴

In Wandersleben, as elsewhere in the Bezirk, the initial progress of these campaigns was nevertheless still tortuously slow. Farmers who had resisted collectivisation thus far continued with the usual methods of weathering the storm. They avoided entering into conversation with the brigades by shutting doors, disappearing into the fields, and avoiding or keeping quiet at public meetings.⁴⁵ Where they could be brought to talk, farmers were careful to raise arguments with which they sought to put off agitators without necessarily exposing themselves to accusations of opposition to socialism. One farmer in Oberdorla, Kreis Mühlhausen called for the immediate implementation of communism rather than just socialism – claiming that just as the workers were given complete factories, so would he enter the LPG once the state had built the new livestock sheds. Another pointed out that private farmers still existed in the Soviet Union, so why not allow them here. More widely, private farmers argued that they would produce more if they were allowed to continue to farm individually but received the same financial support as the LPG, enabling them better to do their duty to socialism in fulfilling the seven-year plan. Alternatively, they agreed to the principle of the LPG, deferring their entry, however, until they had passed on the farm to the next generation, the harvest had been brought in or at the very least until relatives or certain other prominent figures in the community had agreed to join as well.⁴⁶

Others more honestly said that they would only join when they had no other choice, but not until then. In the village of Hollenbach, for example, the wife of an independent farmer told the brigade that her husband was out and refused to let them into the house. In the ensuing discussion she then stated: 'We are still doing well, and we want to keep our independence ... if the water's up to our necks, then we'll go into the LPG.' Similarly other farmers made it clear that they would not join voluntarily, but would do so only if they were forced to join or if it were made illegal not to do so.⁴⁷ The principle of voluntary entry into the LPG enshrined in the model statutes was a key grievance of farmers, who felt the humiliation of 'giving up' the farms of their forefathers far more keenly as a result of this clause. Resistance in a number of villages continued thus to be broad and resolute, and with rumours circulating that an international summit meeting in Paris in May of that year would 'change everything', many decided to try to hold out until the direction of the political tide was certain.⁴⁸

The 'Socialist Spring'

The SED's response to ongoing resistance and the lack of any very significant rise in the percentage of land in the collectives by March, was to increase the intensity of the campaigns still further. Following a meeting between the first secretaries of the SED Bezirksleitungen at the ZK to discuss agricultural questions on 11 March 1960, the Bezirksleitung passed a resolution laying out the initial steps towards mobilising forces loyal to the regime throughout the countryside. Meetings were to be held between the Bezirksleitung, the SED district first secretaries and the agricultural functionaries in the *Rat des Bezirks*. All the heads of the bloc parties, the mass organisations and other Bezirk-wide institutions were to meet to agree a common strategy with regard to collectivisation, and in all the districts conferences were to be held in the course of the week which all responsible functionaries, mayors and chairmen of district institutions were to attend. The numbers of agitators in the brigades operating in the Bezirk rose to as many as 9,724 on 26 March – drawing on factory workers and employees from other enterprises to bolster numbers.⁴⁹

Such intimidating and constant pressure soon began to have results. With attention focused on the lead farmers in each community to form the collective, others soon joined, unwilling to resist unaided and to some extent reassured of the economic viability of the LPGs. Reports on the efforts of a brigade operating in early March in the small agricultural town of Kindelbrück in Kreis Sömmerda illustrate some of the methods employed. Over the week from 3 to 11 March 1960 the sixteen members of the agitation brigade were to divide into five groups each concentrating on a single farm. During the course of the week, members of the board of the existing LPGs, the MTS and two neighbouring state-owned farms were to be called upon to assist with the work of the brigade. Arguments arising from individual discussions with the farmers were to be published in the press and names of resistant farmers were to be repeatedly announced using a loudspeaker.

During the following week, the work of the brigade was intensified. Meetings were arranged with the school teachers, and the National Front representatives in each house and street were called upon to involve all inhabitants in arguing for the collectivisation. The local ABV was also called upon to produce a list of all inhabitants who worked for state-run institutions or were connected to a collective farm, who might be recruited as agitators. Meetings were arranged too with larger groups of farmers, while other farms were, ominously, marked out to be subjected to 'constant discussion'. On the weekends two members

of the brigade were charged with organising further agitation groups made up of local inhabitants to ensure there was no let-up of pressure. On top of this, over the course of the week, farmers were invited individually to the town hall for private discussions. After continuous efforts, the agitation brigade's loudspeaker claimed by 24 March that the formation of an LPG had been secured. This included the five farms targeted in the first week, joined by seven more. Nonetheless 30 per cent of the land attached to Kindelbrück remained outside the collective.⁵⁰

The extent to which force was used explicitly in the agitation campaigns is not clear. There is evidence of individual cases in Bezirk Erfurt as in the rest of the GDR where farmers appear to have been driven to suicide in the highly pressured atmosphere of collectivisation. Police reports from March and April 1960 describing such cases deliberately sought to downplay any connection with the tactics of the agitation campaign. Suicide notes, however, provided clear indication in a number of cases of the level of despair the prospect of collectivisation and the actions of agitation brigades had caused.⁵¹

Certainly acts of resistance to the collectivisation resulted in arrests and in some cases in periods of imprisonment – albeit on other charges. For the majority, however, the participation of the (people's) police as part of the agitation brigades implied threat enough of imprisonment. The 'discovery' of insignificant illegal actions by farmers certainly appears to have been used to break their resistance to entering the LPG.⁵² A letter from the chief of the Kreis Weimar-Land police department to his superiors at the Bezirk describes the situation as follows:

Through intensive investigations carried out by colleagues in the Criminal Department of the Weimar police station it was possible to uncover a number of law-breakers and using individual, tactically correct discussions persuade these same people to join the LPG, without having used force. Thus in serious cases as many as 15 people were invited to the Criminal Department with whom individual discussions were held. As a result of these conversations a whole number of other agricultural enterprises [i.e. farms] have joined in the socialist transformation. Typical for the situation was the fact that it was mostly the spokesmen of the communities who were involved ... However contrary to rumours circulating at the *Bezirk* attorney's offices, I would like to declare that during these actions no arrests of farmers were made.⁵³

It was enough – it seems – for the police to make a show of strength, without actually arresting people. A set of instructions issued by the SED Bezirksleitung to the Kreisleitungen on 21 March illustrates this strategy of persuasion in action again. The document complains that a number of district and village functionaries were not being strict in up-

holding the law and were therefore themselves hindering the process of socialist transformation in the countryside. As a solution it recommended that the Kreisleitungen follow the example of the SED Kreisleitung in Kreis Arnstadt and form groups of financial experts to assess individual farmers – with the implicit suggestion that any irregularities uncovered could be used to encourage participation in the LPGs.⁵⁴

The use of mayors' offices in which to hold interviews with resistant farmers increased the impression – where it had not been explicitly expressed – of possible state sanctions. The use of the formula which connected support for the collectivisation with support for socialism and hence for peace provided a logical net with which farmers could be threatened and labelled as warmongers should they continue to object. Farmers identified as ringleaders of opposition to collectivisation were especially vulnerable if their war record or some other element of their past could designate them fascist or reactionary. Furthermore there were limits to the farmers' abilities to defend themselves, with forcible prevention of 'trespassing' on their land or indeed mere insults directed at the agitators likely to mark them out as especially hostile.

Alongside open demonstrations of state power, the Ministry for State Security, too, had a covert role to play in driving forward the collectivisation campaign. Assessments by the Ministry's Bezirk administration in January and February 1960 highlight that the Stasi had insufficient numbers of informants working in agriculture, and were thus failing to gain sufficient coverage of the situation in villages across the Bezirk. Nevertheless, where possible, the district offices of the Stasi were encouraged in particular to influence the formation of new LPGs. Those well-off independent farmers who had been recruited (for whatever reason) as Stasi informants, it was suggested, ought to be forced to demonstrate their unambiguous support for collectivisation by joining a collective farm 'voluntarily'.⁵⁵

Despite the use or threat of considerable force in the process of collectivisation, it is also clear that some farmers bargained with local and district functionaries for their participation in the LPG. The urgency of the agitation brigades' requirement for a signature or an agreement in order to be able to claim that full collectivisation had been achieved within their area on time, certainly led to verbal concessions to the farmers' desires. The wish of some larger farmers to form their own collective, to the exclusion of weaker, small farms, while not permitted in the initial months of the collectivisation campaign, was allowed as the deadlines grew imminent. Thus a police report on Kreis Nordhausen in April mentions villagers' irritation that three of the largest and best farmers had been allowed to set up an LPG Type I on their own.⁵⁶ Certainly

there were limits to how far such bargaining could go. A fifteen-point set of written conditions for entry into the LPG, which one farmer dared to put to the mayor in March 1960 in a village in Kreis Sömmerda, led to the involvement of the Stasi.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, if the claims of some farmers following collectivisation are to be believed, far-reaching concessions were indeed granted in return for their acceptance of the LPG. These ranged from the freedom to harvest independently in 1960 to guarantees of a certain level of profit or wage, which matched their previous incomes. Thus a police report from 23 March 1960 points to increasing demands from farmers in Kreis Sömmerda in return for LPG entry, such as a minimum wage of 400DM or full reimbursement for the livestock and equipment brought into the collective. Requests were also made for documents allowing travel to West Germany in return for joining an LPG.⁵⁸

According to statistics produced by the SED Bezirksleitung after collectivisation had been nominally completed on 2 April, between 21 March and 1 April the percentage of arable land in the Bezirk farmed collectively doubled from 40 to 80 per cent, entailing quite literally the founding of farming collectives overnight, particularly on the weekend of 25 March to 27 March.⁵⁹ The situation on paper was a long way removed from the reality, however. Sufficient signatures might have been gained agreeing to participation in the LPG, but the terms on which these agreements were reached did little to assuage the doubts of both farmers and many functionaries as to the long-term viability of LPGs. Nor indeed, despite the publication of model statutes in 1959 detailing the organisation of collective farms, was there certainty as to how the practice of collective farming should be undertaken.

Conclusion

Once the success of reaching full collectivisation throughout the Bezirk had been celebrated with greater or lesser degrees of sincerity in the villages in April 1960, the difficult task of establishing actual functioning collective farms began. The practical purpose behind forming the collectives was to achieve large field cultivation of crops and larger, more concentrated livestock holdings which allowed production to be increased as well as more effectively planned and controlled. Conditions thus had to be created in which these goals could be realised, while in addition basic questions of how the collective farm was to be managed and who was to do it had to be addressed. Other fundamentals of organisation such as the calculation of wages, the division of

profits, the allocation of private plots, working hours and delegation of responsibility had also to be settled in practice among the members. Alongside these organisational issues, however, farmers had still to be convinced to be as good as their signature and actually work together in the collective.

The collectivisation was an impressive feat of administration, but neither the political nor the practical argument had been won for most farmers. In addition, the collectivisation process itself had demonstrated the limitations of the SED regime's authority in rural areas. Worse still, the manner in which the collectivisation had taken place had left plenty of room for future conflict and recrimination in rural communities in general, and disorganisation and uncertainty over the future practice of farming and administration of agriculture. There was, too, a real danger that this attack on farmers would rebound on the population at large through food shortages. New parameters had been set in which the transmission of authority in agriculture and rural society were to function. Farmers and the SED regime (and its local representatives) had signed up to a new set of roles and responsibilities with completion of full collectivisation – how these roles and responsibilities were to be interpreted and transformed into practice was by no means settled, however.

In the following chapter the bases of conflict and the expression of opposition in the aftermath of full collectivisation will be examined, along with the processes through which regional and local functionaries sought to resolve these conflicts and consolidate political, financial and organisational stability within LPGs prior to the increased restriction of flight to the West resulting from the construction of the Berlin Wall on 13 August 1961.

Notes

1. Thüringisches Hauptstaatsarchiv Weimar (ThHStAW) Bezirksbehörde der Deutschen Volkspolizei Erfurt (BDVP) 20/134 Volkspolizeikreisamt Mühlhausen, Abt. Schutzpolizei, Ergebnisse der Auswertung der Brigaden innerhalb des MTS-Bereiches Görmar, 10.12.1959.
2. The early development of the LPG in Merxleben as described by Barbara Schier highlights the mixture of local impetus and state interference in the establishment of the very first collective farms. B. Schier, *Alltagsleben im 'Sozialistischen Dorf'*, Münster, 2001, pp. 112–21.
3. C. Nehrig, 'Landwirtschaftspolitik', in *Die SED. Geschichte – Organisation – Politik. Ein Handbuch*, eds A. Herbst, G.-R. Stephan and J. Winkler, Berlin, 1997, pp. 294–305, here p. 295.

4. F. Werkentin, *Politische Strafjustiz in der Ara Ulbricht*, Berlin, 1995, pp. 73–85.
5. P. Kermarrec, *Der 17. Juni 1953 im Bezirk Erfurt*, Erfurt, 2003, pp. 67–71.
6. ThHStAW BDVP 20/134 BDVP Kriminalpolizei, Bericht an die Hauptverwaltung der Deutschen Polizei, Fälle über Proklamierung eines neuen 17. Juni. 26.3.1955.
7. The trials and tribulations of the LPG in Merxleben described in detail by Barbara Schier are instructive in this regard, bearing in mind that as the first LPG to be set up in the Bezirk, the regime had a vested interest in ensuring its success. Schier, *Alltagsleben*, pp. 121–44.
8. ThHStAW BDVP 20/044 Bericht an die BDVP – Politabteilung, Wahleinsatz im VPKA Apolda und Mähdrescherwerk Weimar, 13.6.1957.
9. ThHStAW Rat des Bezirkes (RdB) Erfurt L1151 Rat des Bezirkes Erfurt, Abt. Landwirtschaft, Bericht über den Stand der sozialistischen Entwicklung der Landwirtschaft im Bezirk Erfurt im 1. Halbjahr 1958.
10. Beauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes (BStU) Aussenstelle Erfurt, Bezirksverwaltung Erfurt, Büro der Leitung 1481 Leitung der MfS Bezirksverwaltung an den Leiter der Kreisdienststellen, Orientierung auf die Schwerpunkte der operativen Arbeit der Linie III (Landwirtschaft) im I. Quartal 1959, 18.12.1958, p. 8.
11. J. Gruhle, *Ohne Gott und Sonnenschein*, Nauendorf, 2000, p. 58.
12. ThHStAW RdB Erfurt L1151 Rat des Bezirkes Erfurt, Abt. Landwirtschaft, Bericht über die Entwicklung der LPG seit der 15. Tagung der Bezirksleitung der SED und des Bezirkstages am 23.8.1957.
13. C. Klessmann, 'Zur Sozialgeschichte des protestantischen Milieus in der DDR', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 19, 1993, pp. 29–53.
14. For Bezirk Erfurt, these battles are thoroughly analysed in M. Allinson, *Politics and Popular Opinion in East Germany, 1945–1968*, Manchester, 2000, pp. 87–108.
15. ThHStAW BDVP 20/044 BDVP Politabteilung, Bericht an die Hauptverwaltung – Politische Verwaltung, 10.12.1957.
16. T. Bauer, *Blockpartei und Agrarrevolution von Oben. Die DBD 1948–1963*, Munich, 2003, p. 441.
17. District officers of the Stasi were given instructions to prevent such farmers from taking up positions on the boards of the LPG or being chosen to occupy leading functionary positions. In practice of course this proved rather harder to ensure, as one case in the village of Ramsla demonstrated. Here an LPG Type I was established by a farmer who owned 30 hectares of land along with two other farmers. The LPG ran initially as something of a family business with the Großbauer himself chairman, his son the field brigadier and his daughter the accountant. Despite this seemingly inauspicious ideological composition, this LPG, as it transpired, became something of a model of socialist development. BStU Aussenstelle Erfurt, Bezirksverwaltung Erfurt, Büro der Leitung 1481, Leitung der MfS Bezirksverwaltung an den Leiter der Kreisdienststellen, Orientierung auf die Schwerpunkte der operativen Arbeit der Linie III (Landwirtschaft) im I. Quartal 1959, 18.12.1958, p. 8; BStU Aussenstelle Erfurt, Kreisdienststelle Weimar 682, Analyse über das Dorf Ramsla, 2.6.1960, pp. 33–40.
18. Allinson, *Politics and Popular Opinion*, p. 78.

19. Gruhle, *Ohne Gott*, p. 85: "Zwar sehe ich ein, dass man die besseren Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten hat, aber ich will meine Freiheit haben."
20. LPGs were divided into three types: Type I required the collective use of only the land; Type II required the use collectively of both land and machinery; Type III required the collective use of land, machinery and livestock. ThHStAW RdB Erfurt L562, Rat des Bezirkes Erfurt, Abt. Landwirtschaft, Bericht über die politische und ökonomische Entwicklung der LPG 1959 und den Stand der Betriebsplanung 1960.
21. ThHStAW BDVP 20/134 Kriminalpolizei, VPKA Mühlhausen, Abt. Schutzpolizei – Instrukteurbereich II. Auswertung der Brigadeeinsätze innerhalb des MTS Bereiches Lengefeld zur soz. Umgestaltung der Landwirtschaft, 4.12.1959.
22. BStU Aussenstelle Erfurt, Kreisdienststelle Heiligenstadt TA 184/84 Mündlicher Bericht des GI 'Traktor' beim Treff am 14.11.1958, 18.11.1958, pp. 70–71.
23. BStU Aussenstelle Erfurt, Kreisdienststelle Heiligenstadt TA 184/84, Eigener Treffbericht, Treff mit GI 'Traktor', 5.12.1958, 9.12.1958, p. 72.
24. ThHStAW RdB Erfurt L562 Rat des Bezirkes Erfurt, Abt. Landwirtschaft, Bericht über die politische und ökonomische Entwicklung der LPG 1959 und den Stand der Betriebsplanung 1960; Gruhle, *Ohne Gott*, pp. 76, 87.
25. As Jonathan Osmond has pointed out, some wealthier farmers sought, however, to avoid joining an already existing LPG and to limit outside interference by forming their own LPG Type I: J. Osmond, 'From Junker Estate to Cooperative Farm: East German Agrarian Society 1945–1961', in *The Workers' and Peasants' State: Communism and Society in East Germany under Ullbricht, 1945–1971*, eds P. Major and J. Osmond, Manchester, 2002, pp. 130–50, here p. 139.
26. ThHStAW Bezirksparteiarchiv der SED Erfurt, Bezirksleitung der SED Erfurt BIV/2/4-103 KPKK Sömmerda, Bericht über die Untersuchung in der LPG Kindelbrück, 18.6.1958, pp. 98–100.
27. ThHStAW Bezirksparteiarchiv der SED Erfurt, Bezirksleitung der SED Erfurt BIV/2/4-103 KPKK Sömmerda an die BPKK, Bericht der KPKK über die Untersuchungen in Grossmonra, 9.6.1959, p. 113.
28. See Gruhle, *Ohne Gott*, p. 45 for an example in Barchfeld, Kreis Weimar – an MTS Brigadier was replaced for neglecting the LPG and serving the Großbauern.
29. ThHStAW RdB Erfurt L562 Rat des Bezirkes Erfurt, Abt. Landwirtschaft, Bericht über die politische und ökonomische Entwicklung der LPG 1959 und den Stand der Betriebsplanung 1960. Following, for example, the transfer of machinery to the LPG Tüngeda in Bad Langensalza, six independent farmers applied for entry.
30. Bauer, *Blockpartei*, p. 442.
31. BStU Aussenstelle Erfurt, Bezirksverwaltung Erfurt, Büro der Leitung 1446, Leitung der Bezirksverwaltung an die Leiter der Kreisdienststellen, Orientierung auf die Schwerpunkte der Linie III in Auswertung der Arbeitstagen vom 11.1.1960 und 16.2.1960, 19.2.1960.
32. ThHStAW Bezirksparteiarchiv der SED Erfurt, Bezirksleitung der SED Erfurt IV/2/2-322 SED Bezirksleitung Abt. Landwirtschaft an das Sekretariat:

- Bericht über die Vorbereitung der Organisationswahlen der VdgB und ihre Unterstützung durch die Partei, 12.3.1960, pp. 168–76.
33. ThHStAW BDVP 20/065 BDVP Stab/Operativstab, Information 16/60 Vorkommnisse in der Landwirtschaft, 22.3.1960.
 34. ThHStAW BDVP 20/134 BDVP Kriminalpolizei, Kontrolle und Anleitung bei der Abt. K. Mühlhausen am 26.11.1959.
 35. ThHStAW BDVP 20/106 BDVP Schutzpolizei, Bericht über die Kontrolle und Anleitung im VPKA Heiligenstadt 19.10–14.11.1959; 20.11.1959. Also Allinson, *Politics and Popular Opinion*, pp. 79–80.
 36. ThHStAW BDVP 20/065, Stab/Operativstab, Information 6/60, 24.2.1960.
 37. ThHStAW, RdB Erfurt L562 Rat des Bezirkes Erfurt, Abt. Landwirtschaft Bericht über die politische und ökonomische Entwicklung der LPG 1959 und den Stand der Betriebsplanung 1960, undated (Feb. 1960).
 38. Gerhard Grüneberg (1921–81) was Secretary for Agriculture in the ZK between 1960 and 1980, and from 1966 was a member of the Politburo of the ZK.
 39. Bauer, *Blockpartei*, p. 461.
 40. Gruhle, *Ohne Gott*, p. 168: ‘Die Zusage der Unterbringung war vorhanden, und als die Genossen hinkamen, waren die Türen verschlossen ...’
 41. ThHStAW BDVP 20/065 BDVP Stab/Operativstab, Information 6/60 Landwirtschaft, 24.2.1960.
 42. ThHStAW RdB Erfurt L590 Rat des Bezirkes Erfurt, Abt. Landwirtschaft, Einschätzung über die Stadt Kindelbrück, 3.3.1960.
 43. See Osmond, ‘From Junker Estate to Cooperative Farm’, p. 140.
 44. ThHStAW NF 136, Bezirkssekretariat, Erster Entwurf, Dorfplan 1960 der Gemeinde Wandersleben, Kr. Gotha p.1; Bezirkssekretariat, Beschluss – Brigadeinsatz Wandersleben, 29.12.1959, p. 14; Bezirkssekretariat, Kurzanalyse über die Situation in Wandersleben, Kreis Gotha, 9.1.1960, p. 21.
 45. ThHStAW BDVP 20/065 BDVP Politabteilung Information 5/60 Landwirtschaft, 15.2.1960.
 46. ThHStAW BDVP 20/134 BDVP Kriminalpolizei, Abt. K. Dezernat SE: Bericht über die Mitarbeit der Volkspolizei bei dem Brigadeinsatz zur soz. Umgestaltung der Landwirtschaft, 27.11.1959; ThHStAW RdB Erfurt L590 Rat des Bezirkes Erfurt, Abt. Landwirtschaft, Einschätzung über die Stadt Kindelbrück, 3.3.1960; ThHStAW BDVP 20/065 BDVP Stab/Operativstab Information 17/60: Information und Gerüchte, 23.3.1960; ThHStAW BDVP 20/134 Kriminalpolizei, VPKA Mühlhausen, Abt. Schutzpolizei, Ergebnisse der Auswertung der Brigaden innerhalb des MTS-Bereiches Görmar, 10.12.1959.
 47. ThHStAW BDVP 20/134 Kriminalpolizei, VPKA Mühlhausen, Abt. Schutzpolizei – Instrukteurbereich II. Auswertung der Brigadeeinsätze innerhalb des MTS Bereiches Lengefeld zur soz. Umgestaltung der Landwirtschaft, 4.12.1959.
 48. ThHStAW BDVP 20/065 BDVP Stab/Operativstab Information 17/60: Argumente und Gerüchte, 23.3.1960.
 49. Allinson, *Politics and Popular Opinion*, p. 82.
 50. ThHStAW RdB Erfurt L590 Rat des Bezirkes Erfurt, Abt. Landwirtschaft, Einschätzung über die Stadt Kindelbrück, März 1960.

51. BArch DP 1, Nr. 1150 Ministerium der Justiz, HA II, Tägliche Rapporte des Operativstabs der DVP über die Lage in Berlin und in den Bezirken der DDR: 'On 2.4.1960 in ... *Bezirk* Karl-Marx-Stadt a farmer committed suicide by hanging. His family claim that over the last four weeks agitators have been campaigning almost daily for his entry into the LPG and that therein lie the grounds for the suicide. On 11.4.1960 at around 4 am a private farmer in ... *Bezirk* Karl-Marx-Stadt committed suicide by hanging. In his suicide note, he stated that he did not want to join the LPG.'
52. Thus a list of 'illegal activities' was collected by the brigade operating in Kindelbrück as part of their campaign. ThHStAW RdB Erfurt L590 Einschätzung über die Stadt Kindelbrück – Feststellungen der Brigade zu Fragen der Ungesetzlichkeiten.
53. ThHStAW BDVP 20/081 Stab/Operativstab, VPKA Weimar an die BDVP Stellvertreter Operativ, Bericht über den Instrukteureinsatz zur Unterstützung der Amtsleitung des VPKA Weimar bei der sozialistischen Umgestaltung der Landwirtschaft, 28.3.1960.
54. ThHStAW Bezirksparteiarchiv der SED Erfurt, Bezirksleitung der SED Erfurt IV/2/2-322 SED Bezirksleitung Fernschreiben an alle 1. Kreissekretäre Beschluss-Protokoll Nr. 10/60 der Sekretariatssitzung vom 21.3.1960, p. 144.
55. BStU Aussenstelle Erfurt, Bezirksverwaltung Erfurt, Büro der Leitung 1446, Leitung der Bezirksverwaltung an die Leiter der Kreisdienststellen, Orientierung auf die Schwerpunkte der Linie III in Auswertung der Arbeitstage vom 11.1.1960 und 16.2.1960, 19.2.1960.
56. ThHStAW BDVP 20/065 BDVP Stab/Operativstab Information 10/60 26.2.1960; Information 18/60 21.4.1960.
57. ThHStAW BDVP 20/065 BDVP Stab/Operativstab Information 14/60, Landwirtschaft 21.3.1960.
58. ThHStAW BDVP 20/065 BDVP Stab/Operativstab Information 17/60 Argumente und Gerüchte, 23.3.1960.
59. Gruhle, *Ohne Gott*, p. 208: 'Die zweite Übersicht zeigt dass die Forcierung der Agitationseinsätze bewusst auf das Wochenende vom 26. und 27. März 1960 her zugeschnitten worden war.'