

EDUCATION FOR EQUALITY: THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS AND THE
ROLE OF WOMEN IN A SOCIALIST SOCIETY: THE GDR.

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the thesis is to examine the way that a socialist society, the GDR, which is committed to ensuring the equality of men and women in society, uses education to provide equal opportunities for girls and boys and carry out its cultural revolution. For the purposes of the thesis, education is used in its narrow and its broad sense, i.e the formal education system and socialisation in society as a whole.

The Marxist theories of the liberation of women and of education, mainly in the form of the work of Engels and Bebel, and the development and application of these theories by members of the Social Democratic Party in Germany at the beginning of the 20th century, are examined first. The impact of the Weimar Republic and of the Third Reich are then looked at in relation to the legacy facing the new post-1945 government. A detailed description of the rhetoric of the GDR concerning women's equality is given, and most of the legislation concerning women is examined. In chapter 5 the education system of the GDR is laid out with particular reference to the education of girls. In the following two chapters there is a statistical analysis of the actual position of women in the GDR in terms of their education, employment and social and political standing in society. An analysis of the discrepancies between theory and practice is undertaken, with reference to research done within and outside the GDR. In conclusion, the success of the GDR in achieving women's equality is measured in their own terms and is examined within the framework of a socialist-feminist critique.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this dissertation is to demonstrate the importance of education to the liberation of women and to their subsequent equality with men in society. This importance is recognised in both Western capitalist states and Eastern block socialist states. Much has been written concerning the education of women in the West, some of this work being referred to in Chapter 8, however there is little material available from the East, and little research carried out in the West on the education of women under socialism.

Whilst education is an important tool for change, it cannot by itself bring about emancipation in any political system. Any traditional Marxist would argue that liberation for women is not possible under capitalism, and would subscribe to a Marxist theory of change as outlined in Chapter 1. Most socialists would also argue that women cannot achieve full equality under capitalism, if only for the simple reason that no working class person can. Radical feminists would argue that the economic system is secondary and that equality cannot be achieved until women take power from men, whether in capitalist or socialist society. The position taken in this dissertation is that socialism is necessary for the true equality of working people, male or female, and that some kind of feminist revolution is necessary for the liberation of women: a socialist revolution is not a sufficient condition of women's emancipation.

The study of a socialist society is important to understanding the successes and the limits of a socialist revolution to the emancipation of women. The German Democratic Republic (GDR) was selected to illustrate the case for the following reasons: it is, in the opinion of the author, a socialist country, that is,

the means of production are publicly owned, private property relations are insignificant, and there is a high level of socialised services; 'it is probably the least well researched in the West of all the Eastern block countries; it is the most industrially advanced of those countries; it is one of the more homogeneous of the socialist countries; it has a history, up until 1945, in common with a major Western country and therefore seems more accessible'; and, finally, the language is known to the author.

Western feminists argue that education is vital to the promotion of the equality of women, yet very little work has been done, either in the West or the East, on exactly how education in a socialist society should be structured to achieve this end. The lack of attention in the West to this question may reflect a general lack of interest in the socialist countries, particularly the GDR. In the GDR itself, many of the questions which Western socialist-feminist educationalists see as vital are considered irrelevant to their own situation, for reasons which will emerge later. The author considers that many of the preoccupations in the West are not irrelevant to socialist society, and maintains that the same goal is being aimed at from different directions, and that each could learn something from the other's experiences en route. These lessons will be drawn out in the final chapter.

As mentioned above, the Marxist theory of change adhered to in the GDR locates the liberation of women after the socialist revolution when the preconditions for women's emancipation will have been satisfied (see Chapter 1). However, it is recognised in the GDR that this does not mean that women will become equal immediately or automatically, various pre-socialist laws and customs have to be changed first. It is relatively easy for a centralised authoritarian state to

change laws: it is not so easy for it to change a social and cultural climate that has existed for hundreds of years. Education is seen as the key to this change in the GDR. The argument is put in one of the principle works on women in the GDR:

*"Education must prepare children for their role in life and is the basis for the equality of men and women. But education is not the deciding factor for equality: only socialist relations of production will ensure women's equal position to men."*³

There is official recognition that cultural change must be struggled for:

*"The new position of women will not automatically come about with the changes in economic relations. Women need to be taught how to take their new place, and men must be made to understand this new situation."*⁴

Three points relevant to the argument in this dissertation must be made here: firstly, despite the recognition of the need for cultural change, very little explicit work for change is done, either within the education system or in society as a whole; secondly, there is no recognition that women may be prevented from taking an equal position in society by men; thirdly, there is no acknowledgement of the fact that in order to change the cultural atmosphere, men do not merely have to allow women to strive for equality, they have to change as well. Men must also be re-educated. The constraint on real change is the theory of non-antagonistic contradiction. Marxist-Leninist theory states that changes in the economic base will lead to changes in the superstructure. In socialist societies, where changes in the base have occurred, change and development should be analysed dialectically: change proceeds, the theory goes, not through antagonistic

contradictions but through non-antagonistic ones, such as those between different forms of property (state and collective), types of labour (manual and non-manual), and the uneven development of town and country, as well as the persistence of pre-revolutionary and capitalist mores. The contradictions between the sexes would be explained in this way.⁶⁵The author will argue that this analysis is inadequate.

Education is seen in socialist society as the basic means by which women consolidate their equal position. Women need education in order to obtain the skills necessary to their new economic role, and they need education to aid and accelerate the change of consciousness needed to fulfil their potential. By GDR law they are offered equal access to education and the education they are offered is seemingly identical to that offered men. It will be argued here that in fact girls and women do not have an equal opportunity to education due to the constraints on them of their 'dual role', that is their responsibilities to work and to their families. Secondly, although girls are in theory given the same education as boys, there is no recognition of the forces at work to inhibit teachers from offering and pupils from receiving the same education. An understanding of women's dual role and of the more subtle forces at work in society to keep women in their traditional place are looked at in some detail in order to understand the limits of educational theory and practice in the GDR.

Education is considered in the GDR to be a lifelong process, inside and outside formal educational institutions, and for the purposes of this dissertation it will be treated in this broad sense. The family, pre-school childcare, adult education, youth groups and in-service training are seen to have the same importance as formal schooling in developing people's skills and

attitudes. This dissertation does not therefore restrict itself to examining the school system in its attempt to assess the effectiveness of education in the achievement of the equality of women. Informal education affects the learning of skills and the changing of consciousness. Also, women's experiences in society affects their educational experiences and vice versa. Research done within the GDR has shown that, firstly, women with educational qualifications are more politically and socially active; secondly, qualified women break their careers less often and are more strongly motivated in their careers; thirdly, housework is more equally divided in households with qualified women; fourthly, these households fulfil their educational role better; and lastly, qualified women tend to pursue more education as an adult.⁶

It is therefore within the framework of education in its broadest sense that women's equality in the GDR is looked at. An historical perspective has been given, both in terms of an examination of the theory underpinning GDR society, and of the specific problems that the country had to tackle at its inception.

Chapter 1 deals with the Marxist theory of women's emancipation as developed principally by Friedrich Engels⁷ and August Bebel⁸.

The three pre-conditions for women's emancipation were laid out by Engels as being, firstly, their entry into the productive labour force, secondly, the ending of private property, and, thirdly, the socialisation of domestic labour. These are pre-conditions that the author considers to be largely fulfilled in the GDR, with the possible exception of the third as there remain some individualised household tasks which could, in theory be socialised.⁹ The chapter also examines the Marxist idea of equality, which does not entail 'sameness'. It will be argued by the author that the

Marxist concept of nature is a stumbling block to equality. That is not to suggest that to be equal men and women must be 'the same', but that the nature/nurture debate has consequences for women's role in society which were not adequately explored by the Marxists. There is also in chapter 1 an examination of the work done by Marxists and German socialists concerning education, especially as it affects women. This work was in fact very sparse.

Chapter 2 deals firstly with the development of socialist-feminist ideas within Germany at the beginning of this century. The feminist cause was nearly always subordinated to the class struggle, and any notion of patriarchal^o oppression was refuted in the interests of class solidarity. This dissertation will argue that the effects of this policy are evident in the GDR today, where no independent women's movement is deemed necessary or desirable. As already mentioned, the contradictions between men and women are seen as non-antagonistic.

The second section of the chapter looks at Nazi Germany. The National Socialist ideology concerning women entailed a sort of sexual apartheid. It was thought that women should operate within their own sphere, the domestic one, which was considered inferior to that of men, except in the realm of motherhood. In this period, education was considered crucial in instilling the correct attitude in people and was very effective in its methods. Leaders of the GDR today (practically all men) spent their formative years under such an education system, and this must have some consequences for the cause of women's emancipation. It is important to understand the significance of the Nazi era: propoganda concerning women was very effective and met with little resistance. The author contends that the role being ascribed to women then was accepted because

it did not challenge the dominant, male, power in society. The problem, conversely, with any attempt to ensure women's equality is that it does challenge that power and is therefore not going to be achieved without conflict. This is not recognised in the GDR.

Chapter 3 details the creation of the GDR after the second world war, and the immediate problems the new State had to deal with. The economic and social devastation were enormous and this had consequences for the role of women in the new society. In terms of education, the task was complicated by the fact that most teachers had been Nazis and were immediately dismissed. As well as the physical problems of trying to get an education system re-started, a whole deep-seated ideology had to be combatted. Given the enormity of the problem faced, it is the author's opinion that the GDR has been tremendously successful.

The new government of the GDR set about implementing policies to enable the new society to develop along Marxist-Leninist lines. Chapter 4 sets out the rhetoric and the policies which were aimed at ensuring women's equality. Women were given training, childcare facilities were developed and a cultural revolution was set in motion. All these policies were aimed at changing women's conditions and women's ideas, never at changing those of men. Education was seen as crucial to giving women the required skills and to developing the 'new socialist man', in German the 'allseitige entwickelte Persönlichkeit'. At the same time that these policies to 'emancipate' women were being enacted, an urgent need to increase the population after the war led to a campaign for women to fulfil their 'natural' function of motherhood. The 'dual role' that women were expected to perform was to create great strains on the theory of emancipation as well as on women themselves. The chapter

sets out all the legislation which deals with the role of women in the new socialist society.

A descriptive study of the formal education system is undertaken in chapter 5. The concepts of polytechnical education and of the 'allseitige entwickelte Persönlichkeit' are of particular relevance to the thesis. In theory girls and boys receive the same education, but subtle differences which confirm and deepen sexual stereotyping become apparent on closer examination.

Having laid out the normative statements on the position of women in socialist society and the policies in the GDR to guarantee that position, and having put this study within a theoretical and historical context, the thesis continues by examining the actual position of women in the GDR. Their education emerges as an instrument of change less effective than it purports to be. Chapter 6 is based on available statistics, published mainly in the GDR, which relate to women's status in the economic sphere and to their education. Chapter 7 examines women's role in the political sphere and poses the question: why is the representation of women in politics so low given the stated achievement of equality and given women's apparent equal representation in the education system, especially in higher education? The chapter then goes on to study women's role in the social sphere, particularly the reality of their position in domestic relations, and uses data from surveys carried out by GDR sociologists. The cultural change that has taken place is then evaluated. Studies from the GDR are used and the main point to emerge here is again that change is seen as something reserved for women: the problem is seen as a problem of women and men are not seriously asked to, or helped to, consider their own roles and behaviour.

Chapter 8 examines some of the critical work on the position of women which comes from within the GDR. Again the underlying assumption behind these works is that it is a problem of non-antagonistic contradictions, and there is no serious attempt to consider the concept of patriarchy. The ideas of Western feminists are considered irrelevant, but, it is argued in the final part of the chapter, much of the work on girl's education carried out by Western socialists and feminists has some relevance to the GDR. Some of the ideas in these works are examined here and related to the rest of the thesis.

As has been noted, there are very few resources available which relate directly to the topic of this dissertation. Most of the statistics used come from a single source, that is the GDR, and must be viewed cautiously for this reason. Access to critical works is difficult due to the nature of the society being examined, and direct observation has been limited for the same reason: even as a guest of the Ministry of Education in 1986 the author had only limited access to schools. The author has attempted to pinpoint the theoretical contradictions which minimise the effects of progressive legislation concerning the position of women, and hopes that the tentative conclusion of this thesis will aid the development of educational theory and practice which aims to ensure the equality of women.

Notes to Introduction.

1. Throughout the dissertation it is assumed that the GDR is a socialist state. The debates around the question of whether or not the Soviet Union, and by implication it's 'satellites' in Eastern Europe, is socialist or not have raged for many years. For a full resume of the debate see D.Lane, The Socialist Industrial State, Allen and Unwin, London, 1976.
2. Obviously, before unification in the 1860's, there was no single german state. The cultural and linguistic links between the separate germanic states were, however, strong.
3. H.Kuhrig et al, Zur gesellschaftlichen Stellung der Frau in der DDR. Verlag für die Frau, Leipzig, 1978. Pages 186-189.
4. Ibid, Page 72.
5. See D.Lane, op. cit.
6. H. Kuhrig, op.cit. Page 63
7. F.Engels, Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State. All refernces to the first edition, Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1972. The text provides the starting point for socialist theory on women, and is much discussed among Western socialist feminists. See, for example, V.Beechey in Capital and Class No.3, 1977; P.Aaby in Critique of Anthropology, Vol.3, Nos.9&10 1977; R.Delmar in J.Mitchell and A.Oakley, The Rights and Wrongs of Women. Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1977, and K.Sacks in Reit, Towards an Anthropology of Women, N.Y. 1975.
8. A.Bebel, Woman under Socialism. Schocken books, N.Y. 1971. References also made to A.Bebel, Die Frau und der Sozialismus. Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1979.
9. In fact there is a move towards the individualisation of certain domestic tasks with the technical developments in domestic equipment. The

author is of the opinion that this is not incompatible with socialism. For a discussion of this issue, see J.Gardiner, 'Women's Domestic Labour', New Left Review, No. 89, 1975. Pp.47-58.

- 10 There are many definitions of the term 'patriarchy'. Although traditionally the term meant 'rule by the father', it has come to take on a broader meaning, and, unless otherwise stated, it has been used in this thesis to denote the priviledges which men have in society due to their power as men, a power which pre-dates capitalism and cuts across class lines. It is a form of power which may have changed with changes in modes of and relations of production, but which has not disappeared. For a detailed discussion of the concept of patriarchy, see A-M.Wolpe and A.Kuhn(ed.), Feminism and Materialism. RKP, London, 1978.

CHAPTER 1

The main discussion in the first section of this chapter will concentrate on Engels' work cited above. Reference will also be made to Karl Marx and to August Bebel where their works contribute to the discussion around women's oppression under capitalism and the pre-conditions for their emancipation. Interestingly, Bebel's book appeared in 1883, a year before that of Engels, but it was overshadowed by the latter.

Bebel is more relevant to the second question under consideration in this chapter, that is the nature of women's role under socialism. This debate was taken up by Lenin and the Russian Bolsheviks, notably Krupskaya' and Kollontai², as well as by the German socialist women in the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD), principally Clara Zetkin³. It should be noted that Bebel has particular relevance to the discussion on Germany due to his position as founder and co-leader of the SPD. In 1869 he, along with Karl Liebknecht, founded the Social Democratic Workingman's Party, later to become the SPD. The influence of the Bolsheviks was also very marked due to the personal and political links between them and the SPD. Kollontai was a particular friend and disciple of Zetkin, and Zetkin had many discussions with Lenin.⁴

To return to the first section of this chapter, Engels' 'Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State' was based largely on Lewis Morgan's 'Ancient Society'⁵ and on Marx's notes on this work, although it went further than any analysis of women undertaken by Marx. Marx and Engels shared Morgan's desire to chart the history of the family in a relation to material conditions of production rather than through philosophical speculation or the analysis of religion.⁶ The work on 'Ancient Society' does not stand up in the

light of twentieth century anthropology and has been much disputed. There is no intention here to engage in these disputes. The discussion by Engels of Morgan's demonstration of the existence of matrilineality, and of Bachofen's cultural researches into Greek myths and drama, forms the basis of his analysis of the roots of women's oppression and thus the key to their emancipation.⁷

Engels' book can be examined in three parts: the position of women in pre-capitalist society and the roots of her oppression; the actual oppression of women under capitalism; and the pre-conditions for women's emancipation.

Drawing on Morgan's and Bachofen's works, Engels argues that many pre-historical societies (by which he means those existing before written history) were matrilineal, where women enjoyed equal status with men. Through a 'natural' division of labour, which arose out of physiological differences carried over into the social world, women traditionally worked in the house and were gatherers whilst men were hunters. As agriculture evolved towards animal husbandry, men, having been the hunters, started to look after their own animals. As they acquired more and more animals, which they now jealously guarded as their own property, they needed other people to help them look after them, and thus came to 'own' men as slaves as well as owning animals. It is here, in the development of private property, that Engels locates the source of women's oppression, and just as the subjugation of women coincided with the subjugation of one section of humanity into slavery, he argued, so would women's future liberation coincide with the abolition of wage slavery. Engels goes on to argue that, in view of the fact that societies were matrilineal, this newly acquired private property could not be inherited by the

children of the owner. The lineality therefore had to change, and the necessary change to a patrilineal society was achieved by:

"a simple decree that in the future the offspring of the male members should remain within the gens, but that of the female should be excluded by being transferred to the gens of their father"

The fact that the transition seems to have been so "simple" indicates a confusion in Engels' thinking. Just because the society was matrilineal, it does not follow that women had equal, or any, power and status. In fact, in discussing pre-historical societies, Engels refers to the leaders, chiefs etc. as "he".⁹ The source of women's oppression cannot be simply located in the change to patrilineal society. His call for a return to relations existing in matrilineal societies without the existence of private property would not necessarily benefit women. The immense amount of fieldwork done by anthropologists in the twentieth century has shown that such a variety of kinship systems existed among tribes at the same stage of technological development, that no direct relationship between kinship and economic factors can be agreed upon. Feminists have argued that there is no evidence of a matrilineal system always preceding a patrilineal one, or of matriarchal societies, where the power lies with the mother, existing at all.¹⁰

Engels' argument was mirrored in Bebel's work and their theory depended on the previous existence of a type of society where women were not oppressed:

"The reign of the mother right implied communism, equality for all, the rise of the father right implied the reign of private property, and, with it, the oppression and enslavement of women."

The argument concerning pre-historical societies was understandably crude in the nineteenth century. What is important here is the significance of its conclusions to socialist theory, that is, the conclusion that women's oppression originates in property relations.

Engels goes on to describe the nature of women's oppression under capitalism. As society developed, and property was amassed and concentrated into certain sections of society, social and sexual relations had to change: ownership of property necessitated patrilineal society as men emerged as the owners of property. Monogamy was also necessary, for the female, in order to ensure legitimate inheritance. Marriage among the property owning classes thus becomes, according to Engels, one of convenience, devoid of love except if by chance. The man does not wish to relinquish his sexual freedom, and so the institution of prostitution arises. However, in an analogy with the economic sphere, Engels sees little difference between bourgeois marriage (slavery) and prostitution (wage labour):

*"(the wife) only differs from the ordinary courtesan in that she does not let out her body on piecework as a waged worker, but sells it once and for all into slavery."*¹²

The features of bourgeois marriage are identified as, firstly, the economic dependence of women on men as property owners; secondly, the private domestic service of women within the home, which is defined as non-productive labour by capitalist society; and, thirdly, the lack of participation by women in the political sphere. He went on to argue that only in the proletarian family was there no material basis for oppression, and therefore love could be the basis of marriage. The pre-conditions for this kind of marriage he identified as, firstly, the complete absence of property; secondly, the absence of bourgeois law in

marriage relations; and thirdly, the opportunity for the economic independence of women from men made possible by their entry into the labour force. The fact that there obviously was oppression within the proletarian family was not adequately explained. He considered that:

*"no basis for any kind of male supremacy is left in the proletarian household, except perhaps for something of the brutality towards women that has spread since the introduction of monogamy."*¹³

It is not clear what is meant here, other than a reference to the all-pervading nature of the dominant bourgeois ideology. *(and one?)*

Bebel, like Engels, identified private property as being the basis of women's oppression, institutionalised in marriage. He saw bourgeois marriage as one of compulsion which led to numerous ills, and he collected a mass of statistical information on marriage rates, divorce rates and suicide rates throughout Europe. His conclusion was that:

*"Modern marriage is an institution that is closely connected with the existing social condition, and stands or falls with it. But this marriage is in the course of dissolution and decay, exactly as capitalist society itself. Seeing that all these conditions, harmful to women in particular, are grounded in the nature of capitalist society, and grow worse as the system continues, the same process is itself unable to end the evil and to emancipate women. Another social order is accordingly requisite thereto."*¹⁴

Following the theory of historical materialism, it is precisely the contradictions within capitalism which will precipitate its downfall.

This leads on to the third aspect of Engels' theory, the pre-requisites for women's emancipation. It was precisely because proletarian women were needed in the labour force that they could be emancipated.

*"The emancipation of women and their equality with men are impossible and must remain so as long as women are excluded from socially productive work and restricted to housework, which is private. The emancipation of women becomes possible only when women are enabled to take part in production on a large, social scale, and when domestic duties require attention only to a minor degree. And this has become possible only as a result of modern large-scale industry, which not only permits the participation of women in production in large numbers, but actually calls for it and, moreover, strives to convert private domestic work also into a more public industry."*¹⁵

Both Marx in 'Capital' and Engels in 'The Conditions of the Working Class in England' describe the horrific effects of capitalism on women's and children's lives, as well as on those of men. But entry into the workforce was necessary for women's emancipation:

*"However terrible and disgusting the dissolution of the old family ties within the capitalist system might appear, large scale industry, by assigning an important part in socially organised processes of production, outside the sphere of the domestic economy, to women, young persons and children of both sexes, does nevertheless create a new economic foundation for a higher form of the family and of relations between the sexes."*¹⁶

Even within Engels' lifetime, however, the pattern was not evolving as he predicted. Women were entering the labour force, albeit on a different wage system to that of men, but the social consequences of this in terms of women's reproductive function soon became apparent.¹⁷ Women were therefore 'protected' from certain jobs and were eventually encouraged to leave the workforce altogether, with the aim that the proletarian families would aspire to the 'ideal' of the bourgeois family where women did not work outside the home. The inadequacy of Marx and Engels' analysis of women's relationship to productive work is examined in more depth later.

To summarise Marxist theory, women's emancipation is linked to: a) the abolition of private property; b) women's entry into the production process; c) the socialisation of domestic labour. These three things had to occur within a socialist society. Property relations must change within society as a whole as well as between men and women, the production process that women must enter must be a socialist one, and socialism was deemed necessary to the socialisation of domestic work and childcare. It could be argued that socialist relations of production are not a necessary pre-condition to emancipation, and that the rise of the welfare state in liberal democracies shows that socialism is not necessary for the socialisation of childcare.

An attempt has been made here to briefly illustrate some of the inadequacies of Engels' analysis. According to Marxists, the key to the oppression of women was seen as economic, and relations between men and women would only become equal with the ending of economic oppression:

"The supremacy of the man in marriage is the simple consequence of his economic supremacy,

and, with the abolition of the latter, will disappear of itself."¹⁹ and:

"Prostitution rests upon private property and will fall with it."²⁰

Herein lies the key to understanding the failure of socialist societies in grappling with the problem of men's oppression of women. Hilda Scott, a feminist who has lived in Eastern Europe puts it succinctly:

"If women's inferior position can be traced directly to the emergence of private property, there is no need to search for answers to questions about whether women today are really men's equals physically, mentally and psychologically, to try to define equality... no need to unwrap people's minds and souls or air their misconceptions and prejudices."²¹

The economistic and reductionist bias of Engels tends to dictate the approach of the socialist states to the area of women's oppression, as shall be seen. Whilst not wishing to detract from the importance of his attempt to analyse women's oppression and the positive effects this has had on socialist theory, the author feels that it is ultimately responsible for the failure of existing socialist states to (adequately) address themselves to the problems around relations between the sexes by limiting the analysis to the economic sphere. The question of male power, of patriarchy, will be considered in chapter 8, and one question which will emerge from this study of the GDR is: 'how do changing modes of production change the forms of patriarchy without destroying its existence?'²²

Marxists have usually had more to say about the evils of capitalism and the process of change to socialism and then communism, than about the form that socialist

society should take. An examination of Marxist writings will reveal certain principles that should be followed and a crude model of socialist society can be constructed. In terms of the role and status of women, and how they are to operate in the new society, an attempt will be made here to draw up such a model with reference to the writings (if not the practice!) of Marx, Engels, Bebel, Krupskaya and Kollontai. It was agreed by the above that women must become 'equal' members in society, but we cannot proceed until it is determined exactly what they meant by 'equal'. In Marxist theory it certainly did not mean 'the same'. The problems arising for Marxist feminists as to what a Marxist equality entails have been examined in a recent essay by Michèle Barratt.²² It should be noted that the concept of equality adhered to by Western feminists has its roots more firmly in liberal democratic thought than in classical Marxism. Confusion around this question of what is meant by equality has consequences for the position of women in society.

The starting point is an examination of the concept of 'nature' in Marx, for notions of equality cannot go against what is conceived of as 'natural' differences between men and women. An important idea to grasp is that , although rules of nature remain constant, 'man' is not totally ruled by nature: laws can be used in different ways and the strength of their effect can be altered. The active person can change her/his nature.

'Man':

"sets in motion the natural forces which belong to his own body , his arms, legs, head and hands, in order to appropriate the materials of nature in a form adapted to his own needs. Through this movement he acts upon external nature and changes it, and in this

way he simultaneously changes his own nature." ²³

Society is always faced with the same laws of nature. Its existing historical structure determines the form in which people are subjected to these laws, their mode of operation, their field of application and the degree to which they can be understood and made socially useful. The power of nature cannot be broken entirely: nature can only be ruled in accordance with its own laws.²⁴ The dialectical nature of this relationship between person and nature has implications when looking at ideas around the role of women. It cannot be denied that the 'law' that a woman must bear children is inimitable. Her relationship to this process, how she acts on it, can, however, change, and can change her own nature. There is no reason why, having given birth and, at least in Marx's time, some months of suckling, a mother should then be responsible for that child for its pre-adult life. However, the inevitability of the mother as childcarer was never questioned by Marx and Engels, who accepted the division of labour as being 'natural'.²⁵ The argument against their position is developed in chapter 7. The early Marxists, then, took for granted the fact that women's physiological make-up destined them to different roles from men. As Marx said:

*"Within a family, and, after further development, within a tribe, there springs up naturally a division of labour caused by differences of sex and age and therefore based on a purely physiological foundation."*²⁶

As will be shown, physiological constraints on women's role have been challenged in socialist theory and practice, but certain accepted differences are embodied in the laws, for example those regarding protective

legislation, which have wider implications for women's equality.

The physiological and psychological peculiarities of women were considered to be closely linked, and here the implications for women's equality are broader, covering areas of education and social life in general. Bebel, more than Engels, discusses the future role of women under socialism, and underlying his work is an acceptance of 'natural' psychological differences between men and women. He talks of the 'female' qualities and it is never clear what, and to what extent he attributes to social conditioning or to nature. Thus, in educating women,

*"the object must not be to develop further the sentimental and imaginative side of women, which would only tend to heighten her natural inclination to nervousness."*²⁷

A little later he says:

*"Woman is by nature more impulsive than man, she reflects less than he, she has more abnegation, is naiver and hence is governed by stronger passions."*²⁸

On the other hand, he states that qualities such as 'passion for gossip', 'talk about trifles', 'easily arousable jealousy', 'obsession with fashion':

*"manifest themselves generally in the female sex from early childhood. They are qualities that are born under the pressure of social conditions, and are further developed by heredity, example and education."*²⁹

It is undeniable that women have a different biological function which may or may not affect their psychological traits, however, the argument of this dissertation will be that many so-called 'natural' traits are socially induced and become social roles. More importantly perhaps, those ascribed to women are

considered inferior by society. Bebel would not have wished these characteristics to result in any inequality, but did not adequately discuss the issue. What clearly emerges from Bebel and the other writers is an acceptance of women's traditional role viz-a-viz housework and childcare, although the individualisation of this work was condemned.

It must be said that there was a genuine acceptance of the oppressive nature of housework, and solutions were proposed which followed the line set out by Engels. Even within the new socialist state of the USSR, it was recognised that much had to change. As Lenin said:

"Notwithstanding all the laws emancipating women, she continues to be a domestic slave because petty housework crushes, strangles, stultifies and degrades her, chains her to the kitchen and the nursery, and she wastes her labour on barbarously unproductive, petty, nerve-wracking, stultifying and crushing drudgery. The real emancipation of women, real communism, will begin only where and when an all out struggle begins (led by the proletariat wielding the state power) against this petty house-keeping, or rather, when its wholesale transformation into a large-scale socialist economy begins."³⁰

But what effect would this actually have on women's traditional role? Kollontai in 'Women and Revolution' states:

"At the moment, the mother returns from work tired and exhausted, needing peace and quiet, and immediately she has to start work again coping with her hungry, unwashed and untidy children. It makes all the difference to the mother to call for and collect her

children well-fed, clean and happily full of news."³¹

Women are still considered to be ultimately responsible for childcare, and thus now have to perform two tasks, inside the home and outside in the economic sphere. Socialism would not solve the problem of women's dual role, it would merely make it more palatable. As Karen Honeycutt puts it:

*"In Zetkins dialectical view of the female condition there existed a mutually beneficial relationship between development in each of these directions. Through the experience of motherhood, women matured and developed moral strengths and ethical values which in turn contributed to their effectiveness and creativity in occupational work and other activities outside the home. Similarly, through occupational work, women widened their horizons and gained greater knowledge and experience, all of which enabled them to be better mothers and educators of their children."*³²

There is no doubt that these two experiences can operate to provide a more valuable existence, but the question must be asked why men's experience is not similarly conceived.

The sexual division of labour in the home would be mirrored in the economic sphere. Socialised domestic labour was conceived as being carried out by women, as illustrated by Lenin when talking about communal household and childcare facilities:

*"The work of organising all these institutions will fall mainly to women."*³³

In the productive sphere, women's role was seen as being equal to but different from that of men:

*"Women will occupy the same position as men. Here we are not, of course, speaking of making women the equal of men as far as productivity of labour, the length of the working day, labour conditions etc. are concerned."*³⁴

This view was justified by concern for women's other, and main, function, that is childbirth and childcare: she must be protected in order to fulfil the roles efficiently.

*"The social obligation of the mother is above all to give birth to a healthy baby...During her pregnancy...she is serving the collective, producing from her own flesh and blood a new unit of labour."*³⁵

Similar views were expressed by Zetkin at the Gotha Conference of 1896:

*"It cannot possibly be the task of socialist agitators to alienate the proletarian woman from her duties as wife and mother... (for) in the traditional female role within the home ... (she) achieved exactly as much as the female comrades we see in our meetings."*³⁶

The consequences of this view for political action became clear in the early part of the century in Germany and are also very much in evidence in the pro-natalist policies of the GDR government. Thirty years after Zetkin's speech, the same sentiments were being expressed in a very different political context by Hitler:

*"It must be considered as reprehensible conduct to refrain from giving healthy children to the nation."*³⁷

This serves to illustrate the point that women's role in patriarchal society, of whatever ideology, is not independent of the perceived economic and social needs of that society, as conceived by men. This will have

consequences for the idea of 'equality' for women, especially when connected to the idea of women's 'natural differences'.

Participation in the economic sphere was seen as a pre-requisite to women's emancipation. Once socialism was achieved, women should also participate in the political sphere to realise their equality. As Lenin said:

*"In capitalist society the woman's position is marked by such inequality that her participation in politics is only an insignificant fraction of man's participation ...we say that the emancipation of the workers must be effected by the workers themselves, and in exactly the same way, the emancipation of working women is a matter for working women themselves."*³⁸

It is thereby established that it is women who must emancipate themselves, which can lead to the ghettoisation of women's 'issues' and leaves men untouched. In another section of the speech he reveals a more traditional view of the role of women.

*"Political activity is made available to the working woman in the Soviet Republic and it will consist in the working woman using her organisational ability to help the working man."*³⁹

Lenin did, however, recognise the importance of a strong political involvement by women and of a more sexually balanced administration:

*"We want the working woman to be the equal of the working man, not only before the law, but in actual fact. For this working women must take an increasing part in the administration of socialist enterprises and in the administration of the state...elect more women to the Soviet!"*⁴⁰

The extent to which this has been achieved in the GDR will be examined in chapter 7. Interestingly, Lenin also called for women to take part in the militia, a call that has not been taken up by existing European socialist states.

*"What sort of militia do we need? A true people's militia, that is a militia that foremost comes from the whole population, from all adult citizens of both sexes."*⁴¹

The role of women in the economic, social and political spheres as conceived by the early Marxists has been briefly outlined. In terms of what people's personal and sexual relations might be there is less information and no coherent view. It was recognised that women were oppressed sexually under capitalism, as has been indicated. When discussing future relationships under socialism, Engels reaches the conclusion that monogamy will be the natural outcome as "sexual love is by its nature exclusive."⁴² But he can only offer this as a "personal opinion". Unfortunately, sexual relationships were not an object of public debate, as economic and social relationships were. In the 'Principles of Communism' written in 1847, in response to the question of what influence the communist order of society will have on the family, is the statement:

*"It will make the relation between the sexes a purely private relation which concerns only the persons involved, and in which society has no call to interfere."*⁴³

In the following chapter, the extent to which the importance of discussing sexual relationships was denied amongst socialists is examined. In chapter 8 it will be argued that this has important ramifications for the position of women in a patriarchal society.

Given the new society that was envisaged, with its new role for women, a whole new education system would be necessary. The idea that each individual has an equal right to an equal education was a basic tenet of Marxist philosophy, as Engels said:

*"The first duty (of a socialist society) would be the general education of all children without exception at the expense of the state - an education which is equal for all and continues until the individual is capable of emerging as an independent member of society."*⁴⁴

The sincerity with which Engels held these views is not in doubt, but his male prejudices sometimes crept in and throw doubt on what his notion of equality really was.

*"Religious independence of mind is an awkward matter for women. Persons like George Sand, Mistress Shelley are rare: it is only too easy for doubt to corrode the feminine mind and raise the intellect to a power which it ought not to have in any woman."*⁴⁵

Bebel was more explicit than Marx and Engels about the education necessary to ensure women's equality. In 'Woman under Socialism' he wrote

*"There is no reason for confining one sex to a certain field, and proscribing to it the course of development that it shall pursue, not that, based on differences in natural bent, in advantages and defects, which naturally equalize themselves, privileges may be deducted for one sex, hindrances for another. Consequently, equality for all and a free field for each with a full swing according to their capacity and ability."*⁴⁶

Here he seems to be arguing both that people should not be forced along paths determined by perceived sexual differences, and also that society should not ascribe more value to some assets than to others. Both these points are crucial to educational theory today and will be examined further in chapter 7. Bebel argued that both boys and girls should receive the same education and should be taught alongside one another.

*"One of the first and most important tasks of a rationally organised society must be to end this unhallowed split...the violence done to nature starts at school: first, the separation of the sexes; next, mistaken or no instruction whatever in matters that concern the human being as a sexual entity."*⁴⁷

And:

*"Furthermore, education must be co-educational and must be similar for both sexes. The separation of the sexes is only justified in such cases where the difference of the sexes makes it an absolute necessity. In this sort of education, the USA is far ahead of us. There the education of both sexes is combined from primary school to university. Not only tuition but also materials are free, including the materials for Home Economics and Needlework, for lessons in Chemistry and Physics and the tools that the pupils needs on the experiment and work tables."*⁴⁸

Bebel's ideas, developed by the socialists in Germany in the early 1920's, contain a sophistication in relation to notions of equality which is not apparent in the writings of Marx and Engels. Their ideas were based mainly on the works of Owen, Fourier and Rousseau, and the socialist theory and practice of education was

developed mainly in Russia by Krupskaya, Makarenko, and to some extent Lenin. The general Marxist theory of knowledge will be outlined here, along with the two fundamental tenets of socialist education, the idea of the collective and the concept of polytechnical education.

Marxist educational theory is based on the theory of dialectical materialism. It is dialectical in the sense that the acquisition of knowledge occurs as the human brain develops an increasingly accurate perception of reality as a result of its interaction with the external world.⁴⁵ The knowledge that is constructed is not tested through a simple 'correspondence' with real objects, but by its instrumentality, by its ability to guide efficacious action and intervention in the world.⁵⁰ The theory is materialist in the sense that consciousness arises from practical reality; our acquisition of knowledge is guided by our needs - we solve problems - and in turn works to guide activity. Peoples consciousness is thus transformed by their material circumstances and their relationship to these circumstances.⁵¹

This idea of knowledge finds expression in the practice of polytechnical education. Academic learning and the production process are linked, the main objective being to break the value-laden distinction between mental and manual labour and to give a theoretical understanding and practical knowledge of the production process. The idea of polytechnical education can be found in the 'Communist Manifesto' and in a speech made by Marx in 1866.

"Abolition of factory work by children in its present form. Combination of education with materialist production etc. Polytechnical education which reconciles general principles of all production processes and at the same

time familiarises the child and the young person in the practical usage and handling of the elementary instruments of all work processes."⁵²

Bebel also wrote about polytechnical education in 'Woman under Socialism'.

*"The introduction of mechanical activities in the best equipped workshops, in garden and field work, will constitute a good part of the education of youth...to the end of reaching the most perfectly developed beings."*⁵³

The concept of polytechnical education was developed mainly by Krupskaya, who devoted over 6,000 pages of volume 4 of her pedagogical works to it. It is important to the subject of this thesis to determine whether a sexual division of labour in the practical work is accepted, and what different status is given to 'male' and 'female' work.⁵⁴

The idea of the collective was developed by Makarenko and Krupskaya, the latter stating that:

*"The earlier the child is exposed to the life of a collective the greater are his (sic) chances to grow up as a real communist."*⁵⁵

The idea of the collective as the basis of social organisation can be found in 'The German Ideology':

*"Only in community (with others has each) individual the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions: only in the community therefore is personal freedom possible."*⁵⁶

The question of individual versus collective rights and duties occupied Makarenko and Krupskaya, who both spent much of the 1920's living and teaching in educational collectives. Makarenko emphasised the precedence of the collective interest over individual rights, whilst Krupskaya was more concerned with the collective shaping

itself to individual needs.⁵⁷ In Makarenko's collective households, the 'units' were responsible for the achievements and behaviour of their members, and it was in the interests of them all, especially unit leaders, to maintain order and stability. The principle of collective responsibility was carried over into the classroom where the group would help slow learners and discipline miscreants. This principle is in evidence in Soviet, and GDR, schools today, and has been described and discussed by Bronfenbrenner in his 'Two Worlds of Childhood.'⁵⁸

That concludes this brief description of Marxist ideas concerning the new socialist society, women's place in it, and the kind of education system necessary to it. That women should have equal rights and duties to men was taken for granted by the Marxists, and the form which their new role in society should take was laid down. Women should be involved in productive labour, should be freed from household drudgery, should be politically active, should be equal within sexual relationships, should be allowed some control over reproduction and should take an equal part in an education system designed to promote socialist consciousness and equality, and teach the skills necessary to a socialist society.

Two inadequacies in the debate emerge. Firstly, the sexual division of labour within and outside the family was hardly discussed, and any discussion rested on a tacit acceptance of perceived 'natural' characteristics of the sexes. Secondly, the path to women's emancipation precluded any discussion on women's relationship to men. Women's oppression lay in her lack of participation in the production process and in the capitalist system. Once the power had been taken by the proletariat she would be free. There was no recognition that women might have to take power from men as, in theory, men only

oppressed women because of the existence of private property and capitalist relations of production. The argument of the thesis that these points were not adequately discussed, and the consequences of this for the GDR, will be developed in chapter 7. For feminists within the socialist movement in Germany at the beginning of the twentieth century, the parameters of the debate prevented any sophisticated analysis of women's oppression, any development of a strong socialist feminist movement and any alliance between the socialist and bourgeois feminists. It is these points which are addressed in chapter 2 where the development of the Social Democratic Party and the role of the feminists within it are traced.

Notes to chapter 1.

1. Nadezhda Krupskaya (1869-1939) Active Marxist in St. Petersburg. Married Lenin in exile 1898. Member of the People's Commissariat of Education after 1917.
2. Alesandra Kollontai (1872-1952) Joined Bolsheviks 1915. Became Commissar for Public Welfare after 1917.
3. Clara Zetkin (1857-1933) Joined the SPD in 1881. Edited 'Die Gleichheit' ('Equality') 1892-1917.
4. C.Zetkin, "My Recollections of Lenin." Reprinted in V.Lenin, On the Emancipation of Women. Progress Publishers, Moscow 1965. Pp.97-123
5. L.Morgan. 'Ancient Society.' MacMillan, London, 1887.
6. R.Delmar, "Looking again at Engels' Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State." In J.Mitchell & A.Oakley, The Rights and Wrongs of Women. Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1977. Pp.271-287.
7. J.Bachofen, Myth, Religion and Mother Right. Selected Writings. RKP, London, 1967.
8. F.Engels, op.cit. P.120
9. I realise that the so-called generic term was used without question at this time, unlike today, but it is obvious from the quotation here that 'he' denotes masculinity.
10. For example, see J.Bamberger, "The Myth of Matriarchy: Why Men Rule in Primitive Society." In M.Z Rosaldo, Woman, Culture and Society. Stanford U.P. 1974. She argues that the concept of Bachofen's 'mother-right' (Mutterrecht) was based on myths which had a specific misogynist function to preserve sexual differences in social life and to present a picture of chaotic female rule to adolescent boys.
11. A.Bebel. op.cit. P. 30
12. F.Engels. op.cit. P.134

13. Ibid. P.135.
14. A.Bebel. op.cit. P.144-5
15. F.Engels. Quoted in R.Delmar, op.cit. P.275.
16. K.Marx, Capital, Vol.1, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1976. P. 520-21.
17. This point links to the discussion on the sexual division of labour in the GDR in chapters 6 & 7.
18. F.Engels. op.cit. P. 145. My emphasis.
19. F.Engels. Quoted in K.Marx, F.Engels & V.Lenin, über die Frau und die Familie. Verlag für die Frau, Leipzig, 1976. P 154.
20. H.Scott, Women and Socialism: Experiences from Eastern Europe. Allison & Busby, London, 1976. P. 42.
21. M.Mackintosh, "Reproduction and Patriarchy." In Capital and Class No.2, 1977. Pp.119-127.
22. M.Barrett, "Marxism Feminism and the Work of Karl Marx." In B.Mathews(ed), Marx:100 Years On. Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1983.
23. K.Marx, Capital. Vol.1. op.cit. P.283.
24. A.Schmidt, The Concept of Nature in Marx. NLB, London, 1971. P98.
25. Of course in their time it is conceivable that women were always either pregnant, giving birth or suckling.
26. K.Marx, Capital. Vol. 1. op.cit. P.471.
27. A.Bebel, op.cit. P. 114. My emphasis.
28. Ibid. P.121. My emphasis.
29. Ibid.
30. V.Lenin "A Great Beginning". In V.Lenin, On the Emancipation of Women. Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977. P.65-66.
31. A.Kollontai, "Women and Revolution." In A.Holt, Selected Writings. Allison & Busby, London, 1977. P.138.

32. K.Honeycutt, "Clara Zetkin: A Socialist Approach to the Problem of Women's Oppression." In Feminist Studies, Vol.2. No.2. P.135.
33. V.Lenin, "The Task of the Working Women's Movement in the Soviet Republic, 1919." In V.Lenin, On the Emancipation of Women, op.cit. P.72.
34. Ibid. P.71.
35. A.Kollontai, "The Labour of Women in the Revolution of the Economy." In A.Holt, op.cit. P.144.
36. C.Zetkin, quoted in K.Honeycutt, op.cit. P.166.
37. A.Hitler, Mein Kampf, translated by J.Murphy. Hutchinson, London, 1939. P.350
38. V.Lenin, op.cit. P. 72.
39. Ibid, P.73. My emphasis.
40. V.Lenin, "To the Working Woman." In V.Lenin, On the Emancipation of Women, op.cit. P.80-81.
41. V.Lenin. In Marx, Engels, Lenin, über die Frau und die Familie, op.cit. P.136. My emphasis.
42. F.Engels, op.cit. P.144.
43. K.Marx, "Principles of Communism." In Marx & Engels, Collected Works, Vol.6. Lawrence & Wishart, London. P. 354.
44. F.Engels, "Speeches in Eberfeld." In Marx & Engels, Collected Works, Vol. 4. P. 253.
45. F.Engels, "Landscapes." In Marx & Engels, Collected Works Vol.2. P. 101.
46. A.Bebel, op.cit. P. 210.
47. Ibid, P. 232.
48. "Die Erziehung muß ferner für beide Geschlechter gleich und gemeinsam sein. Die Trennung derselben rechtfertigt sich nur in den Fällen, wo die Verschiedenheit des Geschlechts sie zur Absoluten Notwendigkeit macht. In dieser Art Erziehung sind uns bereits die vereinigten Staaten weit voraus. Dort ist die Erziehung der beiden Geschlechter von der Primärschule bis zu den Universitäten eine

gemeinsame. Nicht nur der Unterricht, sondern auch die Lehrmittel sind unentgeltlich, einschliesslich der Gegenstände für die Handarbeit und den Kochunterricht, für den Unterricht in der Chemie und Physik, und die Gegenstände, die der Schüler am Experimentier- und Arbeitstisch nötig hat." A.Bebel, Die Frau und der Sozialismus, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1979. P.365.

49. M.S.Klein, The Challenge of Communist Education, Columbia University Press, N.Y., 1980. P.23-26.
50. M.Mathews, The Marxist Theory of Schooling, Harvester Press, Brighton, 1980. P.78.
51. Ibid, P.83.
52. K.Marx, quoted in H.Kuhrig et al, Zur gesellschaftlichen Stellung der Frau in der DDR, Verlag für die Frau, Leipzig, 1978. P.195.
53. A.Bebel, op.cit. P.239.
54. See chapters 6 and 7.
55. Krupskaya., quoted in H.Redl, Soviet Educators on Soviet Education, MacMillan, London, 1964.
56. R.F.Price, Marxism and Education in Russia and China, Croom Helm, London, 1977. P.280.
57. A.S.Makarenko, Problems of Soviet School Education, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1965.
58. U.Bronfenbrenner, Two Worlds of Childhood: The USA and the USSR, Touchstone, Simon & Schuster, N.Y., 1970.

CHAPTER 2

This chapter will firstly examine the development of socialist ideas on women within the SPD. There will then be a section on the bourgeois women's movement, and the conflicts between the two movements will be examined. Thirdly the Third Reich will be looked at as there was a strong ideology concerning the role of women during this period which affected German society deeply. Finally, the development of the education system throughout these periods will be examined. This examination of the legacy confronting the new post-war socialist government of the GDR will facilitate an understanding of the problems faced by them in attempting to effect women's emancipation.

In chapter 1 the traditional Marxist theory concerning the emancipation of women and their role in socialist society were examined. These ideas became the the basis of socialist thinking and practice throughout Europe, and were developed especially by women within the SPD in Germany. There were close links between the SPD and the Bolsheviks, especially through Clara Zetkin in Germany and Lenin and Alesandra Kollontai in Russia. Bebel's book was also extremely influential, its arrival having a big effect on at least one German socialist , Ottilie Baader:

"News came of a wonderful book that...Bebel had written. Although I was not a Social Democrat, I had friends who belonged to the Party. Through them I got the precious work. It was my own fate and that of thousands of my sisters. Neither in the family or in public life had I ever heard of all the pain that women must endure. One ignored her life. Bebel's book courageously broke with the old secretiveness.. I read the book not once but

ten times. Because everything was so new, it took considerable effort to come to grips with Bebel's views. I had to break with so many things that I had previously regarded as correct. "'

The SPD was seen by many women in Germany as the most consistent group when it came to championing women's equality, and this perception sustained the Party's female membership. Several women from diverse social backgrounds and theoretical perspectives emerged as leaders of the female section of the Party and as theoreticians. Clara Zetkin was the most prominent leader, probably the most prolific, and remembered mainly for her editorship (1892-1917) of the SPD's women's paper 'Die Gleichheit' (Equality). She, like Marie Juchacz who later replaced her as leader of the women's section, had become a feminist through her involvement with the socialist movement. Others like Emma Ihrer and Lily Braun had been bourgeois feminists who came to accept that socialism was a pre-condition to the emancipation of women.

The main theoretical debate concerning the woman question within the SPD centred on the relationship of sex oppression to class oppression, although it was never fully analysed in those terms. Marx and Engels, and Bebel, had stated that private property must be abolished and that women must join in the labour process in order to free themselves from economic dependence on men. The nature of women's oppression by men was not analysed further. The primacy given to the economic sphere resulted in the dismissal by socialists of many of the demands from the women's section of the SPD as being diversions from the class struggle. This did not come just from socialist men - Rosa Luxemburg, a prominent member of the SPD, "regarded her sex as irrelevant", and argued that women's oppression, being a

direct result of capitalism, would disappear in a socialist society. All energies should therefore be directed towards promoting the revolution.²

These attitudes had a deep effect both on the feminists involved in the SPD themselves and on the theoretical position adopted by the SPD. Even self-identified feminists felt a tremendous pressure to conform to traditional Marxism:

*"We are in the first place Party members, secondly economists, and finally, if at all, feminists."*³

However, feminists within the SPD were conscious of themselves as women, and of their double oppression. They developed Engels' argument further by stating that legal equality with men was necessary even within capitalism in order to develop women's political consciousness. This would occur through their participation primarily in the production process, but also in the spheres of politics and education, spheres denied them at this time in Germany. The conflicts and contradictions both between and within them has prompted Quataert to call them "reluctant feminists"⁴: any attempt by them to struggle outside the economic sphere might cause their Marxism to be challenged, but as women they felt their oppression in all spheres. The consequences of this were far-reaching, as Quataert says:

"To a certain extent socialist feminists were victims of their Marxist ideology that posited the inevitable evolution of the family to a higher moral unit based on full equality between husband and wife, an evolution that was to begin first in working class homes. Since such familiar equality was seen as the guaranteed by-product of emerging economic transformations, socialist ideology

*Quataert's Thesis
and some
reluctant feminists
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*interfered with a thorough critique of actual family life in the working class."*⁵

Given the theoretical position that gave primacy to the economic revolution, there was confusion as to what could and should be achieved under capitalism. The issue was rarely approached in terms of the oppression of women by men, and the contradictions with which socialist feminists struggled centred largely around sexuality and sexual relationships. An illustrative debate was that over the 'Gebärstreik' (birth strike) in pre-1914 Germany. The falling birthrate had alarmed the militaristic government who consequently tried to prevent the sale and use of contraceptives. The tactic suggested by feminists of a 'Gebärstreik' precipitated a bitter debate within the SPD. On the one hand, some socialist feminists saw birth control as easing the burden on working class women and of allowing increased political mobilisation among them. It was also a way of depriving the German military of future soldiers. On the other hand, Luxemburg and Zetkin pointed out that the number of future revolutionaries as well as soldiers would be reduced. They also rejected the neo-Malthusian notion that over-population was responsible for poverty, and feared that the restructuring of the family and the easing of pressure on it that would result from widely available birth control, might reconcile the individual to accepting existing social conditions.⁶ Birth control might help the individual, but it would damage the class. The immediate interests of women must therefore be subordinated to the class struggle. This debate had implications for the socialist feminist ideas on sexual relationships which were a challenge to male dominance within the family. But the debate was always tempered by the overriding fear of causing conflict within the working class. However, the German feminists compromised in the name of class solidarity less than many. For

example, at the 2nd International Conference in 1907 in Stuttgart, Zetkin refused to support the call by the Austrian feminists to drop the demand for female suffrage in the superior interests of male suffrage. However, Zetkin would only go so far in pursuing feminist interests as is brought out in her memoirs of her conversations with Lenin. Lenin had challenged the content of the discussion evenings which socialist feminists were holding throughout Germany, where, he had been told, sexual and marriage problems had precedence.

*"This veiled respect for bourgeois morality is as repugnant to me as rooting about in all that bears on sex. No matter how rebellious and revolutionary it may be made to appear, it is, in the final analysis, thoroughly bourgeois... there is no room for it in the Party, among class-conscious, fighting proletariat."*⁷

Despite Zetkin's reply,

*"I interposed that where private property and bourgeois social order prevail, questions of sex and marriage give rise to manifold problems, conflicts and suffering for women of all classes and strata."*⁸

she had actually already stopped these discussion groups and agreed with Lenin's view that

*"Nowadays, all the thoughts of Communist women, of working women, should be centred on the proletarian revolution, which will lay the foundation, among other things, for the necessary revision of material, and sexual, relations."*⁹

Again we see the triumph of the male view that these issues are diversionary and will solve themselves after the economic revolution.

Another crucial consequence of the position outlined above, which formed the majority socialist feminist view, was that links with the bourgeois feminist movement were never developed. It has been pointed out to the author, however, that Zetkin was friendly with left-wing bourgeois feminists like Minna Cauer and Helene Stöcker, who she persuaded to stay with the bourgeois movement in order to influence it.¹⁰ The arguments put forward for the impossibility, as well as the undesirability, of such an alliance foreshadowed the later debates within the SPD on revisionism. A brief outline of the debate is relevant here as it illustrates the problem of alliances.¹¹ The debate was initiated by Edward Bernstein's challenge to traditional Marxism by his abandonment of the dialectic:

*"I am not of the opinion that the struggle of opposites is the basis of all development. The co-operation of related forces is of great significance as well."*¹²

He also developed an economic argument against Marx based on his perceptions of contemporary German society. He argued empirically that German economic expansion after 1890 was resulting in the improvement of the economic position of all classes and this in turn dampened down class consciousness. He argued, contrary to Marx, that crises were not getting worse and that gaps between periods of prosperity were in fact narrowing. In addition, industry was not becoming concentrated into bigger and fewer consortia and the process of bifurcation of society into two hostile groups was not taking place. The practical outcome of these conclusions was that he advocated the building of alliances with the radical bourgeoisie and stated that socialism would be achieved through the extension of political rights to the proletariat. It was against these ideas that Zetkin so vehemently fought. In terms

of an alliance with the bourgeois women's movement, she argued that class oppression was primary, therefore although women of all classes shared a common oppression by men, due to the nature of capitalism, there could be no collaboration with bourgeois women whose class interests were fundamentally opposed to those of working class women. Not all women within the SPD were agreed, and Zetkin had many conflicts with Lily Braun, who had a wider vision of human liberation and wanted to struggle for the emancipation of women as a sex-group which cut across class lines. This allowed for a more radical questioning of women's relationships with men than Zetkin would pursue, believing as she did that class collaboration was dangerous and would achieve nothing. Her debate with Braun over co-operatives and her insistence that co-operatives would only acquire revolutionary meaning after the proletariat had taken power, against Braun's contention that they were an important building block in the future construction of a socialist society, illustrated a crucial theoretical difference which is still apparent among socialists today. The argument of this thesis is that the acceptance of the primacy of the class struggle to the exclusion of struggles around social and sexual relationships between men and women, had deep ramifications for the building of the new socialist society after 1945.

Another debate which illustrates a certain confusion among socialist feminists at that time was that which ensued after the publication of an article in 'Socialistische Monatshefte' in 1905 by Fischer, a member of the SPD. He posed the question of whether, in a traditional Marxist sense, entry into the labour force would actually free women,

"or is it unnatural, socially unhealthy and harmful for women generally to work, a

*capitalist evil which will and must disappear with the abolition of capitalism. The so-called emancipation of women goes against the nature of women and of mankind as a whole. It is unnatural and therefore impossible to achieve."*¹³

This was obviously contrary to Marxist theory and produced a flood of protest which was printed in 'Die Gleichheit'. As will be seen later, the idea, put in its extreme form by Fischer, that work is somehow unnatural and dangerous to women, has not been totally rejected and has influenced policies of protective legislation.¹⁴ In the ensuing debate in 1905 it was never really made clear how work and motherhood were to be reconciled. Emma Ihrer's response was:

*"To be a mother is as little a life's goal as to be a father. Women can find their life's goal only in general work areas or in solving social tasks that are in the interests of all.. The woman of the future will choose one occupation according to her capabilities and inclinations. She will either be working woman or educator of children or housekeeper, but not all three as today's proletarian women."*¹⁵

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This conflicted with Zetkin's view that socialism would facilitate the reconciliation of women's different roles. Kollontai also attacked the domestic labour of the proletarian woman:

*"The family economic unit involves a) the uneconomic expenditure of products and fuel on the part of small domestic economies, b) unproductive labour, especially by women, in the home - and is therefore in conflict with the interests of the workers' republic."*¹⁶

The solution was deemed to be the socialisation of domestic labour, but as chapter 7 will illustrate, in practice this is no solution at all.

Finally, what was women's position within the SPD and what contradictions did they face in terms of their political role? Although the SPD was by far the most advanced of political parties in Germany in terms of its view on women, and attracted many feminists as members, women were never accepted as equals within it. Socialist feminists fought for equality within the Party, but never fully abandoned holding a traditional view of their own political role. That they saw themselves as subordinate partners in the 'male' revolutionary struggle is illustrated by a comment Zetkin made:

"Rooted and active in the world at large, and in the family, (women) can make the man in the home once again comfortable. From her own rich expansive sphere of activity grows clear understanding for his strivings, struggles, creations. She doesn't stand next to him as an obedient maid, but as a companion in his struggle, as a comrade in his trouble, supportive and receptive."¹⁷

There is little difference between this and Bebel's view of a woman's role:

"To the man who fights in public life against a world of enemies, it is not unimportant what kind of spirit lives in the wife by his side. I could not have found a more loving, a more dedicated, a more self-sacrificing woman. If I achieved what I accomplished, it was primarily possible through her untiring care and assistance."¹⁸

Presumably, not all socialist feminists defined their role in this way, some at least recognised the need to organise separately in order, partly, to discuss their

own role in the revolutionary movement without the self-consciousness and deference that would characterise their participation in mixed meetings. Within the SPD, women were not initially challenged in this desire to organise separately because it was legally impossible for women to belong to political parties. It was also illegal for women to hold political meetings, but Zetkin invented a way of getting around the law after the 1900 Women's Conference. She organised a 'Vertrauenspersonssystem' which was a way of meeting within the law. Meetings were, however, often broken up. In 1908, however, the reform of the Coalition Law legalised women's participation in political organisations, but socialist women sought to preserve their separate group. At the 1908 women's conference in Nuremberg "female separatism" was rejected and women's political groups were directed to join local SPD groups. From this point on women became assimilated into the male Party structure and assumed a traditionally female role. This entry into the SPD proper also coincided with the beginning of the move to the right by the Party, and the women put into positions in the Party, usually by the men, began to push Zetkin out.¹³ The women's conferences became forums for dealing with special matters such as maternity insurance, thus isolating these discussions from men. Women were discouraged from participation in political work and were shunted into social welfare work. On the other hand, the repeal of the law meant that women who had previously been reluctant, because of its semi-legality before 1908, to join the socialist women's movement, now entered the Party. There was not, however, an increase in their influence and power commensurate with the increase in their number.¹⁴ As Quartaert puts it:

"Ironically, the women's full integration into the Party in 1908, a victory for formal

*equality, tended to hamper real equality by reducing the freedom of action for the women's movement."*²¹

And:

*"Integration in 1908 was soon followed by a process of functional segregation that reached its culmination in the Weimar period. Increasingly women came to dominate one sphere of activity, child labour committees and their related municipal welfare tasks."*²²

The situation was the worst of all worlds: socialist women were not allowed legitimate separate organisations where they could have discussed the nature of their oppression by men, and at the same time were excluded from 'real politics', and issues relating to women were ghettoised in women's committees. This was a very similar situation to that which now exists in the GDR.

The shallowness of the SPD's commitment to women's liberation was revealed after 1908 and the socialist feminist movement began to decline. This coincided with an increase in the influence of the revisionist element in the Party and with attacks on Zetkin's editorship of 'Die Gleichheit'. Many thought that the paper's heavy, theoretical articles were impenetrable to ordinary working class women and there was a call for a more popular paper. Deep ideological divisions appeared within the Party which culminated in its splitting during the first world war over whether the SPD should support the war or not. Many socialist feminists, including Zetkin, joined the USPD and later the Communist Party (KPD). The split in the Party had devastating consequences: the socialists were ill-equipped in 1918 to deal with their sudden acquisition of power, and there was no common programme for achieving socialism. The revolutionary socialists left the government and civil war broke out. The ensuing

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revolutionary upheaval, whilst destroying the remnants of the old Wilhelmian Empire, at the same time irretrievably split the socialist movement, a significant factor in the lack of effective socialist opposition to the rise of fascism. During the war, SPD women had temporarily suspended the class struggle and called for co-operation with the bourgeois feminists. They also encouraged women into political administrative positions. The movement had itself also split along pacifist/nationalist lines, and adherents of the former were expelled. The movement lost its radicalism of the early part of the century, and the form that feminism took after the war can partly be attributed to the lack of meaningful alliance, or even discourse, between the socialist and bourgeois feminists at this time.

Two organisations that became important at this time were the 'Bund Deutsche Frauverein' (BDF) dating from 1894 and the 'Bund für Mutterschutz und Sexualreform', or 'Mutterschutz League', founded in 1904. The latter was founded originally to protect the conditions and status of unmarried mothers, and it expounded the ideal of utopian mother colonies which would bring about a change in the nation's 'racial health'. It was in fact very similar to many 'völkisch' utopias being mooted by the Right at this time. The League was radical in its demands for the legal equality of men and women within marriage, with a legal definition of free marriage, for easier divorce and for the availability of contraception.

The BDF expanded rapidly after 1908, but by doing so it incorporated more and more women's groups which were not feminist, and its left/radical ideas became swamped. The BDF rejected the application from the League to affiliate due to their conflicting ideas on the concept of motherhood. For the BDF motherhood was the ultimate fulfilment for women. They believed that the League, by

denying women the opportunity of becoming pregnant, i.e. by advocating contraception, were denying them their femaleness and hence their emancipation. Thus two apparently opposite views on the meaning of women's emancipation emerged, both centring on the concept of motherhood. One was to allow women more choice in their sexual relations and in their decision to become mothers, whilst protecting all women who were mothers. The other emphasised motherhood as the expression of femaleness and thus of women's emancipation. From 1910-1919 Gertrud Baumer was President of the BDF and it became more dogmatic about the nature of women's emancipation.

*"The ultimate aim is not female equality but the equally living, equally full and rich influence of all female values on our culture, a richer flow of specifically female forces into the total of the world's activities. The original aim of the women's movement was to prove through achievement that we had a claim to rights. Our aim now however is only to demand such rights in so far and in such form as they really can release (female) forces and bring about (female) achievements."*²⁴

The two movements did have a common strand, however, which was an increasingly dominant one in the BDF, that of social Darwinism and the idea of racial purity. They both moved to the position that any, and only, racially pure and healthy mothers should be afforded protection. By 1914 almost all branches of the bourgeois women's movement were strongly influenced by social Darwinism. The result was an emphasis on women as mothers rather than claims for equal rights. A strong authoritarianism and moralism also permeated the movement, as seen for example in proposals that alcoholics be sterilised.

These significant changes in the bourgeois women's movement were remarked on by 'Die Gleichheit' in October 1910:

*"In the German feminist movement internal changes are taking place. It is adopting a policy of uniting the majority of active feminists of various persuasions in a centrist policy that more than ever isolates the extreme left without losing contact with the extreme right. It is easy to see that these changes are symptomatic of the process of change which is taking place in the German bourgeoisie as a whole."*²⁵

Another factor reinforcing the rightward drift of the movement was the anti-feminist movement. Feminists were accused of destroying the family, being responsible for the decline in the birthrate, and being unpatriotic. The latter argument involved linking feminism with Jewry. In fact, the feminist movement was becoming increasingly right-wing and anti-semitic, and in defending itself by claiming an equal concern with these issues, they were supporting the anti-feminist views and reinforcing their rightward drift.

After the war, when women were enfranchised, the SPD women were disappointed with their role in the new society. Marie Juchacz, the SPD women's leader, said:

*"The bourgeois women's movement was much better equipped to do such (social and community) work, for their average educational background was much higher than ours and their material means were more abundant. For us socialists, this recognition was shattering."*²⁶

Now that notions of bourgeois equality were allowing women to participate in society the inadequacies of the SPD's earlier position became apparent. In a sense,

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Zetkins' fears that, on gaining equality, bourgeois women would merely take their position within the class structure with little regard for working class women, had been justified. On the other hand, the lack of attention paid by socialist feminists to questions of political and social equality under capitalism, was a factor in their inability to participate. Had there been an earlier feminist alliance a different pattern may have emerged. As it was, socialist feminists were politically impotent, and the bourgeois feminist movement became dominant. After the war the BDF drew up a programme which reflected their move towards a völkisch, nationalistic philosophy. They also believed that women should not compete with men on equal terms in the professions, on the contrary,

*"The competition of the sexes must be overcome through an appropriate social division of labour, within which men and women assume tasks appropriate to their nature."*²⁷

By the mid 1920's the Right was beginning to penetrate the BDF leadership. Many BDF leaders were active in the German Democratic Party (DDP), the German People's Party (DVP) or the German National People's Party (DNVP). There were radical feminists within and outside the socialist parties who were demanding real equality for women, but they tended to be isolated and their ideas dismissed as unpatriotic. Meanwhile, during the 1920's, there was an increasingly violent political struggle taking place between the divided socialist movement and the National Socialists.

As in Britain, the post-first world war government in Germany was committed to giving women some degree of legal equality, including the vote. The Constitution explicitly guaranteed female equality in some areas. Article 119 declared that "marriage rests on the

equality of rights of both sexes", but this was an empty phrase as long as no amendments were made to the Civil Code of Marriage. Article 128 opened all offices in the Civil Service to women, but remained a dead letter as the hierarchy was dominated by conservative men from Imperial days who were not sympathetic to the idea of women's equality. Article 109 declared that "men and women have basically the same rights and duties". The word "basic" made this difficult to interpret.²³ Indicative of the underlying attitudes of the Weimar Republic was the fact that even up until 1932 the Criminal Code prohibited contraceptive devices, and abortion carried heavy prison sentences. The piecemeal tokenism of the Weimar Republic lacked the theoretical base and genuine commitment to women's equality which characterised the post 1945 programme in the GDR.

The enfranchisement of women in 1919 meant that all the political parties had to attract women voters. The socialist parties vied with each other in this task, although they never really abandoned the maxim that women's liberation would come after the revolution, whatever form that took. The KPD explicitly maintained their idea of the class struggle, but in the political reality of the aftermath of the failed revolution, they were forced to display a concern about women's conditions as they were under capitalism. The communists maintained, to a degree, their criticism of the institution of the family, whilst most socialists attacked capitalism for destroying the family. The KPD also defended the principle of economic independence for women which other socialists abandoned in the face of the depression.

The non-socialist parties had a distinct advantage in recruiting women in that they could capitalise on women's self-image, as housewives and mothers, which was being strengthened during demobilisation. The ethos of

'Kinder, Küche, Kirche' was given high status, and professional women in education and social work were also encouraged to stay at home. The economic situation was the main factor in the development of this ethos. The war had brought thousands of women into the labour force. Demobilisation and economic depression after the war prompted the government to force the dismissal, initially, of all these women, who were mainly in the armaments industries. This was followed by the dismissal of as many women as possible. Decrees were issued in March 1919 and January 1920 which gave the following order of priority to dismissal: first to go were women whose husbands had a job, secondly single women and girls, thirdly women and girls who only had one or two people to provide for, and finally all other women and girls. The percentage of women in paid employment returned rapidly to the March 1914 level. The KPD was the only Party which voted against these decrees, and remained the only Party throughout the Weimar period which encouraged the economic independence of women in the face of a strengthening of the ideology of women's traditional role. Even in those traditionally female areas of the economy where women kept their jobs, they did not have equality in terms of status or wages. For example, a court decision in 1922 put women teachers on a salary scale below that of men because, it was argued, male teachers were contributing to the material restoration of Germany by training workmen, whereas the women were only making housewives. In 1932 the BDF itself agreed with the policy of dismissing women workers in order to reduce unemployment amongst 'heads of families'.

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The main tenet of National Socialist ideology on women at this time was a sexual apartheid. Within their own sphere women played an essential role for the state, but

this role included only very limited participation in the economic and political spheres:

*"If we say that the world of the men is commitment, his struggle on behalf of the community, we would then perhaps say that the world of the woman is a smaller world. For her world is her husband, her family, her children and her home. But where would the big world be if no-one wanted to look after the small world? How could the big world continue to exist if there was no-one to make the task of caring for the small world the centre of their lives? No, the big world rests upon the small world. The big world cannot survive if the small world is not secure."*³¹

This is an example of the familiar theme 'the woman behind the man' and has echoes of what SPD women and Bebel had been saying. The development of different spheres of operation for women included separate political organisations, which had no power, and separate education. An apparent contradiction was raised by the belief that girls should be taught by women, women treated by female doctors etc., which meant that there had to be room for women in the economic, particularly the professional, sphere. In fact the Nazis realised that it was unrealistic to remove women totally from the workforce due to the economic needs of the country and to the fact that there were inevitably women who had to support themselves.³²

The "smaller world" of women was idealised and seen as the real liberator of women, which is reminiscent of some BDF ideas already mentioned. The argument necessitated a rejection of notions of equality, in the sense of 'sameness', and an acceptance of 'natural'

differences which were seen to destine men and women to different roles:

*"The so-called granting of equal rights to women, which Marxism demands, in reality does not grant equal rights but constitutes a deprivation of rights since it draws the woman into an area in which she will necessarily be inferior. It places the woman in situations that cannot strengthen her position viz-a-viz both men and society - but only weaken it."*³³

So what, in Nazi terms, constituted equal rights for women?

*"Equal rights for women means that they experience the esteem that they deserve in the areas for which nature has intended them."*³⁴

It was very quickly made clear after the Nazis gained power that women were to have no political role:

*"There is no place for the political woman in the ideological world of National Socialism. The intellectual attitude of the movement on this score is opposed to the political woman. It refers the woman back to the nature-given sphere of the family and to her tasks as wife and mother."*³⁵

The BDF may have approved of many of the Nazis ideas, but it did not welcome its dissolution in 1933. Many radical feminists were exiled whilst other BDF members joined the official women's group, the Nationalsozialistische Frauenschaft (NSF) and became automatic members of the women's sections of local NSDAP branches. Their role was not political and they had no power. Interestingly, not all Nazi women accepted their ascribed role, and they called for an extension of women's role within the Nazi state. Their argument was

based on National Socialist principles and, surprisingly, on Bachofen's 'proof' of pre-existing matriarchies. They looked back to the Nordic utopia where, they claimed, there was male/female equality, and argued that foreign, especially Jewish, influences had corrupted this society. They also argued that women, being the chief educators of children, should be treated equally so that their sons did not consider them inferior and disregard them.³⁶ Their ideas were interesting, if hardly influential, and do indicate that there was disagreement even within National Socialism, about the role being ascribed to women.

Policies adopted by the Nazis were designed to protect the family and to increase the birth-rate of the 'racially pure' and enable their healthy development. Policies of eugenic selection and control involved giving equal status to unmarried mothers and increasing maternity benefit. Those intending to marry were given a tax-free loan, the first 25% of which was cancelled on the birth of the first child.³⁷ However, the wife had to give up employment in order to qualify.³⁸ To protect 'hereditarily valuable' children, the government made a great effort to improve maternity and child welfare services. They increased child benefits, raised the training level and status of midwives, provided homes for single mothers etc. In 1939 they awarded three million prolific mothers of good Aryan stock the new 'Honour Cross of the German Mother'. It is interesting to compare some of the rhetoric and policies of National Socialism with those of socialism concerning motherhood. There is, in practical terms, a striking parallel between the German 'Honour Cross' and the 'Order of Glorious Motherhood' introduced in 1944 in the USSR, and instituted later in the GDR, for women who had ten or more children.³⁹ In two societies with seemingly

opposing philosophies, the same measure was being used for similar purposes.

A popular measure by the National Socialists was the Marriage Law of 1938 whereby either spouse could be granted a divorce if the other refused to have children or was infertile. The real aim was again to increase the birth-rate. In 1939 there were 62,000 divorces. As Leila Rupp points out, the family, rather than being strengthened, was being threatened:

"The demands of population policy eventually proved detrimental to the family, since they led to a liberalisation of the divorce law and the acceptance or encouragement of illegitimate children."⁴⁰

The authority of the family was undermined in another way also:

"The authoritarian state took from the family many of its functions and challenged its integrity by encouraging children to report any treasonous sentiments expressed by their parents."⁴¹

The birth-rate did rise in Germany in the 1930's but not to the extent hoped for, and the trend towards having smaller and later families continued due to factors such as increased knowledge about birth control, economic hardship, an insufficient rate of house-building, and compulsory labour and military service for men introduced in 1935/6.

In the economic sphere, the proportion of women in regular employment fell markedly between 1928 and 1938. This can be attributed in part to Nazi policies, but Tim Mason warns us against putting too much emphasis on this:

"At the more general level, (the fall) reflects directly upon the inadequacy of the scope, scale and type of women's emancipation

achieved under the Weimar Republic. While it had been generally accepted that the provision of well-paid, responsible and appropriate employment for women was one of the cornerstones of any emancipatory programme, whether liberal-democratic or socialist, the reforms of the 1920's did not in fact reach beyond the sectors of civil rights and welfare provisions. Compounded as they were by the adverse effects of violent economic crises, these failures and omissions meant that no general expectation that women could and should have regular and satisfying work was ever established in Germany before 1933."⁴²

There was a slight increase in women's employment in the white-collar sector, but a decline in women industrial workers. Only 4.8% of women industrial workers were 'skilled'⁴³, and marriage was an escape route from boring, badly paid work.

By 1936 a shortage of labour was being identified, due especially to the militaristic policies of the Third Reich. The Nazis found themselves in a contradictory situation, on the one hand needing more labour power, but not wanting women to enter the labour force. They were to some extent victims of their own propoganda, and the fact that Germany never really developed a war economy contributed to its defeat. Over the war years the propoganda was subtly altered whilst the ideal of motherhood was never lost. Women became the mothers of soldiers, and their courage in sending their sons to war corresponded to their courage in bearing children., Military activities became an extension of their central function as mothers: thus, as workers in munitions factories, women were caring for their sons by making the ammunition they needed at the front. As housewives

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women had important economic functions, and they could turn their traditional voluntary work towards the war effort. As an example of the subtle change in propaganda, here is what Ruth Hilderbrand, an NSPAD member, said at the time:

"As mother of her family she meets the demand of the nation, as housewife she acts according to the laws of the national economic order, as employed woman she joins in the overall plan of the national household...her life, like that of the men, is in its major outlines determined by the law that everything must be subordinated to the profit of the people."⁴⁴

A woman's place was thus redefined as where she was needed, and participation in 'unwomanly work' regarded as a sacrifice to the nation. The propaganda was not altogether successful: according to an authoritative estimate at the time, by February 1940 armament plants alone were short of 250,000 workers.⁴⁵ Plans were reluctantly discussed for some form of conscription for women, but in June 1940 Göring announced he would sign no decree to that effect. In 1941 the demand for female conscription was rejected twice by Hitler, although there was by no means agreement within the Nazi Party either with Hitler's stubborn refusal to contemplate the idea that Germany might lose the war or with his inability to adapt his views on women's role. Only in January 1943 when the Red Army moved onto the offensive did he give way, and the limited measure of female conscription which he introduced proved as unpopular as he had feared. To fill the gap in the workforce, foreign workers and prisoners of war were put to work in the factories and this caused concern to the upholders of racial purity. A pamphlet was published warning women not to have sexual relations with these workers.

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The gap in the workforce left by conscripted males was never filled in Germany and between 1939-44 the increase of women in the workforce was only 15%.⁴⁶

It is difficult to estimate the impact of Nazi propaganda on society's image of women and on their self-image. On the one hand the population drive was not as successful as it might have been, on the other hand neither was the employment drive after 1937. It is also difficult to appreciate why women so readily accepted the roles ascribed to them. It has been noted, and needs re-iterating, that Nazi ideology concerning women was not in marked contrast with previous ideas and was not in opposition to a patriarchal society. There would not, therefore, have been the opposition to this ideology as there would be to that of the post-1945 socialist government.

The ideological campaign was being conducted in all spheres of society and was particularly effective in the schools and youth groups. The development of educational philosophy and of the education system from 1919 through the Weimar period and the Third Reich will be briefly outlined, with particular reference to the education of girls.

The new democratic society of the Weimar Republic needed a new kind of education system to help students understand and meet the demands of that society. A 'Neue Sachlichkeit' (New Realism) would, it was thought, replace the old romanticism, and the catastrophe that had devastated German society would not be repeated. A conscious effort was made to integrate democracy and education, breaking down social divisions and extending equal opportunity to all. The liberal challenge embraced an anti-authoritarianism, and 'free expression' and 'learning through experience' were encouraged.

This liberal movement had two strands, the first based to a large extent on Tönnies' ideas whereby industrial society (Gesellschaft) was rejected in favour of agrarian-based communities (Gemeinschaft).⁴⁷ These ideas found expression in the pioneer schools which had nationalistic tendencies and were concerned with the building of a German 'volk' community. The other liberal strand linked the development of the individual to the objective social ideal. This radical movement's main proponent was Paul Östreicher, founder of the League of Radical School Reformers in 1919. He developed the idea of the 'Productionsschule' whereby school life would be linked to working life, an idea based to some extent on the Marxist concept of polytechnical education.

These two strands can to some extent be found underlying Article 148 of the Federal Constitution of 1919:

*"In all schools, effort shall be made to develop moral education, public mindedness and personal and vocational efficiency in the spirit of the German national character and of international conciliation. Civic training and activity instruction shall be part of the curricula of the school."*⁴⁸

To aid 'international conciliation' all old history books were forbidden. Standard uniformity was replaced by freedom and variety, and experiments were encouraged. Many educational experiments did take place, some in terms of democratising schools, some in terms of developing community schools (Gemeinschaftsschule), folk colleges (Volkshochschule) and the Liezt country schools (Landerziehungsschule). These experiments gave space to the development of nationalistic and volkisch, as well as democratic and progressive, ideas.

The introduction of universal compulsory education up to age 14 brought many more girls than boys into the

system due to their previous exclusion. Equality of opportunity did not entail the same education for boys and girls. Co-education did not exist except in some community schools, and later in some public sector schools due to economic pressures. Similarly, there was not a common curriculum for boys and girls. Whilst there were different types of secondary school for boys, there was only one type for girls. In both elementary and secondary schools, girls did one to two hours a week less of arithmetic and of science than boys. They did sewing and cooking whilst boys did manual training, and could stay on for an extra year to study in the 'Hausfrauenklasse' (housewife class). The different curriculum and different type of school made it difficult for girls to find a route to university, the traditional one being through the 'Gymnasium' which existed primarily for boys.

There were some extremely radical experiments during the Weimar period, and certainly girls' educational opportunity was greatly increased. The underlying notion that girls should receive a different education from boys to suit their naturally different role in life was, however, never challenged, except by some Communist Party feminists.

1933 saw the beginning of the systematic institutionalisation of National Socialist ideology through the schools and youth movements. The Nazis recognised the crucial role of the schools in transmitting the ideology of the State, and rapidly changed the structures in order to achieve this most effectively. The task of dismantling the Nazi's system was a crucial one in the period following the end of the war.

The most important aspects to consider of the education system during the Third Reich are the aims of Nazi education, the school structure, the curriculum and

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textbooks, and the training and appointment of teachers. Many of the educational ideas which were put into practice had been laid out in Hitler's 'Mein Kampf'. Anti-intellectualism, anti-individualism and nationalism are key concepts. Ideas on women's role, as on race, emerge clearly:

"The people's state will have to direct the education of girls just as that of boys and according to the same fundamental principles. Here again special importance must be given to physical training and only after that must the importance of spiritual and mental training be taken into account. In the education of the girl, the final goal always to be kept in mind is that she is one day to be a mother." 45

Single-sex schools and a differentiated curriculum ensured the correct education for girls, that is one that prepared them for a non-economic role in the future. At first these educational policies were popular, especially among male workers because of the depression.

In 1938 the school system was reorganised to include three types of secondary school, the 'Deutsche Oberschule', attended by 83.3% of boys, the 'Aufbauschule' which took 5.3% of boys, and the 'Gymnasium' with 11% of boys. The education system for girls mirrored that for boys, in separate schools, but it was virtually impossible for girls to go to a Gymnasium. Jewish children also had their own separate schools as they were not allowed to go to same schools as 'Aryans'. Jewish schools had no state funding. Girls in secondary schools did no Latin, which was necessary to gain entrance to most universities, and in the last three years of schooling they could choose only between a Language and a Homecraft stream, both of which

involved only a limited amount of Maths and Science. These factors and the inability of girls to study at a Gymnasium closed almost every route to university to girls.

In terms of the curriculum, there was a tremendous emphasis on physical education, with a parallel rapid decline in academic standards. There was a great emphasis on history, retold from a National Socialist perspective, concentrating on militarism and the racial question. School readers all dealt with camp life, military training, boys growing up to be soldiers and girls to look after soldiers. All mathematics had an overtly political content, e.g. in arithmetic estimating the loss of territory after the Versailles Treaty.⁵⁰ Drawing lessons became opportunities for working out aerial defence, e.g. bomb shelters. Non-aryans were used as live models in lessons on social and physical characteristics, until they had to go to separate schools. The rigid control over textbooks culminated in 1941 when textbook publication was limited to the German School Press which was owned by the official Party press.

The 'Hitler Jugend' (Hitler youth) and 'Bund Deutsche Mädel' (League of German Girls) complemented the school system and carried ideological training into everyday life. The entire German youth was to be organised into these movements, but membership was not compulsory until 1939. The collective spirit of the groups was reminiscent of Makarenko's 'communities' which were an expression of the Soviet socialist idea of collectivity.⁵¹ But the direction was different: the Hitler Jugend energetically undermined the authority and effectiveness of teachers, especially older ones. Hitler Jugend members spent most evenings in Party work and this, coupled with their anti-intellectualism, led to a rapid academic decline. The failure rate in universities

connected to what purpose?

by the outbreak of the war was staggering, e.g. 40-50% in Medicine.⁵² The tactics of Hitler Jugend members were extremely effective. According to Daniel Horn,

*"Their rebellion kept the schools in perpetual turmoil, disrupted the educational process, undermined the status and prestige of the teachers and brought about such a catastrophic decline in academic quality that it placed Germany in jeopardy of losing its technical and industrial pre-eminence."*⁵³

subvert
Revolution!

Finally, the teaching profession was fundamentally changed during the Third Reich. Teachers found themselves in a contradictory situation under National Socialism. On the one hand their status was enhanced due to the recognition by the state of the importance of the ideological side to their job. On the other hand, their authority was being challenged and their autonomy undermined. They were forced to change their teaching methods and content by pressure from the Party above and from the Hitler Jugend below. Many were forced to, or chose to, leave. For others teaching was a means of rising to a position of authority within the Party, it having been estimated that nearly 30% of the political leaders of Nazi Germany came from the teaching profession, particularly the elementary sector.⁵⁴ The National Socialist Teachers League, which was affiliated to the Party, attracted about 40% of teachers before 1933. By 1936 it claimed the membership of 97% of all teachers. Prospective teachers were given a sound ideological training and, after 1937, had to spend six months in labour service, usually followed by a period in the armed services (except, presumably, for women) before beginning any academic training. At the end of the academic course an examination in fundamental politico-ideological questions replaced the traditional philosophy exam.

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Despite Nazi efforts there was a decline in the supply of teachers. In 1938/9 there was a fall of 2,500 in the numbers of elementary teaching staff. In 1941 special 'Lehrerbildungsanstalten' (teacher training schools) were set up where pupils were taken directly from elementary schools to start on their path to the teaching profession.

By the 1940's there were teachers qualifying who had had most of their institutional education and training under National Socialism, and even the older teachers were so closely vetted and scrutinized in their day to day practice that there was little chance of breaking out of the ideological mould of National Socialism. This situation posed enormous problems for the new post-war governments, along with the more general problems of ideological indoctrination and poor academic standards.

The universities did not maintain any autonomy either. The dismissal of 'undesirable' and non-Aryan university teachers started after the passing of a law on April 7th 1933. By 1938, according to the 'Frankfurter Zeitung', 33% of the total teaching staffs of all the universities had been retired or 'transferred'.⁵⁵ It should be pointed out that the universities had always been reactionary institutions, and had ascribed, even during the Weimar period, to the sentiments of the Prussian Law of 1899 which stated that:

"The deliberate promotion of social democratic aims is inconsistent with holding a position in a royal university."⁵⁶

Another decree in 1933 limited the number of students to be admitted the following year to about 75% of the previous session, with women not comprising more than 10% of the total.⁵⁷ However, applications were down anyway due to the opening up of alternatives in employment and to the Nazi attitude to academic study.

All university teachers and students had to belong to the National Socialist Unions.

In this chapter, certain features of the legacy inherited by the post-war government have been highlighted. To briefly sum up, the following points should be reiterated:

1. Socialist feminists in Germany at the beginning of the century systematically discussed and developed Marxist ideas on women's role in society, but their analysis was constrained by their belief in the primacy of the class struggle.
2. There was never an effective alliance between the socialist feminist and the bourgeois women's movements. When the socialist movement split, socialist feminists became ineffective. The bourgeois women's movement, unaffected by socialist feminist ideas, moved to the right and became the dominant influence.
3. The gains for women under the Weimar Republic were to some extent illusory and did not represent a fundamental change in ideology about women's role. An indication of this was the kind of education girls received.
4. Nazi ideology on women's role was based on a notion of sexual apartheid where women's sphere of operation was separate from and inferior to that of men. Women did however have some prestige in their role as mothers.

The all-pervasive nature of Nazi ideology and the total control of the education system created a situation which was to pose tremendous problems for democratic and socialist forces after the war. It is to this period, and the means by which the new socialist government tackled the problems, that the thesis now turns.

Table 1

Proportion of Women in the SPD and Number of Women
Delegates at National Conferences, 1909-1913.

Date	% female in SPD	% female delegates
1909	9.8	5.8
1910	11.5	6.4
1911	12.9	10.6
1912	13.4	8.6
1913	14.4	7.5

Notes to Chapter 2.

1. O.Baader, quoted in J.H.Quataert, "Unequal Partners in an Uneasy Alliance: Women and the Working Class in Imperial Germany." In M.Boxer & J.Quataert, Socialist Women: European Socialist Feminism in the 19th and early 20th Centuries. Elsevier N. Holland, N.Y., 1978. P. 120.
2. Quoted, Ibid, P.122
3. Gertrud Hanna, quoted in J.H.Quataert, Reluctant Feminists in German Social Democracy 1885-1917. Princeton U.P., Princeton, 1979. P.11.
4. Ibid.
5. J.H.Quataert, "Unequal Partners in an Uneasy Alliance," op.cit. P.137.
6. This argument also occurs in the debate over Revisionism which is looked at later in this chapter.
7. V.Lenin in discussion with Clara Zetkin. C.Zetkin, "My Memorandum Book." In V.Lenin, On the Emancipation of Women. op.cit. P.101.
8. C.Zetkin. Ibid. P.102.
9. V.Lenin. Ibid.P.103.
10. This point was made by Dr.E.Recklies in discussion at the Pädagogische Hochschule in Leipzig. He is a member of the only research group in the GDR looking at the history of the feminist movement in Germany.
11. A full examination of the debate is undertaken by Peter Gay, The Dilemma of Democratic Socialism. Columbia U.P., N.Y., 1952.
12. E.Bernstein, quoted Ibid, P. 137.
13. Fischer, quoted in W.Thönnessen, The Emancipation of Women: The Rise and Decline of the Women's Movement in German Social Democracy 1863-1933. Pluto Press, London, 1973.
14. See chapter 4.

15. J.H.Quataert, Reluctant Feminists..., op.cit. P.102.
16. A.Kollontai, "Thesis on Communist Morality in the sphere of Marital Relations." In A.Holt, op.cit. P.226.
17. C.Zetkin, quoted in J.H.Quataert, Reluctant Feminists..., op.cit.P.92. My emphasis.
18. A.Bebel, "Aus Meinem Leben." Quoted in J.H.Quataert, Reluctant Feminists..., op.cit. P.158.
19. Dr. E. Recklies of Leipzig also made this point.
20. See Table 1 Page 75. From: K.Honeycutt, "Socialism and Feminism in Imperial Germany", Signs, Vol.5, No.1.P.36
21. J.H.Quataert, Reluctant Feminists... op.cit. P.159.
22. Ibid, P.149.
23. "völkisch" meaning "national", under the National Socialists it came to mean 'pure German, anti-semitic.'
24. R.J.Evans, op.cit. P. 155.
25. Ibid. P.170.
26. W.Thönnessen, op.cit. P.86.
27. From the programme of the BDF 1919. See R.Evans, op.cit.P.237.
28. For a fuller discussion of this see R.J.Evans, The Feminist Movement in Germany 1894-1933. Sage Publications Inc., Beverley Hills, 1976.
29. "Children, Kitchen, Church." This defined the sphere for women.
30. R.Bridenthal & C.Koonz, "Beyond Kinde, Küche, Kirche: Weimar Women in Politics and Work." In B.Carroll, Liberating Women's History. University of Illinois Press, Champaign, 1978.
31. A.Hitler. Speech to the national Socialist Women's Organisation in Nuremberg in 1934. Quoted in T.Mason, "Women in Germany 1925-40", History Workshop Journal, Vols.1 & 2 1976.

32. Throughout the inter-war period there were roughly 2 million more women than men in the population. There were 2.8 million widows, and single women accounted for two-thirds of single-person households. Figures based on 1925 census, in T.Mason, op.cit. P.9.
33. A.Hitler. Speech to the National Socialist Women's Conference 1935. Quoted in G.L.Mosse, Nazi Culture, W.H. Allen, London, 1966
34. A.Hitler, quoted in R.J.Evans, op.cit. P.259. 7
35. E.Huber, "Das ist Sozialismus" 1933. Quoted in G.L.Mosse, op.cit. P.47.
36. C.Kirkpatrick, Nazi Germany, its Women and Family, Boba Merrill, N.Y., 1938.
37. Similar legislation was passed by the new socialist government of the GDR. See chapter 4.
38. In 1937 when this condition was revoked due to the increasing labour shortage, there was a sharp rise in the number of applications, perhaps indicating a previous reluctance on the part of women to give up work, either for personal or for economic reasons.
39. See chapter 7.
40. L.Rupp, Mobilising Women for War, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1978. P.38.
41. Ibid. P.39.
42. T.Mason, op.cit. P.7.
43. The term 'skilled' as used in a male-dominated society has tended to be appropriated to describe male jobs.
44. L.Rupp, op.cit. P.118.
45. T.Mason, op.cit.
46. L.Rupp, op.cit.
47. F.Tönnies, Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft, Leipzig, 1887.
48. Quoted in I.Kandel, Comparative Education, Greenwood Press, Westport, 1970.
49. A.Hitler, Mein Kampf, op.cit P.360

50. The peace treaty signed after the first world war in Paris in 1919.
51. See chapter 1.
52. D.Horn, "The Hitler Youth and Educational Decline in the Third Reich", History of Education Quarterley, Vol. 16 1976.
53. Ibid. P.426
54. R.Samuel & R.Hinton-Thomas, Education and Society in Modern Germany. RKP, London, 1949.
55. Ibid.
56. D.Childs, East Germany. Ernest Benn, London, 1969. Chapter 8.
57. Before the Nazis took over the government, 17,000 of the 95,000 students had been women.

CHAPTER 3

The Soviet Red Army entered Berlin in 1945. Germany was divided up to be administered by the four victorious powers. Berlin, the capital and situated in the Soviet zone, was similarly divided into four zones. There was never any trust between the 'socialist' Soviet Union and its 'capitalist' allies, and it was not long before the three Western powers joined together to create a Western bloc wherein they acted together in their ideological unity. This split with the Soviet Union, which eventually led to the physical division of Germany, had many consequences, some of which will be mentioned as they pertain to the problems facing the administration in the Soviet zone.

The establishment of a socialist regime in the eastern sector of Germany did not follow a Marxist pattern. There had been no popular socialist revolution to overthrow the old regime. Socialism was being imposed on the working class as well as on the bourgeoisie, but it would be mistaken to believe that there was no internal support for socialism. Before 1933 some of the key centres of the German labour movement had been in the area that became the Soviet zone: Eisenach, Gotha, Berlin and Halle. In 1933 40% of KPD and 60% of SPD membership lived in this zone, and there was a high recruitment rate to these Parties in 1945. The Soviet authorities managed to mobilise the surviving socialist movement on which to build popular support. Before passing judgement on the imposition of a system by an outside power, it must also be remembered that Germany was the defeated nation, and the USSR the victor of what had been an extremely costly and bitter war for them.

What problems did the new society face? These can be examined in terms of the economic problems, the political problems and the social and cultural problems.

The territory that was occupied by the Soviet Military Administration (SMA), and which was later to become the GDR, had an area of 108,178 square kilometers and consisted in 1945 of five 'Länder' (provinces): Mecklenberg, Brandenburg, Saxony-Anhalt, Thuringen and Greater Berlin.² These five provinces were disbanded on 23rd July 1952 and replaced by fourteen 'Verwaltungsbezirke' (counties): Rostock, Schwerin, Neubrandenburg, Magdeburg, Potsdam, Frankfurt/Oder, Cottbus, Leipzig, Halle, Erfurt, Gera, Suhl, Chemnitz and Dresden.³ The Soviet zone consisted of 30% of the total area and 29% of the total population of modern Germany. The population of this area, having been 16.6 million in 1938, reached its peak in 1948 with over 19 million. It then declined, due to low reproduction rates and the emigration of people to the West, to 17 million, or 24% of the total of Germany, in 1967.⁴ Due to the war there was a great imbalance in the male/female ratio.⁵ With the annihilation of a large proportion of the male workforce and the political unacceptability of other male workers, women were desperately needed in the workforce.

The Soviet zone had been an important industrial area, with 28.9% of total German industrial output in 1936,⁶ but the area was very poor in raw materials, with 2% of hard coal, 8% of pig-iron and 9% of finished steel produced there.⁷ The area became very dependent on imported raw materials from the other zones of Germany and from Poland. The decrease in the capital assets⁸ of industry as a whole expressed as a loss ratio in percentage of the 1939 stock, has been calculated by the 'Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung' (German Institute of Economic Research) in West Germany.⁹

Table 1

	Western zone	Soviet zone
Loss through war damage:	21	15
Loss through dismantling:	12	26
Total loss:	33	41

The Institute points out that the loss of productive capacities is higher than that of capital assets through dismantling, as the loss of one machine can cripple a whole factory. It is clear from the figures that the Soviet Union, itself poor and devastated by war, contributed greatly to the economic problems of their zone of occupation by dismantling its industry in order to rebuild its own. Also to be taken into account in any comparison with the difficulties faced by the Western zones is the \$4 billion Marshall aid given the latter between 1945-55.¹⁰ The devastation of industry, the lack of natural resources and the shortage of labour power were the main economic problems facing the Soviet zone.

Politically, the situation in 1945 was understandably confused. It has been noted that there had been a strong radical tradition in this part of Germany, but it had been virtually wiped out by the Nazi regime. By 1933 the working class movement was divided and too weak to effectively combat Nazism.¹¹ In 1932 the National Socialists gained 11.7 million votes. The SPD had 7.3 million and the KPD 5.9 million, enough, if united, to defeat the Nazis. However, there was no unity. The Communists, increasingly subject to Soviet control and direction, had led an attack on the SPD, calling it the party of social fascists and the chief enemy to be fought. This policy did not change until 1935 when Popular Front tactics were developed to defeat fascism, by this time an impossible task. This experience had a positive effect after the war in the Parties'

determination not to repeat these mistakes, and unification was called for. Another factor in the desire for co-operation was the shared experiences of KPD and SPD members in exile or in concentration camps during the Third Reich. However, many able socialists and communists had died during this period, and there was the problem now of how to deal with Nazi administrators and politicians whose knowledge and skills would be invaluable to building the new state, but whose politics were inadmissible. Another political problem was the question of unity with the rest of Germany. Soviet zone socialists and communists wanted to unite with their comrades in the Western zones to build a united Germany, but this was blocked by Western occupying forces, particularly the British, and by the Western SPD leader Schumacher who did not trust the Soviets.

The social and cultural legacy left by the Third Reich was antithetical to socialist principles. The task of the socialists was to dismantle Nazi structures and destroy Nazi ideology. This was done largely through the education system. The enormous task of restructuring the education system was carried out with greater vigour and in more depth than in the Western zones. After decree No. 40 given by the SMA on 25th August 1945, almost all schools in the Soviet zone could be re-opened on 1st October 1945, only five months after the entry of the Red Army into Berlin. Apart from the fact that about one quarter of all school buildings had been virtually destroyed, there was the problem of inheriting a teaching staff trained under Nazism. The shortage of teachers was already causing problems before the war, and of the 39,348 teachers in the schools in the Soviet zone in 1945, 28,179 had been members of the Nazi Party. Nazi teaching materials could not be used either.

What were the immediate solutions to these problems put forward by the SMA? The economic problems were primarily tackled by transforming the economy in accordance with socialist principles. The main tasks were to vest political and economic power in the KPD, structure a planned economy with a centralised administration, and transfer the ownership of the means of production. In accordance with these principles, the Land Reform of September 1945 enabled large estates and estates owned by former Nazis to be appropriated by 200,000 'new peasants'. Publicly owned estates (Volkseigene Betriebe or V.E.B) were set up. These were handed over to the GDR authorities in 1953.

The first Five Year Plan of 1951-5 was devoted to reconstruction, and priority was given to the expansion of the fuel and power industries, metallurgical industry, steelworks and rolling mills, mechanical engineering and chemical industry. It has already been noted that there was a labour shortage which necessitated female participation, and these industries were not normally associated with a female workforce. The task therefore was twofold, to persuade women to enter the labour market and to train them for traditionally male jobs. Both were alien to women given their previous experiences, and an appropriate educational programme had to be devised. Given that many women were single parents due to the war, nothing could be started without some childcare facilities. The rapid establishment of nursery schools and crèches fulfilled the dual function of releasing women for work and ensuring that children of pre-school age were brought up in the spirit of the anti-fascist democratic order. The education of girls would need special attention to change their perceptions of their role and to provide the right training for work.¹⁴

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how
the 'captivity'
experience*

In terms of the political problems, the immediate task was that of de-Nazification. The principles for this had been laid down jointly by the four allied powers in Article 6 of the Potsdam Agreement.

*"All members of the Nazi Party who have been more than nominal participants in its activities are to be removed from public and semi-public office and from positions of responsibility in important private undertakings. Such persons shall be replaced by persons who, by their political and moral qualities, are deemed capable of assisting in genuine democratic institutions in Germany."*¹⁵

This was not adhered to to the same extent in each zone, and the SMA was by far the most thorough despite the obvious difficulties they would create for themselves by dismissing such a large proportion of the political and administrative machinery.

In terms of party politics, socialist unity was the order of the day and the KPD called for

*"The creation of an anti-fascist, democratic regime, a parliamentary-democratic Republic with full democratic rights and freedoms for the people."*¹⁶

Order No. 1 of the SMA on the 10th June 1945 allowed the founding of anti-fascist Parties and Unions and on the 14th July 1945 the United Front of anti-fascist democratic Parties, later called the Democratic Block, was set up, consisting of the SPD, KPD, CDU (Christliche Demokratische Union or Christian Democrats) and LDPD (Liberaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands or Liberals).

The SPD and KPD cemented their unity by becoming one party, and on 21st-22nd April 1946 the founding conference of the Sozialistische Einheitspartei

Deutschlands (SED) took place. Western zone Party members were refused travel permits to attend the conference by the Western occupying forces. The Central Committee of the SED was composed of 50/50 ex-SPD and ex-KPD members. The joint chairpersons were Wilhelm Pieck (KPD) and Otto Grotewohl (SPD). Anton Ackermann (KPD) and Otto Meier (SPD) were responsible for Party education and for culture and education respectively. *Alte?* [Eli] Schmidt (KPD) and Käthe Kern (SPD) were responsible for the Women's Secretariat and all work among women.' The resolutions at the conference represented a political compromise: they did not recognise Leninism as such or the leading role of the Soviet Communist Party in the world movement. However the SED changed and by 1948 the theory of the 'German way' had been thrown out and there were organizational changes as well as a recognition of Leninism. In 1948 the membership of the SED was 1,800,0000, 57% of whom were workers, 14% were women and 14% were under 25 years old.

In June 1948, the SMA allowed the formation of two new Parties, the Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NDPD) which aimed to win support among the former lower ranks of the Nazi Party and former army officers, and the Demokratische Bauernpartei Deutschlands (DBD) which aimed to win the farmers and farm workers to socialism. On 30th May 1949 at the third 'Deutsche Volkskongress' in Berlin it was decided to elect a new 'Deutsche Volksrat' with 400 members. At its first meeting in October 1949 under the presidency of Walter Pieck it was comprised of 90 SED members, 45 CDU, 15 NDPD, 15 DBD, 30 FDGB (Freie Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbunde), 10 FDJ (Freie Deutsche Jugend), 10 DFD (Demokratische Frauenbund Deutschlands), 5 VdgB and 10 VVM. This Congress marked the founding of the Deutsche Demokratische Republik (DDR) or German Democratic Republic (GDR). *Spdy!*

Although the GDR is not a one-party state, all parties were and are allied to the National Front, and, moreover, their roles are restricted. For example, only the SED are permitted to organise in the economy, the police and the armed forces. That the new state was to be organised along Leninist principles, which had been 'rejected' by the KPD in 1945, was clear. That it is still on this line emerges in a speech by Honecker given on the 30th anniversary of the founding conference.

Administration!
"In the character of the GDR the working class created and established, in alliance with the farmers, the intelligenzia and the other working population, their political empire. They created the socialist state of workers and farmers as a form of dictatorship of the proletariat. By taking this route, our worker and peasant state was able to function as the main implement for the fulfilment of the socialist establishment." 19

The creation of the SED and the incorporation of the NPDP into GDR politics solved some of the political problems facing the authorities. The question of a united Germany was not, however, solved despite Soviet attempts to do so by seeking quadripartite discussions up until 26th May 1952. On that date the USA, GB and France, together with the West German authorities signed contractual agreements which gave the Western zones independence. The Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) was created. 19

As in the sphere of politics, de-Nazification took place in the educational sphere. Article 7 of the Potsdam Agreement stated:

"German education shall be so controlled as to eliminate Nazi and militarist doctrines and to make possible the successful development of democratic ideas." 20

The first document of the anti-fascist democratic school reform came into effect in the Soviet zone before even the western Allies had reached Berlin. By its decree all Nazi teachers were immediately dismissed whilst those persecuted under the Hitler regime were re-employed. Provisional teachers from the ranks of the working class were put on special training courses. Due to the rigid compliance with the dismissal order, 40,000 new teachers were needed and at the beginning of 1946 eight-month courses were started in all Länder. By 1947 the target had been reached.²¹ This period was understandably one of confusion, and the initial training of teachers produced a further problem in that most teachers had been trained using 'bourgeois' pedagogical methods. In 1950 there was an attempt to rectify this with the 'Decree on the lessons as the basic form of school work, the preparation, organization and carrying out of lessons and the control and education of the pupils.' This failed to effect any changes as it was so restrictive.

In the higher education sectors, when recruiting students the greatest importance was attached to considerations regarding social origin, with the added proviso that high-ranking officers of the Nazi Party were excluded. The policy was to ensure that at least 30% of students were from the working classes, and preparatory classes were started to provide working class school students with the necessary background knowledge.²² 30% was a daunting figure to reach. The figures for 1928 show that at all universities (excluding Giessen) 4.03% of male students and 1.17% of female students were from the 'lower classes', defined as low-grade officials and workers.²³ This, together with the disruption caused by the policies of the Third Reich, left a legacy not easy to transform.

All textbooks and pedagogical literature were withdrawn and the gap was temporarily filled with the help of the SMA who published Soviet classics and translations of pedagogical literature. In the autumn of 1945 the 'Volk und Wissen Verlag' publishing house was created and new textbooks were published. By the end of 1945 4,116,000 schoolbooks had been published.²⁴ History lessons were only resumed in the school year 1946/7 as longer preparatory work was seen as necessary than in other subjects. The SMA used a commission of teachers exiled by the Nazis (set up in February 1945) to work out an education policy using Marxist principles. They were keen that education should be under German control as soon as possible and were effective in mobilizing left-wing political groups and teachers associated with the pre-Nazi Reform movement, which had been particularly strong in this part of Germany. Some of the ideas and traditions outlined in chapter 2 were thus incorporated into the new socialist system.

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In terms of changing women's role in society, the SMA had a huge task on their hands. Combatting male, and female, prejudices, and destroying Nazi ideology were priorities. However, women were surprisingly easily won to democratic ideas, and were able and willing to take over important roles. It was mainly women who were involved in the day to day decisions about education, childcare etc., although Ellie Schmidt was the only woman in the Party leadership at that time. Many of the laws and rules concerning women came directly from the SMA. The immediate task was to get women into the workforce. It was seen as the task of socialist and communist women to effect this change, and various women's organisations were established. The main one was the KPD women's committee, the DFD. The tasks of these committees were stated in the 'Call of the central women's committee of the council of Greater Berlin for

the participation of women in the anti-fascist democratic reconstruction of Germany'²⁵ on the 9th November 1945. It included a call for the active participation of women in economic, political and social life; a full new education of children and youth; the encouragement and protection of women seeking jobs not formerly open to them; the struggle for the protection of women at work against accident and illness and protection for mothers and children.²⁶ Order No. 253 of the SMA established the principle for women of equal pay for equal work.²⁷ Order No. 254 on the 11th November 1947 amalgamated all the existing women's organisations, of which there were about 7,451 with 250,000 members, under the umbrella of the DFD.²⁸ The DFD was seen as a crucial tool in changing the role of women. The 'Decision of the Party's executive of the SED about political guidelines for the German democratic school' stated:

"A special task thereby falls on the DFD, which, above all, must win over mothers for democratic education in schools and orientate their work in the strongest measures towards co-operation with the educational parent advisory board."²⁹

*municipal
mothers*

As already mentioned, economic need and theoretical purity necessitated the entry of women into the labour market. There was a big drive to increase the numbers of women obtaining educational and technical qualifications, paralleled by a huge expansion in pre-school care. Before the autumn 1948, 2,242 women³⁰ were trained in short courses for work in pre-school institutions, and a further 3,802 women were engaged with no training.³¹

The points briefly mentioned in this chapter are an attempt to illustrate the enormous difficulties faced by post-war Germany. The Soviet Union, whilst on the one

hand contributing, as the victorious power, to these difficulties, also set up an efficient and effective administrative and political machine to reconstruct its sector of Germany. It used, as far as possible, socialist forces within Germany and took into consideration the specific nature of German society, using some of its left-wing traditions. Similarly with the education system:

"It would be mistaken to regard the school reforms in the Russian zone as merely an imposition of an alien system, though it does reflect to a certain extent the principles underlying educational organisation in Russia. It may be said to be a development out of many of the best features of the theory and practice of German education in the past, in particular of the 'Einheitsschule' as interpreted by German democrats."

my term
It was within the context of a devastated country with a ~~fascist~~ legacy that a mixture of Soviet socialism and German social democratic traditions were translated into policies and practice, and the measures passed which dealt specifically with women and with the education system are examined in the following chapter.

Notes to chapter 3

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3. P. Reichelt, Deutsche Chronik Bände 1 1945-56. Eurobuch Verlag August Lutzeyer, Berlin, 1970.
4. H.G. Schaffer, Women in the Two Germanies. Pergamon Press, N.Y., 1982, Page 2.
5. See Table 1, chapter 6.
6. D. Childs, op.cit.
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8. Defined as the sum total of buildings and such equipment that has a useful life of over one year, and a value, when new, of over 500 Marks. German Institute for Economic Research. 'Handbook of the Economy of the GDR'. Rowolt Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH, 1979.
9. Ibid. P.1.
10. D. Childs, op. cit.
11. See chapter 2.
12. P. Reichelt. op.cit.
13. K-H. Günther & G. Uhlig, History of the Schools in the GDR 1945-68. Volk und Wissen Volkseigener Verlag, Berlin, 1973.
14. These policies are examined in chapter 4.
15. M.S. Klein. op.cit. P.7-8.
16. H. Krisch, German Politics under Soviet Occupation. Columbia U.P., N.Y., 1974.
17. M. McCauley. op.cit.
18. "In Gestalt der DDR errichtete und festigte die Arbeiterklasse in Bündnis mit den Bauern, der Intelligenz und den anderen Werktätigen ihre politische Herrschaft, sie schuf den sozialistischen Staat der Arbeiter und Bauern als eine Form der Diktatur des Proletariats. Indem wir diesem Weg

- beschritten, konnte unser Arbeiter- und Bauern-Staat seine Funktion als Hauptinstrument des sozialistischen Aufbaus voll erfüllen." Dokumente und Materialien zur Demokratische Schulreform. Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1981, P.16.
19. M.S.Klein. op.cit. P.13-14
 20. Ibid. P.8.
 21. K-H.Günther & G.Uhlig. op. cit.
 22. R.Samuel & R.Hinton-Thomas. op.cit.
 23. Ibid. P.126.
 24. K-H.Günther & G.Uhlig. op.cit.
 25. 'Anruf des Zentralen Frauenausschusses beim Magistrat von Groß Berlin zur Teilname der Frauen am antifaschistisch-demokratischen Aufbau Deutschlands.'
 26. F.Schubert Die Frau in der DDR. Leske Verlag & Budrig GmbH, Opladen, 1980. P.39.
 27. H.G.Schaffer. op.cit. P.14.
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 29. "Eine besonders Aufgabe fällt dabei den DFD zu, der vor allen Dingen die Mütter für die demokratische Erziehung in der Schule gewinnen muß und seine Arbeit in starkem Maße auf die Mitarbeit in den zu bildenden Eltern beiräten orientieren soll." Dokumente und Materialien zur Schulreform. op.cit. P.241.
 30. It is stated specifically that they were women, which illustrates a pattern of employment which has continued up to the present day, as shown in chapter 6.
 31. K-H.Günther & G.Uhlig. op. cit.
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CHAPTER 4

In this chapter the rhetoric concerning women's place in the new socialist society will be illustrated by some of the official statements and constitutional decrees. The policies put forward by the Government to fulfil these stated aims will then be considered.

The equality of women was guaranteed in the 1949 Constitution of the GDR, Article 7:

*"Men and women have equal rights. All laws and provisions infringing on the equality of women are revoked."*¹

Article 30 states:

*"Marriage and family form the basic elements of communal life. They are protected by the State. Laws and provisions infringing upon the equality of rights between husband and wife in the family are annulled."*²

All children were guaranteed equal status, and the high status of motherhood was established:

*"Birth out of wedlock may not prejudice either the child or its parents. Contrary laws and provisions are repealed....During maternity, the mother has the right to special protection and care by the State."*³

These statements on marriage and the family are repeated, developed, but fundamentally unchanged in the new Constitution of 1968.⁴

Article 19 of the 1968 Constitution states:

*"Men and women have equal rights and have the same legal status in all spheres of social, state and personal life. The promotion of women, especially with regard to vocational qualifications, is a task of society and the State."*⁵

Marxist theory states that women must enter the labour market in order to emancipate themselves, and to do this they need education and training, and they need childcare facilities. These ideas were expressed in various statements, for example, Article 123 of the 1966 Labour Code states:

*"The principle of equal rights for women in socialist society comes to full function through their participation in the production process and in the management of the State and of the economy."*⁶

This principle was made clear from the very beginning, as an SED statement of August 1949 illustrates:

*"The increased participation of women in economic, political and cultural life is an essential prerequisite to equality. The kindergarten promotes this development through relieving the working woman. That is why the establishment of a compact network of communal, works' and agricultural kindergartens in the centres of industry and agriculture, especially in nationalised enterprises and estates, is a political duty."*⁷

The education of women is also seen as a crucial tool in achieving emancipation:

*"Special attention and help is devoted to qualifications for women, so that they obtain higher scientific and technical knowledge and are thereby able to undertake more powerful and leading functions in the economy and State."*⁸

The other side of a woman's equality involves the prestige given to her role as wife and mother. The two roles, as worker and as mother, are seen to be

complementary. The programme of the SED, published in 1976, states:

*"We call for the consolidation of the social standing and personal development of women, working resolutely towards this goal to enable women to combine their work in their professional capacities and their function as mothers within the family."*¹⁰

Similar ideas were expressed by Honecker in a speech to the World Congress. Celebrating International Women's Year in Berlin in 1975 he said:

*"We respect and honour mothers. Hence there follows for us a significant social obligation. That is why our society has facilitated and alleviated difficulties and made it more possible for wife and mother to combine her obligations to profession, society and family."*¹¹

*Wear the
ready hand
the ambitious
ambition*

The two roles are not seen as posing a choice to women, they are both seen as necessary to her emancipation. Professor Herta Kuhrig, head of the research group 'Women in Socialist Society' at the Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR in Berlin, states in the introduction to her 'Equal Rights for Women':

*"It is alien to the humanitarian concern of socialism to confront women with the alternative: occupational activity or motherhood and family. Equality at the cost of motherhood would be an unacceptable solution, being neither in the personal interest of the woman nor in that of society."*¹²

Motherhood and the traditional role of women in the family are seen as liberating forces, and also necessary to society. After her entry into the labour force, a woman

*"...stands in the centre of life and can therefore educate her children with better experience and awareness, thereby preparing them better for life in its diversity. There comes into existence a new more mature relationship between mother and child that encompasses all the positive traditions of motherhood."*¹³

The extent to which it is women who are best served by this idealisation of motherhood, or whether it is society, or even merely men, needs examining. An enlightening statement on this point is contained in a book published by the women's publishing house in 1974:

*"And today, women and girls learn and gain qualifications to an unprecedented extent, so as to master production better, to shape and be aware of a better social life and to be a wiser partner for the husband and a more understanding mother for the children."*¹⁴

In order to perpetuate traditional self-perceptions in women, the notion of 'natural' differences has to be maintained. The most effective way of training women for life and work is seen as co-education, which will be examined later. This has never had the intention however of eliminating perceived psychological and biological differences:

"The function of woman as mother and other sex-specific social requirements- remember that for instance only men have to complete a conscripted period of military service- exert emotional influences, which even in the future, give rise to different attributes and behaviour. A uniform and joint education which takes account of these aspects will not be a hinderance to sexual identification but

*will provide the same conditions for both sexes to further personality development."*¹⁵

The above brief glance at some of the rhetoric concerning women gives a general picture of her intended role in socialist society, and hints at some of the problems likely to be encountered in achieving this.

How have the policies arising out of this rhetoric related to the changing economic and political situation in the GDR? To facilitate the examination and assessment of the policies they have been classified as follows. Firstly, those seeking to enable women to take an equal position in all spheres of society, and here laws regarding work and education are relevant. Secondly, those policies which aim at reconciling women's dual role, and here family law and labour law are relevant. Thirdly, those policies that attempt to facilitate the 'cultural revolution' to change attitudes towards and of women, whilst maintaining a belief in women's 'natural' psychological and biological differences. Here labour and education laws are examined.

As already noted, the main prerequisite to women's equality is her entry into the labour force. This theoretical maxim fortunately coincided with the economic needs of the new socialist State. The labour force was depleted due to the war and industry needed rebuilding.¹⁶ In order that women could take up an equal and useful position in the labour force, they had primarily to be given the requisite skills. They also had to be positively encouraged to work. After the war it was stated that:

"Fighters against fascism and victims of fascism, women, young persons and honourably discharged members of the armed forces of the GDR, enjoy special protection and promotion when taking up employment or carrying on a profession... Women who, owing to family

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duties, are temporarily prevented from working full-time, must be given the opportunity to make use of the right to work by doing part-time work."¹⁷

Article 126, sections 1 and 2 of the Labour Code states:

"Concerning the qualification of working persons, priority is to be given to women. They are to be trained especially for leading posts in all fields...working women are to be employed in accordance with the degree of qualification they have obtained."

The majority of women did not have any technical, managerial or academic qualifications, and many had a very low level of education at all due to the educational policies of the Third Reich. There were various measures to combat this, including the 'Directive on the Training of Women in Special Study Courses at the Colleges and Technical Schools.'

"1. The colleges and technical schools of the GDR admit women with a fine record in helping to build the socialist society and tied down by looking after a large family, to forms of study (Special Study Courses) which take into consideration their working and living conditions and guarantee the successful completion of their college or technical school studies.

2. Women attending Special Study Courses are given the opportunity of concentrating on the acquisition of political and technical knowledge enabling them to carry out managerial activities in all spheres of the socialist society, in particular in the key industries of the national economy.

3. The delegating enterprises must grant exemption from work to the extent of up to 20

*hours per week to women attending Special Study Courses and not being full-time students."*¹⁹

There was a similar directive for post-graduate study for women. Women could thus train for better, or different, jobs whilst working, through a very generous form of day-release.

The 'Law on the Socialist Development of the Education System' in 1959 was important to the advancement of women. It embodied the polytechnical principle as outlined by Khrushchev in the de-Stalinisation period of the 1950's²⁰. The emphasis was on technological advancement and preparing people, especially women, for work. The Act was compounded in 1965 by the 'Law on the Integrated Socialist Educational System', Article 36 of which states:

*"The womens' and girls' efforts to achieve a higher level of vocational qualification shall be supported by manifold and differentiated forms and methods. They shall be trained as skilled workers, and qualified for medium-level and leading posts. Special attention shall be paid to the training of women and girls in technical jobs."*²¹

Women already working were also given the opportunity to study. In 1971 the 'Directive over the Furtherance of Full-time Working Women' granted women in full-time work with one or more child under 16 one day a week for study purposes. Those doing night shifts with two children under 16 and those workers with three children under 16 could have an additional day's study leave, all paid at average earnings rate.²²

In 1970 a decree on vocational counselling imposed on all schools the obligation of awakening student's interests in 'crucial vocations' and to induce more women to embark on a curriculum of technical

education.²³ These numerous directives did not necessarily have any effect, as will be seen in chapter 7. The reasons for the lack of enthusiasm among women for 'male' jobs and professions are numerous. One, at least, was considered by the GDR authorities. It related to the workplace:

*"In the case of socialist reconstruction work, the building of new projects, plants and machines, care must be taken that an increasing number of activities and workplaces are adapted to the physical and psychological characteristics of women."*²⁴

Whilst one might question the GDR's notion of what these 'differences' are, and whether they should be accommodated or changed, it is encouraging that there is some recognition of the male-defined nature of the workplace.

In terms of women's political role, there appear to be no specific measures which attempt to positively discriminate in terms of representation, political positions, etc. Women are 'encouraged' to participate more, and the DFD, designated to look after the interests of women, were given 15 seats in the Volkskammer.

There have been several measures directly aimed at determining women's social position. In 1955 the Marriage and Divorce Laws abolished all support and alimony payments except in hardship cases.²⁵ All property accrued in marriage is deemed to belong equally to both spouses. Women, then, are treated equally in marriage and divorce, the abolition of alimony being an important recognition of their financial independence from men. However, it is only truly fair and equal if married women have exactly the same economic opportunities in society as married men. It is the

contention of this thesis that in the GDR they still do not.²⁶

In 1966 divorce was made more difficult, mainly due to the concern over the falling birth-rate.²⁷ A marriage could only be dissolved

"If the courts have established that the reasons put forward are so serious as to permit the conclusion that the marriage has lost its meaning for the partners, their children, and consequently also for society."²⁸

An important principle of equality and independence has revolved around the question of names in the Western feminist movement. For obvious reasons, women have rebelled against taking their husband's name. This question has been discussed in the GDR, and Article 7 of the Family Code states that:

"The married partners bear a joint family name. They can choose the name of the husband or the name of the wife. The children receive the joint family name."²⁹

It has been proposed that each partner could keep their own name if they wished, but this was rejected as being 'too subtle a point of equality'.³⁰ They can, however, choose the double-barrelled name.

A final law to be mentioned in the context of women's social position is the 1972 'Law on the Interruption of Pregnancy'.

"The equality of women ... demands that a woman has the right to decide for herself about pregnancy and whether or not she wants to bear and deliver the child."³¹

According to this law abortion was made legal and available on demand up to the twelfth week of pregnancy. After twelve weeks a medical reason had to be given. The only real restriction is that abortion is inadmissible where less than six months have passed since a previous

abortion. Contraception is free and freely available.³² The law is very pro-women by Western standards, but does no more than put into practice Marxist principles. In fact, although abortion was readily available from the start, in 1966 it was illegalised due, again, to concern over falling birth-rates. This indicates that principles about women's equality can sometimes be lost in the face of perceived economic and political necessity, especially when that perception is by men. In 1972 the authorities liberalised the law, due to increasing numbers of illegal abortions and resultant maternal deaths and to the obvious inconsistency of theory and practice. Maternal death rates fell from 52 (per 100,000 live births) in 1968 to 18 in 1977, compared to the FRG where figures for those years were 51.6 and 34 respectively.³³ The birth rate fell even more after 1972 as was feared.³⁴ As can be seen (from Table 1) the GDR had the lowest birthrate among the socialist countries, but now it is recovering, with Bulgaria and Hungary having a lower birth rate. In 1970-75 the GDR was the only country in Europe to have a negative population growth, due to the low birth-rate and the exodus of people to the West. Now four countries have negative population growths whilst the GDR is recovering. (See Table 2.)³⁵

Wider
-1970s?

The entry of women into the labour force coincided with a fall in the birth-rate as well as with an exodus of workers from the country. The GDR needed workers and recruited women. However, they also needed future workers, and women were proving reluctant to have children whilst employed in full-time work. A way had to be found therefore of reconciling women's dual role in the workforce and in the family. The duality of the role of women in society was never questioned, whilst a duality of role for men was never seriously envisaged. The solutions to this problem can be classified by

dealing with each role separately, although they are intertwined. Firstly, there were special labour provisions for women and policies to further the socialisation of childcare and household tasks to ensure that women stayed in the workforce. Secondly, there were social security provisions and economic incentives to ensure that working women had children.

The policies relating to working mothers are hinged on measures to allow women more free time to deal with family responsibilities and on providing adequate childcare. On July 1st 1972 a forty hour week was introduced for mothers with three or more children under 16 or mothers with two or more children under 16 working a multiple shift system.³⁶ The minimum holiday period was increased to 21 days and 24 days respectively for these categories of mothers.³⁷ In 1977 the 40 hour week was granted to all women with two children under 16.³⁸

Part-time work for women was originally tolerated as an alternative to women not working at all, especially during the early years when childcare provisions were inadequate. It was seen as a way of bringing housewives into the workforce who did not want to work full-time. Slowly measures were brought in like the forty hour week and the 'housework day' to encourage mothers to work full-time.³⁹ This has not been altogether successful, with some women choosing to stay at home with their children. The wages structure also discriminates against women being an equal breadwinner, and part-time work suffers from similar disadvantages as in the West.⁴⁰

The housework day was granted in the 1966 Labour Code, Article 125:

*"Full-time working mothers are entitled to one household day per month, in so far as this is consistent with the relevant legal provisions."*⁴¹

The provision was extended in 1977 to include all full-time working women over forty years old with their own household whether or not they have children.⁴³ It was stated that :

*"A household day is also granted to lone fathers in full-time employment with children under 18 years of age where they are obliged to take care of one or more of the children. Further, a man in full-time employment whose wife has medically certified need of care also receives this benefit where household tasks make it necessary."*⁴³

Women are thus seen as responsible for the household, with men taking over this role in exceptional circumstances. The reconciliation of women's dual role does not seem to entail any change in men's role, although men are encouraged to 'help' with the housework. The strongest statement to this effect is probably in the commentary to the 1966 Labour Code:

*"The husband may not content himself with 'assisting'. He must rather do his share, appropriate to the concrete family situation, in the education of and care of the children and the conduct of the household."*⁴⁴

This will be further discussed in chapter 7.

Other measures to ease the burden on working mothers would, in theory, involve the socialisation of household tasks as envisaged by Engels and Bebel. This has taken place to a limited extent, for example communal eating places have been encouraged as time-savers.⁴⁵ Communal laundries are also encouraged, but there is a high degree of individualised household amenities.⁴⁶

The most extensive programme of socialisation has been that concerning childcare. In 1975 there were places for 45% of children up to 3 years old in crèches and for 82% of children aged 3-5 in kindergartens.⁴⁷ Now,

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practically every child whose parents want it has a place in a kindergarten. There are still insufficient crèche places, and a directive of 1973 indicated which parents should have priority:

*"Children of fully employed working mothers, or else children of mothers in full-time education or an apprenticeship, are given precedence in crèches or community houses. Special consideration is given to: Children of the fully employed single person, of students and apprentices, children from families where the income is solely earned by the woman, children from families with several children, children of female 'professional soldiers' and working wives of 'professional soldiers', children of female shift workers, children of mothers who work in manufacturing industry, and also the ones whose mothers are occupied in the care and support of the community."*⁴³

The 'Fifth Decree on Improved Social Security Benefits' 1972 catered for single mothers who could not find a crèche place:

*"Single working mothers whose children cannot be accommodated in a crèche and who must therefore interrupt their work involving contributions under a compulsory social insurance scheme, receive from the social insurance a monthly assistance."*⁴³

It is recognised that there are still some mothers who are prevented from working due to inadequate and unevenly distributed childcare facilities. It is also, reluctantly, recognised that there are some mothers who do not wish to work outside the home.

The above policies attempt to encourage mothers to work. The following lay a greater emphasis on

encouraging working women to have children. In terms of social insurance benefits, women who interrupted work to have children were at a disadvantage with respect to pension rights. Pensions were paid after 15 years of activity, subject to compulsory insurance payments and to reaching retirement age, which for men is 65 and for women is 60. Measures were passed to compensate women for time spent bringing up children. For women with more than two children, each child after the second reduced the qualifying time by one year. After 1st July 1973, mothers of five or more children had entitlement even without any insurable period. Also, for every child born before the pension is due, an additional working year is creditable to women when calculating the amount of pension due based on the number of years worked.⁵⁰

Maternity leave and child benefits have increased over the years. In 1976 maternity leave was extended to 26 weeks at full average net pay. Working mothers were granted paid leave up to the first birthday of their second or subsequent children, receiving benefits equal to their sick pay with a minimum of 300 Marks a month for a woman with two children and 350 Marks a month for those with three or more children.⁵¹ In April 1986 a new Family Law extended maternity leave of one year to women with their first child. The minimum maternity benefits are 250 Marks per month for one child, 300 M. per month for two and 350 M. per month for three or more children. In addition, mothers with two or more children get up to six weeks paid leave to look after their sick children. This can be taken by marriage partners or grandmothers.⁵² During her maternity leave, a woman's job is protected and kept for her. Nursing mothers are guaranteed two 45 minute breaks during their working day.⁵³

Until recently, all these provisions were explicitly and implicitly for working mothers. Laws governing the

working hours of mothers and maternity leave did not extend to married fathers:

*"The existing rules about duration of working hours and holidays for fully employed mothers are also applied to fully employed single fathers if it is necessary for the care of the child or children. The decision is made by the foreman together with the consent of the appropriate operational internal union."*⁵⁴

There seems to be a fairly obvious contradiction here, as illustrated by Article 10 of the family Code:

*"Both married persons share in the upbringing of the children and in the management of the household."*⁵⁵

However, the new family law does extend to married fathers. It is too early to tell whether fathers will take advantage of this, but questions put by the author on this were met with some scepticism that things will change at all.

As well as provisions for maternity leave, maternity grants are given as a one-off payment at the birth of each child. In 1972 the amount was 1,000 Marks per child. After 1967 a monthly payment was given to mothers with four or more children. At that time it was 60 Marks a month for four children and 70 Marks a month for five or more children, thus encouraging large families.⁵⁶ In 1972, as the fall in the birth-rate reached crisis point and the Abortion Act was passed, a Decree on the granting of credits at favourable terms for young married couples was introduced. This encouraged young people to get married and to start a family immediately. The consequences of this for the divorce rates would be an interesting study. Articles 4 and 5 of the Decree state:

"4. Independent of the housing credit dealt with in Articles 2 and 3, young married people may apply to the local savings bank for a credit to the value of up to 5,000 Marks to pay for furniture, household items and other durable goods, radio or television sets, household linen etc. The credit is granted free of interest. It must be repayed in monthly installments within eight years beginning with the date of borrowing.

5. Of the repayable interest-free credits referred to in Article 2, 3 and 4 above, the following amounts will be cancelled: at the birth of the first child 1,000 Marks. At the birth of the second, a further 1,500 Marks. At the birth of a third, a further 2,500 Marks." 57

The effect of these policies will be examined in chapter 7.

The third set of policies to be examined are those aimed at effecting the cultural revolution, i.e. changing women's, and to some extent men's, views on women's role whilst maintaining a belief in the existence and value of 'natural' differences. Official GDR statements pose it thus:

"From a Marxian viewpoint the equality of women was not and is not at any time looked upon as egalitarianism." 58

But there is a recognition that cultural change must be struggled for:

"The new position of women will not automatically come about with the changes in economic relations. Women need to be taught how to take their new place, and men must be made to understand this new situation. This will be done not only through propaganda and

Use of 1968/72
1968/72

agitation, but also through art and literary works."⁵⁹

It should be noted that implicit in this statement is that women must change and that men must accept it, not that men must change. It is through education, in its broadest sense, that change can be brought about:

*"By means of political and ideological persuasion, men and women must be brought to develop a correct opinion about the role of women in the family and in society, in harmony with the character of socialist humanism. What matters above all is to concentrate on the unity of words and deeds and to subject old and backward views and modes of behaviour, formed under the preceding systems of society, to bold but helpful and sympathetic critical assessment."*⁶⁰

The education of people to hold the 'correct' views about society and women's place in it was seen as the duty of the family as well as of the State. Article 37(4) of the 1968 Constitution states:

*"It is the right and the supreme task of parents to educate their children to become healthy, happy, competent, universally educated and patriotic citizens. Parents have a right to a close and trustful co-operation with the social and State educational institutions."*⁶¹

The links between school and family were, in the post-war days, and still are, extremely important in order that the more 'backward' family would be in touch with new ideas and ideals and some degree of consistency could be maintained in the development of the 'new socialist personality'. The extremely influential role of the family in the development of children was

recognised, and it was mothers who were seen as the primary educators. Unfortunately it was also mothers who were the most 'backward' due to their role in previous capitalist and, especially, fascist societies.

The first parents' committees were set up in 1951 and more than one in every four families is represented on these committees. The 1966 'Decree on the Representation of Parents of the General Schools' states in Article 3:

*"The parents advisory council takes an active interest in the development of the children's socialist education in the family. The council submits proposals and makes suggestions on how the teachers might familiarise the parents with a wide variety of information on school policy and on educational and psychological data. The council sees to it that the parents' meetings and seminars are well attended."*⁶²

In an information booklet of 1976 it is stated that:

*"Whatever the contribution made by nurseries and schools, prime responsibility for children's upbringing remains with the family.. all measures to assist working mothers should be geared to giving them more free time to devote to the family, to education, to culture."*⁶³

The fact that it is still seen as the woman's task to educate her children, and that, as will be seen later, the vast proportion of teachers in kindergartens and the primary classes are women, will have a big effect on the cultural revolution regarding women that is supposedly taking place in the schools and in the home.

Concern with changing women's role whilst maintaining her childbearing and caring capacities is reflected in protective employment legislation.

*"All legislation for the special protection of the health of women and girls in no way restricts their right to work. They are necessary because of the physiological differences between man and woman."*⁶⁴

Under Article 129 of the Labour Code it is stated that women must not be given 'heavy or health-endangering jobs' and these are defined in Article 20 of the 1951 'Decree on the Protection of Labour'.⁶⁵ The question of protective legislation will be discussed in chapter 7, but points to bear in mind are:- Are protective laws used primarily to keep women from higher paid jobs and disguise actual wage discrimination? Does protective legislation actually prevent an effective challenge to sex-role stereotyping? Should a distinction be made between pregnant and nursing mothers and ordinary women?

Finally, in the realm of the cultural revolution, the DFD's role is important. Its self-declared functions are to carry out political and ideological work among women, draw women from all strata of the population into social life, win women over to productive work, and to ease the burden on working women, especially mothers. The role of the DFD was clarified by the SED on the 10th anniversary of the founding of the DFD:

*"The woman problem must be vividly and clearly represented through the DFD. In their work the groups of the DFD must be orientated not only to DFD organised women, but must also feel responsibility for all women of their class background and must improve their position in the National Front of democratic Germany."*⁶⁶

In the mid-1970's the DFD had 1.3 million members in 16,800 branches, and was represented by 35 delegates in Parliament. It intervened on behalf of women in discussions and plans on the national economy and has

worked actively for the extension of childcare facilities. It has also published educational books relevant to women's interests, including one aimed at promoting the division of household chores equally among children irrespective of gender. Its emphasis has changed since the late 1960's towards concentrating on organising non-employed women and part-time women workers. In 1976, 71.7% of its members were employed, 28.3% were full-time housewives.⁶⁷ An East Berlin editor commented:

*"The DFD was needed as an information agency for women. Consciousness-raising and motivating women towards productive work were among its primary functions. But all this is no longer necessary. This is why today the DFD caters primarily for non-working women and especially for older women who have retired."*⁶⁸

This orientation has been strengthened:

*"Since the introduction of the baby year (1976) we have had more young women join us, especially those who are worried about their ability to handle simultaneously marriage, a child and a career."*⁶⁹

The reorientation of the DFD reflects a belief that women's problems viz-à-viz work have been largely solved, or no longer need special attention:

*"Our working women are now fully taken care of by the Party, the labour union and other socio-economic organisations in the GDR. We do not need a special women's organisation to represent their interests."*⁷⁰

Two points need to be made here. Firstly, the structures which have assimilated women and women's problems have not been themselves fundamentally changed in the process: they are male-orientated and male-

defined. Secondly, the DFD is not an independent but a State and Party organisation for the furtherance of women's equality, and therefore its terms of reference are those of the State and the Party: male-dominated and male-defined. These points will be expanded later.

This chapter has attempted to offer a picture of how women's role in GDR society is perceived and the measures taken to procure the changes necessary to give women equality. The fact that some confusions and contradictions arise is due less to the inadequacies of the policies than to the analysis of the problem by the GDR, following a traditional Marxist formula.

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Notes to chapter 4.

1. Constitution of the GDR 1949. Verlag Zeit im Bild, Dresden.
2. Ibid. The last sentence refers to the old Family Law of 1900 which was retained by the government, with the above proviso, until such time as they could draw up their own family law, which was done in 1965. See H.G.Shaffer, op.cit. P 12.
3. Ibid .Article 33.
4. The Constitution was revised in 1968 due to external and internal political circumstances. Socialist society was more developed and was now, especially after the building of the Berlin wall, totally separate from the FRG. The existence of a sovereign, socialist, separate Germany needed to be stressed. There was also unease about what was happening in Czechoslovakia and the authors of the Constitution wanted to emphasise basic individual rights. See D.Childs, op.cit. Chapter 3.
5. Constitution of the GDR 1968. Verlag Zeit im Bild, Dresden.
6. H,Kuhrig, Equal Rights for Women. GDR Committee for Human Rights Publication No. 5, Berlin, 1973
7. "Die verstärkte Beteiligung der Frauen am wirtschaftlichen, politischen und kulturellen Leben ist eine wesentliche Voraussetzung zu ihrer Gleichberechtigung. Der Kindergarten fördert durch die Entlastung der arbeitenden Frauen diese Entwicklung. Deshalb ist die Schaffung eines dichtes Netzes von kommunalen Betriebs- und Erntekindergärten bei den Schwerpunkten der Industrie und Landwirtschaft, insbesondere den volkeigene Betrieben und Gütern, eine politische Aufgabe." Dokumente und Materialien zur demokratische Schulreform. op.cit. P.196.

8. "Besondere Aufmerksamkeit und Hilfe ist den Frauen bei ihrer Qualifizierung zu widmen, damit sie höhere, wissenschaftliche und technische Kenntnisse erwerben, und immer stärker leitende Funktionen in Wirtschaft und Staat unternehmen können." Ibid, P.269.
9. This reflects the views of Zetkin, see chapter 2.
10. "Die Festigung der gesellschaftlichen Stellung und die Persönlichkeitsentwicklung der Frauen erfordern, zielstrebig daran zu arbeiten, daß die Frauen ihrer beruflichen Tätigkeit hoch erfolgreicher mit ihren Aufgaben als Mütter und in der Familie vereinbaren können." Programm der SED, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1982. P. 53-4.
11. "Wir achten und ehren die Mütter. Daraus ergibt sich für uns eine bedeutende soziale Verpflichtung. Deshalb hat unsere Gesellschaft erleichterungen geschaffen, die es der Frau und Mutter immer besser ermöglichen, ihre Obliegenheiten in Beruf, Gesellschaft und Familie miteinander zu verbinden." E.Honecker, Reden und Aufsätze, Volume 4, Berlin, 1977. P.85.
12. H.Kuhrig, Equal Rights for Women, op.cit.
13. "...steht mitten im Leben und kann daher ihrer Kinder besser sachkundiger und bewusster erziehen, besser auf das Leben in seiner Vielfalt vorbereiten. Es entsteht ein neues, reiferes Verhältnis zwischen Mutter und Kind, das alle positiven Traditionen der Mütterlichkeit in sich einschließt." H.Kuhrig et al, Zur gesellschaftlichen Stellung der Frau in der DDR, op.cit. P. 56.
14. "Und heute lernen und qualifizieren sich Frauen und Mädchen in einem nie gekannten Ausmaße, um die Produktion besser zu beherrschen, das gesellschaftliche Leben bewusster zu gestalten, und dem Mann eine kluge Partnerin und den Kindern eine

- verständnisvolle Mutter zu sein." L.Thomas-Heinrich & J.Weyer, Sie bei uns. Ein Bilderich aus dem Leben der Frauen. Verlag für die Frau, Leipzig, 1974. P.39. My emphasis.
15. "Die Mutterfunktion der Frau und andere geschlechtsspezifische gesellschaftliche Anforderungen (bedenken wir z.B. daß nur die Männer einen Wehrdienst ableisten) führen zur emotionalen Einflüssen, die auch in Zukunft die in gewissem Maße unterschiedlichen Eigenschaften in einem z.T. anderen Verhalten münden lassen. Eine gleiche und gemeinsame Erziehung, die diese Aspekte berücksichtigt, wird die geschlechtliche Identifikation nicht behindern, sondern bei beiden Geschlechtern gleiche Voraussetzungen für die Persönlichkeitsentwicklung fordern." H.Kuhrig et.al. Zur gesellschaftlichen Stellung der Frau in der DDR. op.cit. P. 198.
 16. see above chapter 3.
 17. H.Kuhrig, Equal Rights for Women. op.cit. P.109.
 18. Ibid. P. 99.
 19. Ibid. P.89-90.
 20. An interesting anecdote illustrating the ending of the cult of Stalin comes from the 20th Party Conference of the CPSU in 1956. When the central committee drafted its greeting, it concluded it with the words "Long live the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin." When Walter Ulbricht read it to the Congress in Moscow Stalin's name was no longer on it. See P.Reichelt. op.cit. P.257.
 21. H.Kuhrig, Equal Rights for Women. op.cit. P. 83.
 22. F.Schubert, op.cit. P. 78.
 23. H.G.Shaffer, op. cit. P. 128.
 24. H.Kuhrig, Equal Rights for Women, op.cit. P. 140.
 25. Payments by the State are made to all women for all children.

26. See chapter 6.
27. Interestingly, the National Socialist response to this was to liberalise divorce. See chapter 2.
28. Article 24, Family Law 1966. Reprinted in B.W.Jancar, Women under Communism. John Hopkins U.P., Baltimore, 1978.
29. H.Kuhrig, Equal Rights for Women. op.cit. P. 60.
30. "eine überspitzung des Gleichberechtigungsgrundsatzes." H.Kuhrig et. al., op.cit.
31. H.G.Shaffer. op.cit. P. 51.
32. Sterilization, however, is not available. This was explained to me as being due to feelings about the many forced sterilizations that took place for political and experimental reasons under the Nazis.
33. H.G.Shaffer, op.cit. P. 51. In 1983 the figure was 15 per 100,000 live births. See Women in the GDR. Report by the GDR government to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Verlag Zeit im Bild, Berlin, 1985. P.31.
34. See Table 1.
35. Statistische Jahrbuch der DDR 1985. Staatsverlag der DDR, Berlin. Pp.3* & 37*.
36. Previously the working week had been 43.75 hours.
37. H.Kuhrig, Equal Rights for Women. op.cit.
38. S.Stratkowa, Women and Socialism: Facts and Figures on the Equality of Women in the GDR. Panorama GDR Auslandspresseagentur GmbH Berlin 1976. P.63.
39. The 'housework day' originated due to the laundry system in most blocks of flats. The machines would wash several families' clothes at once, but took a whole day to do so. Women therefore took it in turns to spend the day doing the washing. Thanks to Bertha Mourton for enlightening me on this.
40. See chapter 7.
41. H.Kuhrig, Equal Rights for Women. op.cit. P.110.

42. S.Stratkowa, op.cit. P.64.
43. ILO, Work and Family Life: The Role of the Social Infrastructure in East European Countries. Geneva, 1980. P.24.
44. H.G.Shaffer, op.cit. P.31. My emphasis.
45. It was estimated that, in 1974, families who used these facilities spent 100 minutes per day at meals compared with 248 minutes spent per day by families who did not use them. Whether it is in fact desirable to cut the time spent at meals is not discussed. See H.Kuhrig et.al. op. cit. P.311.
46. The number of washing machines, for example, has increased from 83 per 100 households in 1981 to 91 per 100 households in 1985. See GDR 86: Facts and Figures. Panorama DDR, Auslandspressagentur GmbH, Berlin, 1986.
47. S.Stratkowa, op.cit. P. 63.
48. "Kinder vollbeschäftigter Mütter bzw. Kinder der Mutter, die an einem Direktstudium oder eine Lehrausbildung teilnehmen, sind vorrangig in Krippen und (Dauer)Heime aufzunehmen. Besonders zu berücksichtigen sind:- Kinder von alleinstehende Werktätigen, von Studenten und Lehlingen; Kinder aus Familien, in den der Unterhalt allein der Frau obliegt; Kinder aus Familien mit mehreren Kindern; Kinder von weiblichen 'Berufssoldaten' und werktätigen Ehefrauen von 'Berufssoldaten'; Kinder von Schichtarbeiterinnen; Kinder von Müttern, die in der mateiellen Produktion sowie in Bereichen der Betreuung und Versorgung der Bevölkerung tätig sind." 'Verordnung über die Einweisung und Aufnahme von Säuglingen und Kleinkindern in Kinderkrippen und Dauerheime.' Article 2. Staatliche Dokumente zur Förderung der Frau in der DDR. Staatsverlag der DDR, Berlin 1975. P.178.
49. H. Kuhrig, Equal Rights for Women. op.cit. P.135.

50. Handbook of the Economy of the GDR, op.cit. P.191.
51. S.Stratkowa, op.cit. P.62.
52. 'Verordnung über die weitere Verbesserung der Arbeits- und Lebensbedingungen der Familien mit Kindern' Reprinted in Neues Deutschland, 28.4.1986.
53. Arbeitsgesetzbuch der DDR, Staatsverlag der DDR, Berlin 1982. Article 249, P. 62.
54. "Die für vollbeschäftigte werktätige Mütter geltenden Bestimmung über die Dauer der Arbeitszeit und des Erhöhungsurlaubs finden auch für vollbeschäftigte alleinstehende Väter Anwendung, wenn es die Betreuung des Kindes bzw. der Kinder erfordert. Die Entscheidung trifft der Betriebsleiter mit Zustimmung der zuständigen, betrieblichen Gewerkschaftsleitung." Ibid, Article 251, P.62. My emphasis.
55. H.Kuhrig, Equal Rights for Women, op.cit. P. 58.
56. Staatliche Dokumente zur Förderung der Frau, op.cit. P.149.
57. H.Kuhrig, Equal Rights for Women, op.cit. P.127. In 1986 the credit available was raised to 7,000 Marks repayable over 11 years: 'Verordnung über die Gewährung von Krediten zu vergünstigten Bedingungen an junge Eheleute.' Reprinted in Neues Deutschland, 28.4.1986.
58. "Aus Marxistisches Sicht wurde und wird Gleichberechtigung der Frau zu keiner Zeit als Gleichmacherei aufgefaßt." H.Kuhrig et.al. op.cit. P.340.
59. Ibid. P.35. My emphasis.
60. H.Kuhrig, Equal Rights for Women, op.cit. P. 11. The reference to 'sympathetic' critical assessment may reflect the desire to see existing contradictions as 'non-antagonistic'.
61. Constitution of the GDR 1968, op.cit.
62. H.Kuhrig, Equal Rights for Women, op.cit. P.106-7.

63. K.H. Arnold, Policies which put People First. Panorama DDR, Dresden, 1976 P.51.
64. "Alle gesetzliche Festlegungen zum besonderen Schutz der Gesundheit der Frauen und Mädchen schränken ihr Recht auf Arbeit keineswegs ein. Sie sind wegen der unterschiedlichen anthropometrischen und physiologischen Merkmale von Mann und Frau erforderlich." H.Kuhrig et. al. op.cit. P. 340.
65. H.Kuhrig, Equal Rights for Women. op.cit. P.113.
66. Dokumente der SED Band 6. Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1958. P.209.
67. F.Schubert, op.cit. P.44.
68. Quoted in H.G.Shaffer, op.cit. P.159.
69. Herta Kuhrig.Quoted Ibid P.159.N.B. Women taking their 'baby year' would be classified as employed.
70. Helga Hörz, GDR representative to the UN on the status of women. Quoted Ibid. P.159.

TABLE 1.

Live births per 1000 population.

COUNTRY	1970	1975	1980	1983
DDR	13.9	10.8	14.6	14.0
Bulgaria	16.3	16.6	14.5	13.7
Cuba	27.7	20.8	14.1	16.7
Mongolia	40.2	39.4	37.9	36.2
Poland	16.6	18.9	19.5	19.7
Roumania	21.1	19.7	18.0	14.3
Czech.	15.9	19.6	16.3	14.9
USSR	17.4	18.1	18.3	20.1
Hungary	14.7	18.4	13.9	11.9

From: Statistisches Jahrbuch der DDR 1985, P.3*.

TABLE 2.

Birth Rate.

COUNTRY	1970	1983
DDR	-0.2	0.7
Albania	25.0	21.9
Belgium	2.4	0.6
Bulgaria	7.2	2.3
BRD	1.6	-1.8
Denmark	5.4	-1.3
Finland	4.2	4.5
France	6.1	3.5
Greece	8.1	4.5
Great Britain	4.4	1.1
Ireland	10.4	9.7
Iceland	12.4	11.6
Italy	7.1	0.7
Jugoslavia	8.8	7.0
Luxembourg	0.9	0.2
Netherlands	9.9	3.6
Norway	6.8	2.0
Austria	1.8	-0.4
Poland	8.5	10.2
Portugal	8.9	5.1
Roumania	11.6	3.9
Sweden	3.8	0.1
Switzerland	6.7	2.1
Spain	11.1	6.0
Czech.	4.3	2.9
USSR	9.2	9.8
Hungary	3.1	-2.0
West Berlin	-9.5	-8.2

From: Statistisches Jahrbuch der DDR 1985, P.37*.

CHAPTER 5

Before continuing to see how the various laws concerning the role of women are working in practice, there needs to be an exposition of the formal education system that exists in the GDR. In this chapter the rules governing education as well as a description of the school system and of the curriculum will follow.

In chapter 1 the traditional Marxist educational theories which form the basis of Soviet socialist, and to a large extent East German socialist, pedagogy were briefly outlined. The influence of Soviet ideas was strong in the immediate post-war years in East Germany, but the German socialist tradition was also a strong element in the evolving educational system. Article 39 of the 1949 Constitution guarantees that:

"Every child must be given the opportunity of all round development of physical, intellectual and moral facilities. The course of educational development of youth must not be made dependent on the social and economic status of the parents. On the contrary, children handicapped by adverse social conditions shall receive special attention."

There was, and has been since then, concern about the position of working class students and of women in the education system. The principle has been that the numbers of working class and women students, especially in higher education, should reflect their proportion in the population as a whole. In terms of working class students this principle has led to positive discrimination, which now takes place at the pre-Abitur level.² The origin of this policy is Stalin's point in 'Problems of Leninism' that "no ruling class has ever survived without its own technicians."³ The 'ruling class' is the dictatorship of the proletariat, and

therefore the working class must produce the intelligentsia which would be free of bourgeois values and loyal to the party of the working class, in this case the SED. It must also have the knowledge and skills necessary to take over the means of production. As already noted, this emphasis on working class representation has fluctuated according to political circumstances. The 'special attention' afforded to women has been a constant theme, but has never taken the form of positive discrimination.⁴

The 1949 Constitution guaranteed that:

*"Every citizen has equal rights to education and the free choice of his (sic) profession."*⁵

The 1968 version represents a subtle shift on two counts, firstly as reflected in Article 25(ii):

*"All young people shall have the right and duty to learn a vocation"*⁶

where the element of 'choice' seems to have disappeared, and secondly concerning the principle of positive discrimination for working class students:

"The State shall ensure the possibility of transference to the next higher stage of education up to the highest educational institutions, the universities and the colleges. This shall be done in accordance with the performance principle, social requirements, and taking into consideration the structure of the population."⁷

Implicit in this is the assumption that equal opportunity is now a meaningful phrase as no-one is disadvantaged. Another conclusion that could be drawn is that educational standards had been declining under positive discrimination. However, there has been a shift back to positive discrimination in the case of working class students. The performance principle has always been followed in regard to women's education, and, it

will be argued, is not sufficient to guarantee women's equality.

One of the central themes of statements on educational aims is that of the 'allseitige entwickelte Persönlichkeit' - all round developed personality:

*"Education assists the development and training of overall developed personalities, which deploy their capabilities and gifts for the good of the socialist community, and which distinguish themselves through love of work and defence, through team spirit and the aspiration to high communist ideals."*²⁸

In another statement by the SED, 'On the socialist development of the school system in the GDR', further details are given:

*"Socialist education means: overall development of the personality, education towards solidarity and collective action, towards love of work, towards effective activity, the provision of a high theoretical and musical all-round education, the development of all mental and physical capacities, i.e. the building of a socialist consciousness for the good of the people and the country."*²⁹

The 'Dictionary of Socialist Youth Policy' of 1975 defines the socialist personality as:

"A fully developed personality, knowledgeable on political, specialist and general scientific matters, with a firm class standpoint and a Marxist-Leninist 'Weltanschauung' distinguished by high mental, physical and moral qualities imbued with collective thought and behaviour and participating actively, consciously and

*creatively in the development of
socialism."*¹⁰

This was the most comprehensive definition that could be found.

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are?*
The concept of the 'allseitige entwickelte Persönlichkeit' is important to the consideration of the changes in women's position in GDR society undertaken here. Nowhere could the author find a link drawn between the development of a new socialist personality and the combatting of previous, and continuing, forms of oppressive behaviour of men towards women. That the concept of the 'allseitige entwickelte Persönlichkeit' does not explicitly encompass the struggle for new forms of relationships between the sexes seems inconsistent with the genuine concern to change women's role in society. However, it does seem to support the contention in this thesis that the problem is only really seen in terms of women changing, not men.

The Marxist principle of ending the split between mental and manual labour is also stated:

*"In the socialist social order the essential differences between manual and mental work are disappearing slowly, so that the way is open for the deployment of the talents of all the working population."*¹¹

The basis of the educational system was laid down by the 1946 'Law for the Democratization of the German School' which had three stated aims: to break the educational privileges of the old propertied classes; to bridge the gap between schools in urban areas and those in villages; to raise the academic content of schools above the pre-war level.¹² The Law established the eight-year 'Grundschule' which replaced the former 'Gymnasium', 'Mittelschule' and 'Volkschule'. The system was a comprehensive one, with children taught in mixed-ability classes, but there were several compromises that

had to be made due to the political situation. For example in Berlin religious education was allowed to continue and existing private schools were left alone. The overall aim of the new system was to change the existing social framework and to develop schools into institutions where young people could be effectively educated and trained to become productive members of socialist society. By 1952 steps had been made in this direction. An educational programme based on Marxism-Leninism had been developed, initial efforts had been made at integrating vocational training with economic objectives, and, with the appearance of translations of Soviet pedagogical literature, bourgeois educational views were being replaced.¹³

Events in Hungary in 1956 prompted criticisms, and an attempt to close the gap between the teaching profession and the leadership involved experiments in polytechnical education. The economic changes brought about by a 'scientific-technological revolution' also pushed schools in this direction. A third factor was the death of Stalin and the Khrushchev reforms of 1956.¹⁴

Polytechnical education was introduced in all schools from 1st September 1958. On 2nd December 1959 the 'Volkskammer' adopted the 'Law on the Socialist Development of the School System in the GDR'. It stipulated that:

1) The general school for all children would be the ten-year polytechnical school.

2) Education and training should be closely bound up with productive work and the activities of socialist production.

3) Polytechnical education would be a basic feature and an integral part of instruction and education in all school classes.

4) The ten year school was divided into a lower level, the 'Unterstufe' for years 1-4, and an upper level, the 'Oberstufe', for years 5-10.

5) Twelve years of general polytechnical education would qualify students for university after one year's practical work.

6) Attendance at the ten-year school for eight years plus two years of vocational schooling or academic study were made compulsory.¹⁵

The system which remains the basis of education today was laid down in the 1964 'Law on the Integrated Socialist Education System.' The phrase 'zehnklassige allgemeinbildende polytechnische Oberschule' was coined (ten-year allround polytechnical high school.) It is a bit of a mouthful even for Germans, and the schools are referred to as POS.¹⁶

At present, then, compulsory education is for ten years. The process of education is, however, seen as lifelong. Pre-school education is available to most of those who want to use it and its use is encouraged. Participation in post-school education is also encouraged, especially for women, and apart from the traditional forms of university and college, there are many opportunities in adult education throughout people's working lives, both in terms of gaining further qualifications for employment and in a more general sense. The roads to higher education are not just academic ones: with the stated aim of bridging the mental/manual labour divide the structure of education is specifically aimed at allowing anyone the opportunity of entering higher education.

Given the stress on the importance of education in the development of good socialists and a strong socialist society, an early start is favoured. 'Kinderkrippen' or crèches are run for infants up to three years old. They are administered under the Health Service rather than the

Education Department.¹⁷ The maximum number of children allowed in one crèche is 98 and the largest single group of children allowed is 15. The staffing ratio varies from one teacher to four children under one year, to one teacher to fifteen children over two years.¹⁸ The training for crèche workers is a three-year course after completion of the ten-year general education. Most crèches are open seven days a week from 6a.m. to 7p.m. and there are also weekly boarding nurseries for the children of women on shift work. Parents pay 1.40 Marks per day for a day crèche and 2.00 Marks a day for a boarding place. In 1976, 57% of children under three years old attended a crèche.¹⁹ In 1984 this figure had risen to 69%.²⁰ However, the figure is unlikely to rise much further due to the introduction of the 'baby-year' for the first child: the only babies under one in crèches now are those of students.

'Kindergarten' are administered under the Education Department and are free, parents paying 0.50 Marks per day for food. They are open weekdays from 6a.m.-7p.m. and on Saturdays for the children of parents who work or who perform 'socially useful tasks'. In areas where there are not enough places, priority is given on the basis laid out in the previous chapter. In 1979 92% of all children in the kindergarten age range of 3-6 had places in kindergarten.²¹ Now, it is claimed, all children whose parents want them, have places in kindergarten. The kindergarten visited in 1981, said to be typical, had 200 children organised into ten groups and engaged 18 teachers. Each group had its own washing facilities, and each child had its own washing materials and a quilt for the afternoon sleep. The rooms were light and airy and well-maintained and there was plenty of open space for playing. It was claimed by the staff that the many dolls in evidence were played with equally by boys and girls, whilst outside boys were observed

playing football whilst girls engaged in activities such as talking, throwing and catching and playing tag. ^{100!}

Compulsory education begins at age six and takes place in the POS under the control of the Department of Education. The system is centralised and the curriculum, teaching plans and textbooks are used uniformly throughout the country. Textbooks are produced and curriculum planned by teams of experts including educationalists, teachers and subject area specialists. New teaching plans and text books come down from the Ministry after being written by academics. Senior teachers and educationalists can then discuss them and suggest changes before they are officially adopted. Once they are adopted they must be strictly followed. This process takes place about every ten years for most subjects. ²³ Educational research is centralised in the Academy of Pedagogical Sciences which is located in Berlin and is responsible to the Ministry of Education. ²⁴

Attendance at the POS is compulsory for all children aged 6-16 years. Two groups of children do not attend the POS: physically and psychologically handicapped students attend special schools, and those deemed to have exceptional talent attend specialized schools in Art, Music, Sport, Mathematics, Languages or Science. In 1979 less than 3% of the 2,423,563 pupils in schools were in special schools of either category. ²⁵ Within mainstream education there are special classes in the 'Unterstufe' for disturbed or disruptive pupils, with a maximum of nine pupils per class. There are also classes for dyslexic pupils. Continually disruptive pupils go to a 'Heime'.

The POS is described as a ten-year school, but some pupils leave after the 8th class to complete their education in two-year vocational training schools. The number who do this is small, being only 8.4% of the

total number of children in the 8th class in 1975. A further 8% are selected at the end of the eighth year according to high academic achievement. They attend special classes, 'Vorbereitungsklassen', to prepare for entry into the 'erweiterte allgemeinbildende polytechnische Oberschule' or EOS. At the end of the tenth year they take an examination to qualify for entrance to the EOS, and in the EOS prepare for the Abitur examination. In fact all pupils take the examination at the end of the tenth year and those from ordinary classes with high enough grades can also go onto the EOS. However the numbers prepared for the Abitur is strictly controlled, at 15% of all tenth-grade pupils at present, as this is the method of control of entry to the universities. In 1984 there were 44,266 students in the EOS.

Students in the tenth year can also choose to combine vocational training with preparation for the Abitur, and this is a three-year course. Of the total number of students completing the tenth year in 1976, 83% began a two year period of vocational training, 5% entered the three-year programme of vocational training with preparation for the Abitur, and 12% - most of whom had been selected after the 8th year - continued academic studies in the EOS.

Figure 4 shows the subjects studied in the POS. These can be classified into 'Humanities' (German, Russian, Geography, History, Civics, Drawing, Music), 'Science and Maths' (Mathematics, Astronomy, Biology, Chemistry, Physics), 'Polytechnical Instruction' (Gardening, Industrial Arts, Introduction to Socialist Production, Polytechnical Instruction, Productive Work, Technical Drawing), and 'Sport'. The emphasis changes between the 'Unterstufe' and the 'Oberstufe'.

The second stage of schooling is marked by the introduction of formal Science classes and an

intensification of polytechnical education and training. Although polytechnical instruction as such is not introduced until year seven, in the earlier years children are introduced to the concepts embodied in polytechnical education. The 'Act on the Integrated Socialist Educational System' gives a content breakdown for the whole of the curriculum. Article 14 deals with the 'Unterstufe' years:

*"At the primary stage elementary technical, technological and economic knowledge shall be imparted, and simple technical-constructive abilities and working skills developed."*³³

The proportion of time devoted to the Humanities decreases in the 'Oberstufe' and there is a shift of emphasis within it, especially with the introduction of Russian in the fifth year. This shift of emphasis to polytechnical instruction and the sciences reflects the desire to produce technical expertise and speed the technological revolution. It is hoped that students will obtain an understanding of the productive process in general and of technological and scientific principles rather than a narrow grasp of a particular skill which is the outcome of the kind of vocational training in the West.³³ The outcome of this kind of education will be, it is hoped, a workforce able to adapt itself to the rapidly changing technical needs of society, and a population which understands the vital importance of manual labour, and consequently develops the 'correct' attitude regarding mental and manual labour.

The four or five hours a week polytechnical instruction is divided into theoretical work in the school and practical work in the workplace or school workshop. The 'Introduction to Socialist Production' consists of mechanical engineering, foundations of socialist production and electrical engineering.³⁴ Each school has a patron, an industrial, trade or

agricultural enterprise chosen by the school and bound by a patronage agreement. Polytechnical training is carried out jointly by teachers and suitably qualified employees of the enterprise. The latter also set up specialist departments, equip classrooms, help with the maintenance of buildings and train students in the vacations.³⁵ Career advice is given which is intended to ensure that the personal wishes and interests of young people are thoroughly co-ordinated with the requirements of the national economy. These are not, however, always the same. The significance of the curriculum for the education of girls will be examined in chapter 7.

The environment most conducive to the learning process is seen to be the collective, which functions on the principles of mutual assistance and subjugation of the ego. The collective is supposed to stimulate equality and co-operation. These things are also part of the rhetoric of Western education systems, but a true collective, it is argued by Marxists, is only possible in socialist society:

*"Equality and collective work in schools in capitalist states are in direct conflict with the real situation in life. On the other hand in socialism, the unity of school and life is reflected, from which it gains its specific character."*³⁶

Collectives are not seen as groups with just any goal, but with the specific aim of developing socialist personalities and contributing to the development of socialist society.³⁷ Discipline is also a collective responsibility. Corporal punishment was banned in 1947 on the basis that pupils should be responsible for their own discipline and collectively for that of their fellow students.³⁸

Bronfenbrenner has made detailed studies of teaching methods in the Soviet Union. He describes how the

principle of collective responsibility, whereby individual successes and failures are borne by the group which in turn exerts pressure on the individual, has produced well-behaved young people:

"What impressed this observer, like others before him, about Soviet youngsters was their 'good behaviour'. In their external actions they are well-mannered, attentive and industrious. In informal conversations they reveal a strong motivation to learn, a readiness to serve their society. In keeping with this general orientation, relationships with parents, teachers and upbringers are those of respectful but affectionate friendship. The discipline of the collective is accepted and regarded as justified, even when severe as judged by Western standards."

Despite this praise his conclusion is that this good behaviour is achieved by conformity at the expense of individual development. The implication is that collective discipline and teaching methods produce automatons who blindly conform to the status quo. The highly individualistic and competitive nature of American society is not noted for its caring approach or success in producing well-mannered and motivated students. Bronfenbrenner might do well to locate his criticism of Soviet, and by implication socialist, society elsewhere than in the collective approach to learning and personality development.

Teaching methods in schools take various forms, varying from the teacher lecture to the student discussion. Throughout, motivation is sought by relating topics to contemporary problems so that students become aware of their social and economic significance. The degree of motivation is deemed to have a direct

relationship to levels of success, and lack of motivation is often traced to the home environment, hence the emphasis placed on home-school interaction. Apart from the parents' committees which function to this end, part of a teacher's job is to visit the homes of her/his students. The collective is used in teaching mixed ability classes: high achievers are often paired with slow learners. The mixed ability class is put together on the basis of kindergarten reports with the aims of mixing children of workers with those of intellectuals and children with 'desirable' and 'undesirable' personality characteristics. The class remains a basically cohesive learning unit throughout the ten years of compulsory education.

There are 5,171 POS in the GDR with an average of 377 pupils per school, and an average of 20.7 pupils per class.⁴⁰ Secondary schools are therefore considerably smaller than they are in Britain and have a much better pupil-teacher ratio. Each POS is usually in a complex with one or two others and certain facilities are shared e.g. the kitchens for the provision of school meals. The POS visited in 1986 in Leipzig on a new housing estate of 40,000 people, had 700 students and sixty members of staff, ten male and fifty female.

Teachers have twenty-seven days holiday a year. During the schools' summer holidays they must work in school fourteen days with the children in 'Ferienspiel' (holiday activities). Ferienspiel is open to any child and is used mainly by the younger children of working parents. It consists of very little formal work and there are many arranged trips. During term-time teachers have twenty-three hours per week teaching time, but this can be less if they have other duties, such as visiting pupils' homes. Although officially teachers have twenty-three hours contact time, the fall in the school population has meant there are too many teachers, and

many teachers only teach eighteen hours. The 'free time' is spent in teacher-organised seminars discussing various topics, e.g. the new teaching plans. The means of getting more girls to study technical subjects is also, apparently, on the agenda.⁴¹

Every POS has 'Schulhorte', afternoon school for 'Unterstufe' children. These are run by different teachers who have a different training from 'Unterstufe' teachers. They train for four years in a 'Fachschule', however there is a move towards having 'Unterstufe' trained teachers running the 'Schulhorte'. Children attending spend their time doing their homework, playing, gardening, and going on trips. In 1984 83% of children of 'Unterstufe' age were using the 'Schulhorte'.⁴²

Special schools are smaller than the POS, with a much higher pupil-teacher ratio. The one visited in Erfurt in 1982, for physically handicapped pupils, had 250 children with 100 teachers and carers. There is also a medical ward and medical staff. The exam system parallels that in the POS, and pupils can be re-integrated into the general system if the teachers (not the parents) decide it is possible. It was expected that all the children in this school would be employed. However, handicapped people cannot be teachers, the reason given being that teachers have to be physically strong. Teachers in special schools receive a higher wage than those in the POS, about 1,000 Marks per month which is more than a doctor of equivalent age. The school was well-equipped and resembled our own comprehensive schools more than the POS seemed to, in the sense that the teaching was more informal than in the POS and there was a greater emphasis on self-expression and artistic development.

Post-school education takes many varied forms in the GDR. Vocational training is compulsory, except for the

small minority who go into the EOS, and takes place in 965 'Berufsschule' or vocational schools. There are also 240 'Fachschule' or technical schools which are usually attended after the period of vocational training, 48 'Hochschule' or colleges and 6 universities.⁴³ Entry into the colleges and universities is dependent on gaining the Abitur, although other considerations are the political work of students and the stated aim that these institutions should reflect the class composition of society as a whole. Mature students can also enter college or university through other routes which do not entail having the Abitur. In addition to these institutes of higher education there are various adult education establishments, where, in theory, anyone can continue their education during their working life. There are enterprise and agricultural and/or co-operative based training centres where workers can gain their skilled worker certificates. There are industrial training centres which train managers. There are people's universities providing, in particular, language courses, and scientific societies where the latest scientific and research findings are introduced. Finally, there are more ad-hoc organisations providing a general education such as parent's associations and women's training centres.⁴⁴ As seen in chapter 4, women are encouraged to make use of these facilities and are granted study leave in order to do so. The socialist concept of life-long education is realised in these institutions and organisations.

Given the aims of socialist education, the role of the teacher is vital. According to Margot Honecker, Minister of Education, it is more vital now than at any time:

"The teacher in present day society is facing an exacting task in that he (sic) is now bringing up that generation which in the

*prime of its life, will complete socialism
and carry out the transition to communism."*⁴⁵

This is an illuminating statement in its assessment of when communism will be reached in the GDR. It would seem that the GDR will very soon be a communist society, and women will therefore soon have total equality. Our examination of the education of boys and girls which is taking place now would seem to deny this possibility.

There is not a unitary system of teacher training in the GDR, and students attend universities, 'pädagogische Hochschulen', teacher training colleges or pedagogical schools depending on the level at which they are to teach. Kindergarten teachers complete ten years at the POS and then study for three years at the pedagogical schools which have a similar status to technical schools. Teachers for the 'Unterstufe' at the POS also complete a ten-year general education and then study for four years at a teacher training college, which is a category of technical college. 'Oberstufe' teachers have to pass the Abitur and then enter a university or 'pädagogische Hochschule'. The period of training for them was for four years, but from 1982 was extended to five years. There is, in theory, no difference between a university and a 'pädagogische Hochschule' (of which there are nine in the GDR), but universities continue to be perceived by parents as having a higher status.

Apart from the initial teacher training, all teachers must complete 100 hours in-service training every five years. This is either undertaken in short units or in a block, for which there are residential places for teachers in rural areas. One week of this training must be on theory/pedagogy and two weeks on their subject and teaching methods. Seminars are also organised on particular themes within a town or a school. All these take place in the holidays. Kindergarten teachers receive their in-service training from the head teacher

who herself attends the courses. Teachers also have seventy days a year (100 days if they have two or more children) to pursue their own qualifications. Women are always encouraged to take advantage of this right, but it is admitted that there are always problems of conflict with family duties.⁴⁶

All student teachers have the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism incorporated into their course, and there is an emphasis on educational theory and on practical experience. A detailed example of training courses is given here for the 'Diplomlehrer'- a teacher for years 5-12 in a POS - based on the revised five-year schedule, and obtained during a visit to the GDR.:-

Figure 1

Marxism-Leninism	3 months per year.
Main subject	956 hours
Subsidiary subject	600 hours
Education	200 hours
Psychology	111 hours
Methodology	250 hours
Obligatory subjects	180 hours

There is a lot of practical experience in the course, including participation in holiday camps, psychological studies in schools, a day a week in a school during the third year, and the whole of the fifth year is practical. Teachers can belong to any political party or to none, although there is a higher proportion of teachers in the SED than of other groups of workers. 70% of student teachers are female, the proportion varying from one sector of the education system to another, in a pattern similar to that found in Britain. This will be looked at in more detail in chapter 6. (See Table 25)

The education system in the GDR is thus geared towards serving the needs of the economy and in providing an equal education to all members of society regardless of their social origin or sex. This is done in terms of the

knowledge and practical skills gained as well as in terms of the socialisation children are exposed to. For the purposes of this dissertation, it is necessary to give a statistical survey of the position of women in the economy and in society and to attempt to draw links between the education they receive and the position they later find themselves in. The statistical survey is undertaken in the next chapter and is further analysed in chapter 7.

Notes to chapter 5.

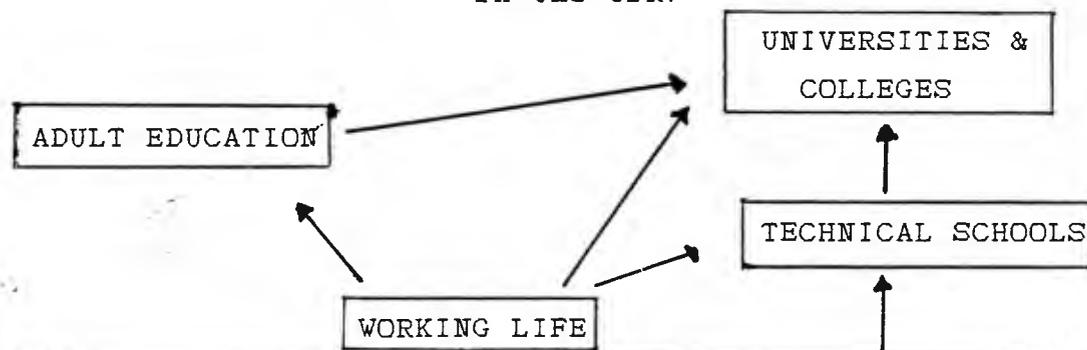
1. Constitution of the GDR 1949, op.cit.
2. According to East German teacher Bertha Mourton. See below for an explanation of the Abitur.
3. T.A.Baylis, The Technical Intelligentsia and the East German Elite, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1974, chapter 2.
4. Akademie der Pädagogischen Wissenschaften der DDR, Das Bildungswesen der DDR, Volk und Wissen Volkseigener Verlag, Berlin 1979. P.23.
5. Constitution of the GDR 1949, op.cit. Article 35.
6. Constitution of the GDR 1968, op.cit.
7. Ibid, Article 26(i). My emphasis.
8. "Das Bildungswesen dient der Erziehung und Ausbildung allseitige entwickelte Persönlichkeiten, die ihre Fähigkeiten und Begabung zum Wohl der sozialistischen Gesellschaft entfalten, sich durch Arbeitsliebe und Verleidungsbereitschaft, durch Gemeinschaftsgeist und das Streben nach hohen kommunistischen Idealen auszeichnen." Programm der SED, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1982. P.66-7.
9. "Sozialistische Erziehung heißt: allseitige Entwicklung der Persönlichkeit, Erziehung zur Solidarität, und zu kollektiven Handeln, Erziehung zur Liebe zur Arbeit, Erziehung zu kampferischer Aktivität, Vermittlung einer hohen theoretischen und musischen Allgemeinbildung, Entfaltung aller geistigen und körperlichen Fähigkeiten, d.h. Bildung des sozialistischen Bewußtseins zum Wohl des Volkes und der Nation." Dokumente der SED, Bande 7, Dietz Verlag Berlin, 1961. P 506.
10. E.Schneider, op cit, chapter 5.
11. "In der sozialistischen Gesellschaftsordnung verschwindern die wesentlichen Unterschiede zwischen körperliche und geistige Arbeit allmählich

- für die Entfaltung der Talente aller Werktätigen wird der Weg freigemacht." Dokumente der SED Bände 7, op.cit. P.507.
12. D.Childs, op.cit. chapter 8.
 13. M.S.Klein, op.cit. P.15.
 14. See chapter 3.
 15. M.S.Klein, op.cit. P17-18.
 16. See Figure 2 for diagramatic view of the school education system.
 17. See Figure 3.
 18. S.Kammerman & A.Kahn, Childcare, family benefits and working parents: A Study in Comparative Policy, Columbia U.P., N.Y., 1981.
 19. ILO, op cit, P.18.
 20. Women in the GDR, Report by the GDR government to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. op.cit. P.15.
 21. Statistische Jahrbuch der DDR 1980, op.cit. P.288.
 22. See chapter 7 for further discussion of this.
 23. Point made in discussion with the organisers of in-service training for teachers at the 'Bezirkskabinett für Weiterbildung' in Leipzig
 24. M.S.Klein, op.cit. P.41.
 25. Statistische Jahrbuch der DDR 1985, op.cit. P.295. The proportion in specialised schools for exceptional students was quoted as being 0.6% by G.Menke in the 'Haus des Lehrers' in Berlin.
 26. M.S.Klein, op.cit. P.46.
 27. Statistics given by G.Menke.
 28. Statistische Jahrbuch der DDR 1985, op.cit. P. 295.
 29. H.Klein, Bildung in der DDR, Rowolt Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH, Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1974. P.110.
 30. M.S.Klein, op. cit. P.152.
 31. See Figure 4.
 32. M.S.Klein, op.cit. P. 152.

33. Such as that undertaken by all school students in the FRG. A similar trend can be seen in this country with Youth Training Schemes, but I would not wish to compare this 'training' in its present form with that which takes place in West Germany, and certainly not with what takes place in the GDR.
34. Lehrplan Polytechnische Unterricht, P2.P.1. Volk & Wissen Volkseigener Verlag, Berlin P.8.
35. E.Schneider, op.cit. Chapter 5.
36. "Gleichberechtigung und gegenseitige Hilfe in der Schule stehen also in capitalisitschen Ländern objectiv im Widerspruch zu der realen Situation im Leben. Im Sozialismus dagegen spiegeln sie die Einheit von Schule und Leben wider und enthalen von daher ihre spezifische inhaltlich Prägung."
H.Klein, op.cit. P.160.
37. Ibid, P.160.
38. Dokumente und Materialien der demokratische Schulreform, op.cit. P.149.
39. U.Bronfenbrenner, op.cit. P.77.
40. Statistische Jahrbuch der DDR 1985, op.cit. P.294.
41. According to the 'Bezirkskabinett für Weiterbildung'. Apparently the surplus of teachers has not led to a programme of retraining as it is feared that it might precipitate an exodus of maths and science teachers into new technology even though the pay is no better there.
42. Statistische Jahrbuch 1985, op.cit. P. 292.
43. Ibid, Pp.296 & 303.
44. E.Schneider, op.cit.
45. Quoted in M.S.Klein, op.cit. P.89.
46. By members of the 'Bezirkskabinett', Leipzig.

FIGURE 2.

Structure of the Integrated Socialist Education System
in the GDR.



AGE		GRADE
19		13
18		12
17	VOCATIONAL TRAINING	* ** 11
16		10
15		*** 9
14	TEN-YEAR GENERAL	8
13		Oberstufe 7
12	POLYTECHNICAL	6
11		5
10	SCHOOL	4
9		3
8		Unterstufe 2
7		1
6		
5	KINDERGARTEN	
4		
3		
2	CRÈCHE	
1		

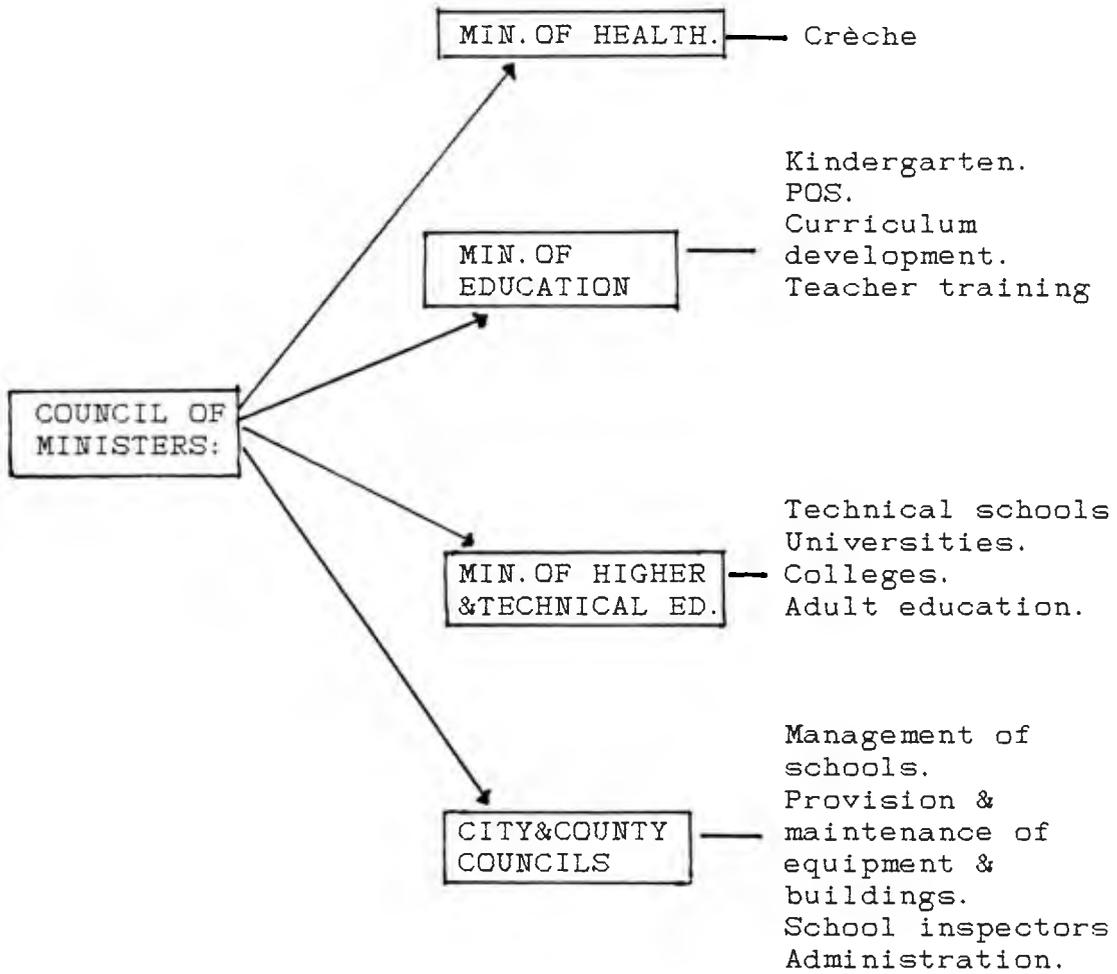
* Vocational Training plus Abitur.

** EOS

*** Special Preparation classes for EOS

From: Education in the GDR, Panorama DDR, P.54.

FIGURE 3



From: M.S.Klein, P.41.

FIGURE 5

Subject Time in the 'Oberstufe' and 'Unterstufe'.

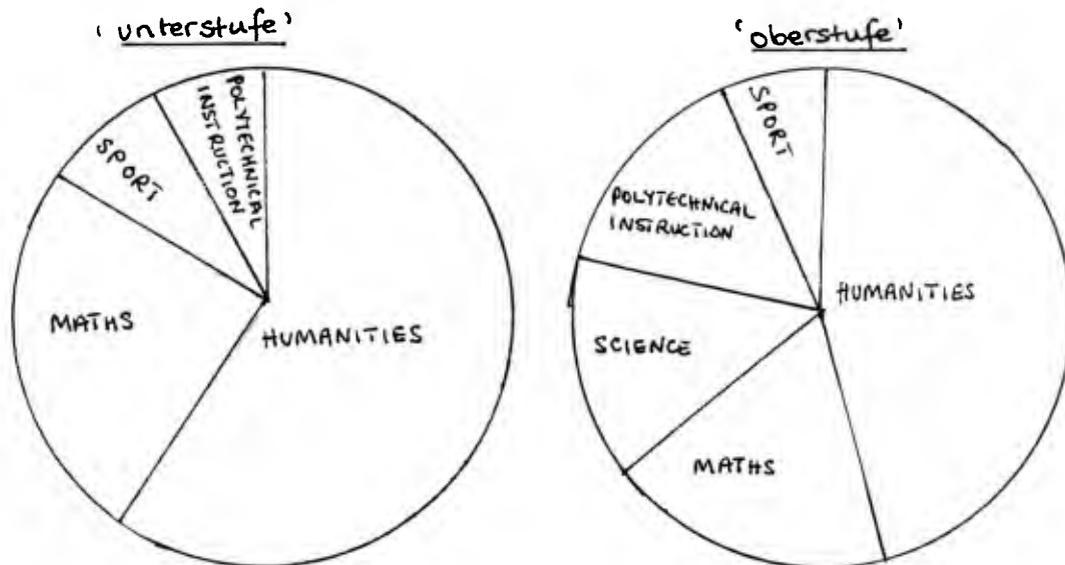


FIGURE 4
Weekly Timetable of the POS.

SUBJECT	GRADE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
German		10*	12	14	14	7	6	5	5	3	3
Russian		-	-	-	-	6	5	3	3	3	3
Mathematics		5	6	6	6	6	6	6	4	5	4
Physics		-	-	-	-	-	3	2	2	3	3
Astronomy		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Chemistry		-	-	-	-	-	-	2	4	2	2
Biology		-	-	-	-	2	2	1	2	2	2
Geography		-	-	-	-	2	2	2	2	1	2
Industrial arts		1	1	1	2	2	2	-	-	-	-
Gardening		1**	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Poly.ed.***		-	-	-	-	-	-	4	4	5	5
History		-	-	-	-	1	2	2	2	2	2
Civics		-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	2
Drawing		1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	-
Music		1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sport		2	2	2	3	3	3	2	2	2	2
TOTAL		21	24	27	29	31	33	32	33	31	32

* 11 lessons during the first 6 months

** starts at the beginning of the second 6 months

*** is subdivided into the subjects: Introduction to socialist production, technical drawing and productive work.

Optional subjects: Needlework in grades 5 & 6 (1 lesson each), second foreign language in grades 7-10 (3 lessons each).

From: Education in the GDR. Panorama DDR, Auslandspresseagentu GmbH, Verlag Zeit im Bild, Dresden, 1984.

CHAPTER 6.

An attempt will be made in this chapter to illustrate the objective position of women in the economy of the GDR. For this purpose, statistics have been compiled from the statistical yearbooks of the GDR¹ and of the FRG² for various years, from UNESCO yearbooks³ and from the ILO Yearbooks of Labour Statistics⁴. An historical approach has been taken to illustrate how the position of women has changed, and an international perspective shows the relative success of GDR policies.

Statistics published in the GDR yearbooks reveal a familiar pattern of employment for women. However, the job categories used are rather broad, and certain assumptions have been made, for the purposes of this dissertation, as to the finer job distinctions. This has been done on the basis of other materials used in the dissertation. There are also glaring omissions in the otherwise comprehensive statistics: for example, after 1972 statistics are not given for the numbers of women in part-time employment. Table 9 indicates that the figure has been increasing up until 1972, albeit not due to a decrease in the number of full-time women workers, and as women are encouraged to work full-time it could be concluded that the strain of women's dual role was forcing women to turn to part-time work despite official policy.⁵ A more significant omission in the statistics is a breakdown of earnings by sex. The average monthly wage is given for many categories of jobs in Tables 15 and 16, but male/female average earnings are no longer given in the yearbooks. Average earnings for men and women were last published in 1968 with figures for 1962. Those figures showed that 80% of all working women, compared with 30% of all working men, were at that time in the lowest four of eight wage categories.⁶ The unpalatable fact that women in full-time employment earn

handwritten note:
historical significance of
more in policy work

on average less than men is recognised in the GDR but no longer documented.

This wage discrepancy is partly explained by the lack of qualifications women had obtained in pre-1945 Germany, a disadvantage that the GDR has taken very seriously. In 1961 only one in ten women in industry had qualifications, whereas by 1971 this had increased to one in five. In 1971 78% of men and 75% of women aged 18-20, and 84% of men and 73% of women aged 20-30 had job qualifications. Due to this tremendous success of educational policies, young women would now appear to be on a par with young men. However, the level of qualification, and for what type of job, are not mentioned. This will be examined in more detail in a discussion of Tables 15 and 16, where it will be argued that on average women still earn less than men.

Population statistics as shown in Table 1 show clearly the gender imbalance in the GDR after the war. This imbalance increased the necessity of bringing women rapidly into the workforce. The population declined further in the 1950's due to people leaving for the West, before the exodus was halted with the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961. Although the population of the GDR continued a slow decline, Table 2 shows that after 1970 the population of working age begins to increase. This change in the workforce age structure is due to war survivors reaching pensionable age, a post-war baby boom, and a more recent fall in the birth-rate, there being a negative population growth after 1970, although this has now recovered.

Despite women being in the majority in the 1950's, there were fewer women than men working, as Table 3 shows. From these figures the percentage of men and women of working age in employment (the 'activity rate') can be calculated as in Tables 4 and 5. The activity rate for men has decreased over the years. This pattern

is reflected in other countries, as shown in Table 7, and is due to an increasing trend to take early retirement. An expansion in further education could also be a factor in these countries, but is not significant in the GDR where the proportion of people in full-time further education has only increased slightly since 1965 (see Table 8). Meanwhile the activity rate for women has steadily increased in the GDR and is now equal to that of men. Women now constitute 50% of the workforce, although it must be remembered that the proportion who work part-time is not known. Part-time male employment is never mentioned and is assumed to be very small or non-existent. These figures illustrate the extraordinary achievement in the GDR of fulfilling the first pre-requisite for women's emancipation, viz. her entry into the economic sphere. It is interesting to note, however, that some Western countries are not far off the same situation. Table 7 shows that in Sweden women form 45% of the workforce, with the USA not far behind. In fact, Sweden has a higher activity rate for women than does Hungary, a comparable socialist country. Socialism is apparently not, therefore, a necessary condition for this first pre-requisite of women's emancipation.

It is not enough for the purposes of this dissertation to conclude that women have an equal role in the economic sphere because they have equal representation there. Other factors must be considered, for example the type of work men and women do, i.e. the sexual division of labour, the position women occupy in the career hierarchies, and wages. Education policies and practices have relevance here as people tend to do the job they are trained for and/or socially and psychologically prepared for. Promotion depends on study outside working hours, for which women have less time, as well as on

more subtle constraints of social attitudes. These are examined more fully in chapter 7.

In order to identify the areas of work where women are situated, a breakdown into job categories is shown in Tables 10-14. The categories given by the GDR are broad, and therefore any argument is necessarily tentative. Assumptions made outside the statistical evidence available have been based on other evidence supplied throughout the dissertation.

There has been a steady increase in the numbers of people working in industry, (from 7,722,500 in 1955 to 8,498,500 in 1984, and see Table 10), and Table 13 indicates that the proportion of workers in industry who are female has also increased, although it now appears to be in decline again. The major increases in the proportion of women have taken place in transport and communications, in business, and in the 'non-productive' spheres, the latter being accountable to the growth of the service sector, a traditional area of work for women also in the West. 63.1% of the total female workforce are engaged in industry and 'non-productive' work compared with 54% in 1960 (Table 12). A breakdown of industry as shown in Table 14 shows women to be engaged mostly in light industry and the food and textile industries. If it is conceded that those areas quoted above are traditionally female areas of work, then it can be concluded that the increase of women in the workforce which has taken place has emphasised the traditional sexual division of labour. It must be pointed out, however, that the largest decrease in the workforce, particularly for women workers, has been in forestry and agriculture, another traditionally female area of work where women's role declines with mechanisation. (Table 11) A look at the least traditionally female area of work, i.e. construction, shows that the percentage of women in that industry has

almost doubled since 1955, and although it is still low at 16% (Table 13), it is undoubtedly higher than in Western countries.

38% of the total workforce was engaged in industry in 1984 and of those workers 42% were female. Women are not, however distributed evenly throughout the various sectors of industry, but are concentrated in certain sectors. Those industries with an above average proportion of women are electronics, light industry, textile industries and the food industry (Table 14). Women are thus concentrated in those areas where manual dexterity are important or which are traditionally female preserves in domestic as well as productive life.

Whilst women have an opportunity equal to that of men to work, they are concentrated in traditionally female areas and the stereotypes are only slowly, if at all, breaking down. Whilst being concerned about the stereotyping of women (and of men), it does not necessarily follow that their position in the economic sphere is inferior. The status of their work and their remuneration for it are good indicators of their relative position. It is difficult to establish the status afforded various jobs, although wages are relevant. The GDR does not publish wages broken down by sex, and conclusions must be tentatively drawn by combining the available statistics. Tables 15 and 16 illustrate that wages have consistently been above average in those sectors of the economy dominated by men, whereas where women are predominant wages are relatively low. Industrial wages have consistently been high, but a similar pattern emerges with the breakdown of industry into sectors (Table 16). In light industry, textiles and food, the wages are below average, whilst the highest wage is paid in metallurgy which has the lowest proportion of women. The anomaly is the water industry with low wages and a low proportion of women,

but as the total employed in this sector is only 0.7% of the workforce, it is not considered significant (Tables 14 and 16). A large proportion of the workforce is engaged in engineering, and with a workforce that is nearly 70% male the wages are high. These figures do not prove that average male earnings are higher than average female earnings, they only relate to the 'productive' sphere and do not indicate wage differentials due to grading within sectors. However, it is considered here that the figures are consistent enough to support the general conclusion that those areas of the economy where women workers are predominant are also those where wages are below average.

These figures show a relationship between the types of job women do and the average wage for those jobs. There may be even greater differences between male and female wages within job categories, depending on length of service and position within the career structure. Official sources note that, even in 1982, only 30% of women 'perform leading functions in the economy'.¹⁰ Another consideration is that, whilst women do not lose any annual increments through time off on maternity leave', women sometimes leave full-time work for longer than official maternity leave and they would not be compensated for this. Also, part-time workers, mainly women, may not have the same promotion prospects.

A person's position within the career structure depends mainly on the level at which they entered that career and the training they receive during their employment, as well as less tangible things such as the prejudices of their superiors. If the post-school education and training of women is examined, some tentative conclusions on these factors can be drawn. Whatever the criticisms stated here however, it must be said that the opportunity for training for women in the GDR is far greater than in Western countries and women

are increasingly obtaining higher education in all subjects. Table 17 relates to all those in higher and further education (except technical medical schools before 1974), in full-time and part-time study, evening and correspondence courses. Whilst the total number of students has decreased over the ten year period¹², the proportion of women has risen from 48.4% to 52.2%.

The subject categories used by UNESCO correspond closely to those used by the GDR (see Table 26), but a confusion could arise over the category 'engineering' as used by UNESCO for the GDR. Notes to Table 17 show which subjects come under this category, and it would be more accurate to term it 'technical subjects' of which engineering would be one. This would avoid any conclusion that nearly one-third of engineering students are women which is clearly not the case. The category includes 'textiles' which would be mostly women, and also 'applied science' would help to contribute to the 30% figure.

Table 17 shows that women are increasing their representation in all areas except medicine, where there is a slight decline, and law where women account for just over one-third of students. It is clear from this Table that women are hugely over-represented in medicine and education, traditional female preserves, and under-represented in technical subjects. In fact 76% of all female students in further and higher education are studying education, medicine and social sciences. A clearer picture emerges if post-school education is broken down into its different sectors, i.e. universities and Hochschulen, Fachschulen, and Berufsschulen.¹³ In technical colleges (Fachschulen) women account for 70% of students (Table 18). This figure has increased steadily over the years and the increase is not just accountable to the inclusion of technical medical schools in 1974. It should be noted

that in technical colleges medicine does not include the training of doctors, and education does not include the training of teachers above level 4 of the POS (see Table 26). Medicine, mainly the training of nurses, and education, mainly the training of nursery and primary teachers, accounted for 44% of the total numbers of students in technical colleges in 1984, these subjects being taken predominantly by women.¹⁴

A general statement can be made concerning post-school education in the GDR as can be made concerning it in Britain, i.e. that in general people are trained for more prestigious jobs, and for the higher levels in any profession or job, in colleges and universities rather than in technical colleges. Tables 18 and 19 show that 50% of students in the former sectors are women compared to 73% in the latter sector. Education is a good example of this: whereas 98.7% of Kindergarten and crèche teachers are women, only 7% of university lecturers are women, the latter having higher status and pay (see Tables 24 & 25).

There is a similar pattern further down the system in the vocational schools: 43% of vocational students are women, but only 34.5% are female in the classes where training is combined with studying for the Abitur, the exam needed for university entrance, and this figure has drastically decreased in recent years (see Table 20). In terms of the subjects studied by women, again they follow traditional lines. In 1970 the 'Decree on Vocational Counselling' imposed on all schools the obligation to awaken students' interests in 'crucial vocations' and to induce more women to embark on a curriculum of technical education. But again 'technical education' encompasses many things, and whereas by 1974 30% of all full-time students at vocational schools taking technical subjects were women, most of the students opting for 'machinery' were men whilst four-

fifths of those taking 'textiles' were women.¹⁵ This is borne out in Table 21 which indicates the subjects taken by vocational students in 1979 and 1984, and there is again a marked division along gender lines. Thus 10% of engineering students and 90% of textiles students were women. Construction is dominated by male students. It is interesting to note that the proportion of women overall decreased between 1979 and 1986, whilst the proportion of women in communications increased significantly. Table 24 indicates a similar pattern among apprentices, although there is a slight shift taking place over the years.

At an early stage, then, women are choosing stereotypical careers. This choice is to some extent determined by the annual allocation given to apprenticeships and vocational training places which is planned by the central administration, and which allocates certain percentages to girls and boys, as will be seen in the next chapter. Sudau, in her article in 'The New German Critique' states that:

*"No female were accepted as roofers, chimney sweeps, or glaziers. Instead, almost all training spots for sales positions were held open for them. Only girls were accepted as seamstresses or specialists in secretarial work, but the apprenticeships for electricians were almost all reserved for the boys."*¹⁶

It would appear that girls are being channelled into traditional, and traditionally low-paid, areas of work in the name of central planning. Yet at the same time they are being encouraged, in theory, into technical jobs, so there would appear to be some contradiction between theory and practice. Of course, to say that girls 'choose' a specific career is to some extent begging the question, because their 'choice' is the

outcome of their previous educational and social experiences.

Education in the GDR does not end when employment begins. There is a great emphasis on adult education, and more and more workers are gaining qualifications. Women have always been behind men in their level of training, which of course has implications for their careers and wages. The numbers of women with some form of job qualification have been consistently below average. As noted earlier, the situation has improved greatly, but Table 23 indicates that in 1984 women were still not receiving the same amount of in-service training as men. For example, whilst 42% of employees in industry in 1984 were women, women accounted for only 24% of students in industry engaged in in-service training for some kind of qualification (for example the skilled workers certificate). There was a similar pattern for all other sectors of the economy except business. Given that less women than men had qualifications to start with, the proportion of women among in-service students should have been greater than their proportion among workers in each sector of the economy.

The tables relating to education and training presented here indicate that women continue to choose stereotypical careers, although decreasingly so, and that they are probably being trained for lower levels in the career structures. They also indicate that women do not receive the same training after entering a career, and this will obviously effect their promotion prospects and wage level. It must be remembered that apart from these disadvantages, women's success in employment is also constrained by male prejudices and by their own lack of energy and drive due to their domestic responsibilities and to their own self-image.

The statistics presented in this chapter have been used to illustrate certain points. Firstly, that working women are concentrated in particular sectors of the economy which tend to be traditionally female. These are jobs which reflect a woman's domestic role or are said to make use of her 'natural' skills and inclinations. Some would see this as a perfectly acceptable state of affairs, although in fact it is not accepted in the GDR as can be seen in the constant endeavours to encourage women into technical subjects. As stated elsewhere, the argument of this dissertation is that such a division of labour is a constraint on the achievement of equality for women.

Secondly, what the statistics show is that there is some relationship between the type of work done by women and the remuneration for that work. Equal pay, guaranteed by law, is not a reality. It is not just pay that is related to the gender of the workforce, but also job status: For what reason does the medical profession enjoy a lower status in the GDR (and in the Soviet Union) than in any Western society? Could it be related to the much higher proportion of female doctors?

Thirdly, the statistics have been used to show that in, general, women tend to be less well-qualified than men, despite appearing on the surface to enjoy an equal education. This in turn affects their career and promotion prospects.

These and other points illustrated in the chapter serve to show that the GDR rhetoric concerning women's equality conceals a different reality in the economy, i.e. one of inferiority. However, these statistics also show what a tremendous change has taken place in the post-war years. This progress seems to have stultified. The argument of this thesis is that the progress has come to a standstill before reaching the desired goal due to the inadequacies of the theoretical position on

which it is based and to the lack of change in other areas of life. This is the subject of the next chapter.

Notes to chapter 6.

1. Statistisches Jahrbuch der DDR 1980 & 1985.
Staatsverlag der DDR, Berlin 1980 and 1985.
2. Statistisches Jahrbuch der BRD 1980.
3. International Yearbook of Education. 1970-1982.
UNESCO, Geneva.
4. ILO Yearbook of International Labour Statistics.
1961-2, 1980-3. Geneva.
5. The figure given to me by Herta Kuhrig in 1986 was 28%. This question is discussed in chapter 7.
6. H.G. Shaffer, op.cit. P.102. The wage categories are as follows:- 1 & 2 'Hilfsarbeiter', 'Ungelernte Arbeiter'. 3 & 4 'Angelernte Arbeiter'. 5 'Facharbeiter ohne Berufserfahrung'. 6,7 & 8 'Facharbeiter mit höherer Qualifikation'.
7. R. Wiggerhaus, Geschichte der Frauen und der Frauenbewegung in der BRD und der DDR nach 1945.
Peter Hammer Verlag, Wuppertal, 1979. P.100.
8. Statistische Jahrbuch der DDR 1985. op.cit. P.3*.
See chapter 7.
9. This was confirmed in conversation with Herta Kuhrig. Men work part-time only after retirement age.
10. Panorama DDR , Women in the GDR. Verlag Zeit im Bild.
Dresden, 1983. P.10.
11. See chapter 4.
12. There was a change in educational policy due to the re-orientation towards slower scientific-technological progress and the realisation that in the foreseeable future fewer jobs requiring highly qualified personnel would be available. Admissions to technical subjects were therefore reduced. See H. Zimmermann, "The GDR in the 1970's", Problems of Communism. Vol.27 No.2 March/April 1978.
13. N.B. The latter sector is not included in Table 18.

14. Statistisches Jahrbuch der DDR 1985, op.cit.
P.304/5.
15. H.G.Shaffer, op.cit. P.128.
16. C.Sudau, "Women in the GDR", New German Critique,
No. 13, 1978. Pp..69-81.

TABLE 1

Population of the GDR¹ 1939-1984

YEAR	TOTAL POP.	TOTAL M. POP.	TOTAL F. POP.
1939	16,745,385	8,190,781	8,554,604
1946	18,488,316	7,859,545	10,628,771
1950	18,388,172	8,161,189	10,226,983
1955	17,832,232	7,968,716	9,863,516
1960	17,188,488	7,745,274	9,443,214
1965	17,039,717	7,779,661	9,260,056
1970	17,068,318	7,865,265	9,203,053
1975	16,820,249	7,817,415	9,002,834
1980	16,739,538	7,856,965	8,882,573
1984	16,659,957	7,868,406	8,791,551

1. The GDR obviously did not exist before 1948. The area of Germany that was to become the GDR has been used to give comparisons with pre-war populations.

TABLE 2

Population of the GDR of working age (15-60/65)
1955-1984

YEAR	TOTAL POP. (working age)	TOTAL M. POP. (15-65)	TOTAL F. POP. (15-60)
1955	11,402,495	5,220,831	6,181,664
1960	10,542,093	4,961,099	5,580,994
1965	9,916,271	4,789,255	5,127,016
1970	9,881,068	4,870,386	5,010,682
1975	10,046,449	5,031,755	5,014,694
1980	10,580,640	5,323,965	5,256,675
1984	10,766,551	5,525,551	5,241,706

From: Statistisches Jahrbuch der DDR 1985, P348-9

TABLE 3

Employed (without apprentices) in full-time and part-time work. 1955-1984

YEAR	TOTAL EMPLOYED	MALE EMPLOYED	FEM. EMPLOYED
1955	7,722,500	4,326,900	3,395,600
1960	7,685,600	4,229,200	3,456,400
1965	7,675,800	4,095,000	3,580,800
1970	7,769,300	4,019,600	3,749,700
1975	7,947,600	4,002,000	3,945,600
1980	8,225,200	4,119,300	4,105,900
1984	8,499,000	4,303,000	4,196,000

TABLE 4

Working men as a proportion of male population of working age. 1955-1984.

YEAR	1955	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1984
%	82.9	85.3	85.5	82.5	79.5	77.4	77.9

TABLE 5

Working women as a proportion of female population of working age. 1955-1984

YEAR	1955	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1984
%	54.9	61.9	69.8	74.8	78.7	78.1	80.0

TABLE 6

Working women as a proportion of the total workforce 1955-1984.

YEAR	1955	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1984
%	44.0	45.0	46.7	48.3	49.7	49.9	49.4

Tables 3-6 compiled from: Statistisches Jahrbuch der DDR 1985, Pp. 111, 122, 123.

TABLE 7.

Activity rates for men and women, and women as a proportion of the total workforce in various countries in Europe.

COUNTRY	ACTIVITY RATES ^{1, 2}				WOMEN AS A %	
	MALES		FEMALES		OF TOTAL	
	c1960	c1979	c1960	c1979	c1960	c1979
France	90.4	82.3	49.9	54.9	33.4	38.3
FRG	95.5	85.9	54.1	54.4	36.7	37.9
GDR ³	89.0	83.1	64.1	82.1	44.8	49.7
Hungary	100.8	84.4	50.7	66.5	35.1	43.4
Netherlands	94.2	79.4	28.4	36.9	22.3	29.7
Sweden ⁴	91.8	83.6	42.7	77.3	29.8	45.0
UK ⁴	98.2	92.4	49.6	64.1	32.5	39.9
USA ⁴	90.5	86.1	44.1	63.3	32.1	41.5

1. For comparative reasons, activity rate is calculated as the total numbers working (of any age) in proportion to the numbers of working age (15-64 for men, 15-59 for women). For this reason it can be more than 100%.

2. "In interpreting these rates, the effects of differences in the definitions of the economically active population used in various countries should be taken into account. In particular, the activity rate for females are frequently not comparable internationally, since in many countries relatively large numbers of women assist on farms or in other family enterprises without pay, and there are differences from one country to another in the criteria adopted for determining the extent to which such workers are to be counted among the economically active." ILO Yearbook, 1965, P. 3

3. For the purposes of comparison, apprentices included.

4. For c1979 working ages are taken as 15-65 and 15-60.

Compiled from ILO and GDR statistical Yearbooks.

TABLE 8

Students in post-16 full-time education'
1965-1984.

YEAR	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	STUDENTS AS A % OF POP. OF WORKING AGE
1965	631,238	6.4
1970	648,310	6.6
1975	647,897	6.4
1980	667,934	6.3
1984	645,563	6.0

1. This includes the EOS, vocational schools, technical colleges, higher education colleges and universities.

From: Statistisches Jahrbuch der DDR 1985,
Pp.295,296,302,303.

TABLE 9

Married women in employment.

YEAR	% IN F-T WORK	% IN P-T WORK	% NOT IN WORK
1965	41.7	30.3	28.0
1972	42.0	36.3	21.7

From G.Lippold, "A Contribution to the Temporal Aspects of the Socialist Way of Life", Society and Leisure, Vol.6, No.2, 1974.

In the following tables, abbreviations have been used as follows:

I	Industry	H	Productive Handicraft
C	Construction	A/F	Agriculture & Forestry
T/C	Transport & Communications	B	Business
O/P	Other Productive	N-P	Non-productive

TABLE 10.

% of the workforce in different sectors of the economy.
1955-1984.

YEAR	I	H	C	A/F	T/C	B	O/P	N-P
1955	32.9	6.6	5.6	22.3	6.5	10.9	15.2	
1960	36.0	5.4	6.1	17.0	7.2	11.6	1.2	15.5
1965	36.4	5.1	5.9	15.4	7.4	11.5	1.8	16.5
1970	36.8	5.2	6.9	12.8	7.5	11.0	2.3	17.4
1975	38.2	3.4	7.0	11.3	7.6	10.6	3.0	19.1
1980	38.0	3.1	7.1	10.7	7.5	10.3	3.2	20.1
1984	37.9	3.1	6.9	10.8	7.4	10.1	3.0	20.9

TABLE 11

Women in different sectors as a proportion of total workforce. 1955-1984.

YEAR	I	H	C	A/F	T/C	B	O/P	N-P
1955	12.4	2.2	0.5	11.4	1.9	6.5	9.0	
1960	14.6	1.8	0.5	7.6	2.3	7.5	0.5	9.9
1965	14.5	2.0	0.6	7.3	2.5	7.8	0.8	11.2
1970	15.6	2.1	0.9	5.9	2.7	7.6	1.3	12.3
1975	16.7	1.3	1.0	4.8	2.8	7.6	1.6	14.5
1980	16.5	1.2	1.2	4.4	2.7	7.5	1.8	14.6
1984	15.9	1.2	1.1	4.2	2.7	7.4	1.7	15.3

From: Statistisches Jahrbuch der DDR 1985, P115, 116.

TABLE 12.

Women in different sectors as a proportion of the female workforce. 1955-1984.

YEAR	I	H	C	A/F	T/C	B	O/P	N-P
1955	28.3	5.1	1.2	26.0	4.3	14.7	20.5	
1960	32.4	4.0	1.2	17.2	5.2	16.7	1.2	21.6
1965	31.1	4.2	1.2	15.7	5.4	16.6	1.7	24.0
1970	32.3	4.3	1.9	12.2	5.5	15.8	2.6	25.4
1975	33.7	2.6	2.1	9.7	5.7	15.3	3.2	27.8
1980	33.0	2.4	2.3	8.9	5.5	15.1	3.5	29.3
1984	32.1	2.3	2.3	8.6	5.4	15.0	3.4	31.0

TABLE 13.

Proportion of women in each sector.
1955-1984.

YEAR	I	H	C	A/F	T/C	B	O/P	N-P
1955	37.7	34.3	9.0	51.3	28.7	59.0	59.4	
1960	40.5	33.6	8.6	45.7	32.3	64.6	42.8	64.2
1965	39.9	38.0	9.7	47.8	33.9	67.2	45.2	68.0
1970	42.5	40.1	13.3	45.8	35.5	69.2	53.7	70.2
1975	43.7	38.7	14.9	42.9	37.3	71.4	54.2	72.3
1980	43.3	38.0	16.2	41.4	36.9	72.8	55.1	72.9
1984	41.9	37.4	16.3	39.4	36.0	72.8	55.0	73.2

From: Statistisches Jahrbuch der DDR 1985, Pp.111,117

TABLE 14.

Workers in Industry 1984.

SECTOR OF INDUSTRY	TOTAL NOS. EMPLOYED	% OF TOTAL IN INDUSTRY	% FEMALE
Energy:	223,753	6.9	29.4
Chemical:	343,385	10.6	41.4
Metallurgy:	138,182	4.3	27.5
Building materials:	94,231	2.9	27.2
Water:	24,246	0.7	29.7
Machine&Vehicle building:	957,768	29.6	30.3
Electricity/ Electronics:	462,520	14.3	45.5
Light Industry Textile Industry:	497,920 222,353	15.4 6.9	59.5 68.5
Food Industry	275,539	8.5	48.2
TOTAL	3,239,897	100.0	42.0

From: Statistisches Jahrbuch der DDR 1985, Pp. 139, 157.

TABLE 15.

Proportion of women employed and average monthly earnings (Marks) in each productive sector, 1955-1984.

SECTOR	1955	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1984
I. % f.	37.7	40.5	39.9	42.5	43.7	43.3	41.9
I. Wage	460	571	656	770	895	1039	1121
C. % f.	9.0	8.6	9.7	13.3	14.9	16.2	16.3
C. Wage	440	600	686	833	949	1039	1123
A/F. % f.	51.3	45.7	47.8	45.8	42.9	41.4	39.4
A/F. Wage	324	475	573	710	886	1000	1062
Transport. % f.				25.6	27.3	27.5	27.1
T. Wage				806	990	1127	1208
Communications. % f.				68.8	70.5	70.4	69.3
Co. Wage				653	818	904	1035
B. % f.	59.0	64.6	67.2	69.2	71.4	72.8	72.8
B. Wage	380	487	536	668	798	905	984
AVE. WAGE	439	558	640	762	897	1030	1111

TABLE 16.

Proportion of women employed and average monthly earnings (Marks) in each sector of industry, 1984.

SECTOR	% FEMALE	WAGES
Energy	29.4	1229
Chemical	41.4	1148
Metallurgy	28.0	1197
Building Materials	27.2	1096
Water	29.8	1034
Machine & Vehicle building	30.3	1150
Electricity/Electronics	45.5	1146
Light Industry	59.5	1027
Textile Industry	68.5	997
Food Industry	48.2	1068
AVERAGE	42.0	1120

From: Statistisches Jahrbuch der DDR 1985,
Pp. 129, 230, 157.

TABLE 17.

Students in different subject areas¹ of higher and further education. 1972-1981.

SUBJECTS	1972			1981		
	Nos.	%	% F.	Nos.	%	% F.
Humanities	11,815	3.4	49.5	8,827	5.0	51.6
Education	60,585	17.4	75.1	54,662	18.5	78.0
Fine Arts	4,435	1.3	46.8	5,578	1.9	49.0
Law	4,475	1.3	40.3	3,650	1.2	35.0
Soc. Sci.	87,828	25.2	61.2	66,509	22.5	72.7
Nat. Sci	15,643	4.5	39.5	9,442	3.2	44.3
Engineering	131,201	37.7	20.4	82,811	28.0	28.8
Medicine	12,654	3.7	70.3	62,920	21.3	88.4
Agriculture	19,445	5.6	32.8	19,016	6.4	49.2
Total	348,081	-	48.4	295,761	-	52.2

1. See notes on following page for definition of subject areas.

2. Includes all students, part-time, full-time, correspondence and evening. After 1974 technical medical schools are included.

From the UNESCO yearbooks 1974-1983

NOTES TO TABLE 17.

HUMANITIES:	Archeology, History, Languages, Theology, Librarianship, Philosophy, Psychology, Letters.
EDUCATION:	Teacher Training, Pedagogy.
FINE ARTS:	Architecture, Drawing, Music, Painting, Sculpture, Speech & Drama.
LAW:	Law.
SOCIAL SCIENCES:	Banking, Commerce, Diplomacy, Economics, Ethnology, Geography, Home Economics, International Relations, Journalism, Political Science, Public Administration, Social Welfare, Sociology, Statistics.
NATURAL SCIENCES:	Astronomy, Bacteriology, Bio- chemistry, Biology, Botany, Chemistry, Entomolgy, Geology, Geophysics, Maths, Physics, Zoology.
ENGINEERING:	Applied Science, Construction, Metallurgy, Mining, Surveying, Technology, Textiles.
MEDICINE:	Anatomy, Dentistry, Medicine, Midwifery, Nursing, Pharmacy, Physiotherapy, Public Health.
AGRICULTURE.	Agronomy, Dairying, Fisheries, Forestry, Horticulture, Rural Science, Vetinary Medicine

TABLE 18.

Students enrolled in Further Education (Fachschulen)
1960-1984.

YEAR	No. OF STUDENTS	% FEMALE	Nos./1000POP.
1960	126,018	28.6	73,1
1965	113,624	30.5	66,7
1970	167,158	48.6	97,9
1975	156,384	65.4	93,0
1980	171,825	71.9	102,6
1985	163,573	73.4	98,2

TABLE 19.

Students enrolled in Higher Education (Universities
and Hochschulen) 1960-1984.

YEAR	No. OF STUDENTS	% FEMALE	Nos/1000POP.
1960	99,860	25.2	58,1
1965	111,591	26.1	65,5
1970	143,163	35.7	83,9
1975	136,854	48.2	81,4
1980	129,970	48.7	77,6
1984	129,628	49.9	77,8

From: Statistisches Jahrbuch der DDR 1985, Pp. 302, 303.

TABLE 20.

Students entering vocational training. 1970-84.

YEAR	ALL STUDENTS		ABITUR CLASSES	
	No. OF STUDENTS	%FEMALE	No. OF STUDENTS	%FEMALE
1970	193,894	46.0	16,371	36.3
1975	206,837	43.8	9,629	38.7
1980	231,450	44.3	11,108	39.3
1984	191,764	43.4	10,981	34.5

TABLE 21.

Vocational training by subject choice and gender. 1984.

SUBJECT	No. OF STUDENTS	% OF STUDENTS	% FEMALE
Chemistry:	3,716	1.9	79.0 (80.7)
Energy:	2,972	1.5	35.0 (41.7)
Metallurgy/ Raw mats.:	1,826	1.0	18.7 (18.1)
Engineering: Manufacture/ Production:	34,074	17.8	9.9 (10.0)
Electronics:	14,044	7.3	26.6 (27.7)
Automisation:	13,353	7.0	20.0 (21.2)
Joinery:	4,104	2.1	49.5 (53.8)
Textiles:	3,203	1.7	13.5 (16.9)
Leatherwork:	8,704	4.8	90.1 (92.1)
Food Prod.:	1,409	0.7	86.7 (87.8)
Agriculture/ Forestry:	5,973	3.1	47.9 (53.5)
Construction:	19,248	10.0	45.7 (48.7)
Transport:	22,809	12.0	8.1 (9.7)
Communications:	6,919	3.6	50.0 (53.9)
Management/ Administration:	3,527	1.8	61.0 (56.5)
Bus./Catering/ Hairdressing:	14,265	7.4	97.0 (97.0)
Other:	23,753	12.4	86.3 (88.3)
	7,875	4.1	--
Total:	191,764	-	43.4 (44.6)

Figures in brackets are for 1979.

From: Statistisches Jahrbuch der DDR 1985, P. 297.

TABLE 22.

No. of Apprentices (000's) and proportion female
1970-1984.

SECTOR	1970	1975	1980	1984
I (Nos.)	196,6	212,6	235,4	196,5
I (%F)	43.1	41.6	41.7	40.3
H (Nos.)	23,9	15,0	18,1	15,6
H (%F)	20.5	19.3	20.7	20.7
C (Nos.)	80,4	70,1	70,8	49,3
C (%F)	9.6	9.2	11.0	10.1
A/F (Nos.)	26,0	28,1	33,0	41,9
A/F (%F)	45.7	46.3	47.1	41.4
T/C (Nos.)	31,8	39,1	42,5	37,5
T/C (%F)	37.7	30.4	28.4	30.1
B (Nos.)	38,8	46,0	51,0	40,3
B (%F)	85.4	83.2	84.4	85.0
O/P (Nos.)	7,0	10,5	12,6	9,9
O/P (%F)	69.7	74.0	75.2	75.3
N-P (Nos.)	44,5	32,2	28,6	26,1
N-P (%F)	92.4	85.9	76.7	73.4
Total Nos.	448,8	453,6	492,0	417,2
Total %F	44.7	43.3	43.1	42.4

From: Statistisches Jahrbuch der DDR 1985, Pp. 115, 117.

TABLE 23.

Workers in further education classes 1984.

SECTOR	TOTAL NOS.	% FEMALE	% FEMALE IN WORKFORCE
Industry	734,148	24.0	41.9
Construction	122,385	10.4	16.3
Transport	185,044	20.1	27.1
Communications	20,772	46.8	69.3
Business	281,898	75.7	72.8
Total	1,730,267	40.7	49.4

From: Statistisches Jahrbuch der DDR 1985, P.300.

TABLE 24.

Proportion of women in some professions in the GDR and
the FRG 1975-8.

PROFESSION	GDR	FRG
Physician	46.0	20.2
Dentist	45.8	17.3
Pharmacist	61.0	37.0
Teacher	76.0	52.4
Lawyer	30.0	5.0
University/College Lecturer	7.0	0.6

From H. Shaffer, Women in the two Germanies.

TABLE 25.

Proportion of women teachers in different sectors of education 1984.

SECTOR	NOS. EMPLOYED (000's)	% FEMALE
Pre-school	100,7	98.7
School	238,7	75.8
Homes	14,0	76.4
Vocational education	11,1	55.0
Technical schools	21,4	61.7
Colleges	63,6	48.9
Adult education	10,3	56.3
Youth workers	5,0	50.0
Other	105,2	84.8

From: Statistisches Jahrbuch der DDR 1985, P.320.

TABLE 26.

Subjects studied in Colleges (Hochschulen) and Universities.

FACULTIES	SUBJECTS INCLUDED
Maths & Science:	Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Geology, Psychology, Pharmacy.
Technical Subjects	Engineering, Raw materials, Management, Electronics, Construction, Town Planning, Architecture, Transport, Mining, Surveying, Cartography.
Medicine	Medicine
Agriculture	Plant & Animal Production, Forestry, Nutrition.
Economics	Economics
Social Sciences	Philosophy, Sociology, Law, Marxism- Leninism.
Aesthetics/Civics	Aesthetics, Civics, Sport.
Theology	Theology.
Literature/ Languages	Philology, Languages, Journalism.
Art	Music, Fine Art, Applied Art, Representational Art, Industrial Art.
Pedagogy	'Oberstufe' teachers, Vocational teachers, Special School teachers

TABLE 27.

Subjects studied in Technical Colleges (Fachschulen).

FACULTIES	SUBJECTS INCLUDED.
Technical Ed.	Engineering, Textiles & Clothes, Carpentry, Raw Materials, Chemical & Biological Technicians, Paper, Automation, Electronics, Energy, Construction, Building Materials Technicians, Structural Engineering, Mining.
Medicine/Health	Nursing & Medical Assistants, Medical Technology, Radiography, Nursery Nurses, Pharmacy.
Agriculture	Plant & Animal Production, Soil Technology, Forestry, Nutrition.
Economics	Economics.
Social Science.	Politics, Sociology, Librarianship, Archivist, Book Trade.
Civics/Sport	Civics, Sport.
Literature/Ling.	Literature, Linguistics.
Art	Music, Representational Art, Applied Art.
Pedagogy	Vocational Teachers, Nursery Teachers, Playcentre Teachers, 'Unterstufe' Teachers.

CHAPTER 7.

In chapter 6 the economic situation of women viz à viz their role in the workforce, the sexual division of labour and the hierarchical and wages' structures were examined. This chapter proceeds to examine women's representation in political life and their equality in social life, thus completing the survey of the actual position of women in the economic, social and political life of the GDR. Secondly, the chapter will look at the realities of the 'dual role' and whether there has been any success in integrating women's two roles without detriment to her position in either sphere, or to herself as a person. Thirdly, the success of the cultural revolution will be examined and some measure given of the actual change in the consciousness of both men and women.

The political system of the GDR is based on the principle of democratic centralism. The decision-making bodies are elected in a pyramid formation, and the central body makes policies which are passed back down again and implemented by the State machinery.' The SED is the Marxist-Leninist party of the working class and is the dominant party in the National Front. Decisions by the SED are binding on the National Front and are ratified in the Volkskammer (People's Assembly). Decisions can, of course, be influenced through debate with other parties and interest groups in the Volkskammer and with other comrades in the SED at Party Congress. To the extent that these people are elected, either to the Volkskammer or to the Party Congress, democracy is not a meaningless concept in the GDR. The Party and government structure is, however, extremely authoritarian and power is centralised in a few hands. These considerations are important to this examination of the role women play in the political process, and the

effect they can have in determining their role in society.

The Volkskammer is the parliament of the GDR where decisions are ratified. Delegates are elected for five years by secret universal ballot of citizens over 21. Nine parliamentary groups constitute the Volkskammer, and each is allocated a certain number of seats. Each group puts forward names to the ballot and the requisite number are chosen after the vote. The numbers each group has in parliament does not change, and parliament is a unity of different groups within an acceptance of socialist principles. There is no opposition group as such. Although groups' interests may be in contradiction to each other, they are seen as 'non-antagonistic' as opposed to 'antagonistic' contradictions: As already noted, the antagonisms between men and women are seen as non-antagonistic, being due only to the persistence of pre-socialist mores.² The adherence to the concept of non-antagonistic contradictions is consistent with the denial of the need for an independent women's movement working for women's equality.

The 500 seats in the Volkskammer are distributed as follows:-

FIGURE 1.

SED	127
CDU	52
LDPD	52
NDPD	52
DBD	52
FDGB	68
FDJ	40
DFD	35
League of Culture	22

Clearly the SED has a dominant position in the Volkskammer and this dominance is present throughout the organs of government. The Volkskammer elects members of

two Councils, the Council of State, responsible for representing the GDR internationally, and the Council of Ministers, which is responsible for domestic and foreign issues. The Chairperson of the Council of State is the General Secretary of the SED, at present Erich Honecker. The Chairperson of the Council of Ministers is also a member of the SED. The Vice-chairpersons of both Councils are elected from the other four political parties. Ministers do not necessarily have to be SED members, for example the Minister of Justice is a member of the LDPD, although the SED alone has the right to control certain areas, e.g. defence.

The local representative bodies, the 'Bezirkstage' (regional bodies), 'Landkreise' (county councils), and 'Stadtkreise' (town councils), are similarly elected for five years, and they preside over all questions affecting the locality and take decisions based on central regulations, laws and decrees.

The National Front of political parties and groups has its own council and its own Presidium. Each party has its own internal structure and own Party Congress. Real power in the GDR rests in the Politburo of the SED.

What is the political status of women in terms of their representation in the bodies outlined? If it is accepted that women's political power rests on their ability to make demands on their government and their actual participation in the decision-making process, then not only is the proportion of women in different branches of government important, but so is their cohesiveness as a group and their effectiveness in the democratic process further down. But the argument is not so simple and disagreements abound. Some studies of various societies have suggested that the role of women in politics may reflect the degree to which they have achieved equality in other spheres rather than determine it. It should be pointed out, however, that

in a highly centralised and authoritarian structure such as the GDR, notions of equality are determined in large part by the government and party. Jodi Lovenduski notes that:

*"Throughout the history of state socialist Europe there has been little evidence of a correlation between levels of political participation by women and their share of top political leadership posts. And women's party roles have not kept pace with their economic and social roles. Part of the explanation for such discrepancies undoubtedly rests with the impact of the double burden in societies which are characterised by high levels of paid employment for women. But where elites have considerable experience of attitude transformation and where parties have considerable propaganda wherewithal, the failure to admit women into political leadership must be seen as deliberate."*⁴

She goes on to question whether the presence of women in the political elites will in fact improve women's position in general:

*"The evidence is that many women politicians are surrogate men, that they have no interest in pursuing women's rights or questions of particular concern to their women electors.... A certain 'critical mass' of women must exist to enable the development of a group identity and the resistance of socialisation into established male norms of elite behaviour."*⁵

It is undoubtedly true that many women politicians are not concerned with the advancement of women in general. The presence of women in the GDR ruling structure does not guarantee a faster or more true move towards women's

equality. The absence of women in these structures, however, must inhibit the realisation of women's equality, even if it was accepted (which it isn't here) that the contradictions between men and women are 'non-antagonistic'.

In relation to the ability of women to influence the decision-making process lower down, it is argued here that so long as no independent women's movement is 'allowed', women's demands will not be able to break out of the male-defined structures through which they are forced to operate. This theme will be discussed further in chapter 8.

What, then, is the representation of women in the political structure of the GDR? In 1982 the proportion of women in the 'Volkskammer' was 32.4%. It should be remembered that 35 of these women are DFD members with their places reserved. However, the representation of women, whilst being unequal, is far in advance of our own. In the Bezirkstage, the proportion of women is more favourable at 38.7% (after the 1981 elections). In the 'Landkreis' and 'Stadtkreis' it is 42.6% and in the village assemblies it is 36.8% (after the 1984 elections). For the year 1980, these figures can be broken down to show the different representation of women in the fifteen provinces (percentage female, see Figure 2.) It is interesting to note that Berlin, the capital city, has the worst representation of women. Those provinces with an above average proportion of women (in italics) are in the south of the country, the most industrial part.

It is clear that the GDR has gone a long way in its attempt to equalize the position of women in terms of parliamentary representation. If the pattern is traced up through the hierarchical structures, however, and the decision-making bodies both in government and in the SED are examined, a different picture emerges.

FIGURE 2

PROVINCE	BEZIRKSTAGE	LAND_/STADTKREISE
Berlin	30.5	37.9
Cottbus	40.0	46.2
Dresden	33.5	39.8
Erfurt	40.0	43.6
Frankfurt	39.4	42.6
Gera	40.5	46.3
Halle	38.0	40.5
Karl-Marx Stadt	35.5	37.5
Leipzig	42.0	41.1
Magdeburg	38.5	40.5
Neubrandenburg	36.0	41.6
Potsdam	41.5	45.3
Rostock	39.4	38.1
Schwerin	35	46.9
Suhl	38.1	46.3
AVERAGE	37.9	41.7

There are no Chairwomen in the Council of State or the Council of Ministers, and only one Minister out of a total of twenty-eight is a woman. This is Margot Honecker, Minister of Education, the most female sphere in the GDR.¹⁰ Of the 32 Presidium members and Chairpersons of the Volkskammer, two are women. Of the 126 Chairpersons and Officers of the various committees, councils and secretariats who inform the government on policy matters, three are women.¹¹ The proportion of female members of the SED has increased over the years, and in 1984 it was 35%.¹² Given that membership is an individual choice, with some Party ratification required, this in itself is a low figure, for reasons which will emerge later. Going up through the Party hierarchy, however, the situation is much worse. In 1976, nineteen out of the 145 members and four of the 52

candidate members of the Zentralkomitee (central committee) were women.¹³ The situation in the Politburo is even worse: there have been no female members of the Politburo to date and there are only two female candidate members. There have been female candidate members for some years and they do not seem to become full members¹⁴

FIGURE 3

YEAR	MEMBERS		CANDIDATE MEMBERS	
	Total	women	Total	Women
1949	7	0	2	0
1967	15	0	6	1
1974	16	0	10	2
1978	19	0	8	2

In 1986 the same two women are still candidate members. The fact that all the male members are over sixty years old also has some bearing on the attitudes towards women's equality in that their formative years were in the pre-socialist era.

*approx
and
change.*

In other organs of the Party hierarchy the pattern is little different, and the percentage of women members and candidate members in most positions has in fact declined: in 1946 there was at least a woman on the Politburo.¹⁵ This would appear to support the theory that women do better in times of revolution and upheaval when old structures are breaking down, e.g. in post-war GDR and in 1917 Russia, and then return to their former position, albeit with some changes, when stability returns.

This pattern of under-representation of women in the power structure runs across parties and through State institutions and industrial and professional hierarchies. However, things have been improving steadily throughout societal institutions. The percentage of judges who are women has increased from

15.3% in 1949 to 35.5% in 1970 and to 51% in 1982. Similarly for those years, the percentage of female mayors has been 8.5%, 18.1% and 27.2%.¹⁶ The situation has also improved in the trade unions, with a female membership of 53%, where 50.1% of the Central Committee of the FDGB are women. In 1984 50.1% of shop stewards, 59.8% of members and 51.4% of chairpersons of factory committees were women.¹⁷

The management structure in the professions and in industry, as well as the grading structure and the sexual division of labour, follows a similar pattern. This has consequences for the decision-making process, as well as for the wage's structure as shown in the previous chapter. There are women's committees in the FDGB and some advances have been made in the redesigning of machinery and the drawing up of annual plans for improving women's position in industry. Even so, in terms of the teaching profession, in 1982 only 31.6% of school directors were women.¹⁸ Official sources note that even in 1970, only one out of every eleven leading positions in industry was held by a woman and out of 10,000 collective farms the top leadership position was held by a woman in only 129.¹⁹ In 1982 the percentage of women 'performing leading functions in the economy' was quoted as 30%, and a further breakdown of this was given directly to the author. Whilst 48% of skilled workers are now female, only 12.4% of foremen (sic) are women. 61.8% of middle management are female, but only 38.2% of top management.²⁰ This will be examined later in the chapter, but to illustrate the point here, a survey carried out in the late 1960's among male workers in the energy sector showed that the majority would prefer to work under a male rather than a female boss. They were also asked who they, as managers, would appoint as managers out of a male and a female applicant, who both had children under sixteen years old, for a top

supervisory job. Over 75% of the men asked said they would opt for the man and only 5% for the woman.²¹ Whilst attitudes have changed since then, it was admitted to the author that women may still be discriminated against as they are seen as more unreliable due to their family commitments.²²

It could be argued that the DFD exists to ensure the representation of women's interests, but the DFD is not an independent group, and is limited to activities that are acceptable to the (male-dominated) Party. They cannot openly fight the Party on issues concerning women. There is no sex discrimination law as such in the GDR and no policies of positive discrimination in the form of quota systems. These things are seen as products of liberal capitalist democracies attempting to iron out some of the inequalities intrinsic in their systems. In a society where economic relations have changed so as to allow the equality of women to evolve, these things are not deemed necessary. The evolution does not appear to be so forthcoming.

As shown in chapter 6, the proportion of women in higher education has increased steadily over the years and is now over 50%. The proportion of the student body studying medical sciences (doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, public health) and education is 28%. The proportion of students who are female in these disciplines is 89% and 78% respectively.²³ A large proportion of the female student body is therefore involved in traditionally female areas. The sexual division of labour and the role of the education system in perpetuating it was tabulated in chapter 6. It must be said that, despite these misgivings, the record of the GDR in giving women equal opportunities in higher education - even at the levels of the universities and Hochschulen - is far in advance of Britain's and has improved steadily. However, the question remains: if

women have equal access to higher education and represent more than 50% of students, why do they not hold leadership positions in politics and managerial positions in the economy? The explanation must involve a closer look at schooling, at the opportunities for working women to devote time to their careers whilst bringing up a family, and at the prejudices which still exist towards women and which are reflected in their own self-image.

Have the GDR succeeded in their attempt to reconcile the 'dual role' of women? It will be argued here that the very attempt at reconciliation in the manner followed in the GDR detracts from rather than increases women's chances of achieving equality in the political, economic and social spheres. The achievement of the two aims are in contradiction, given the political and theoretical position of the GDR. The reasons for this will emerge in the course of the discussion.

It is undeniable that it has been made much easier for women to work and be mothers, and these very real advances should not be treated lightly. But what is the reality of a working mother's life and how does it compare with that of a working father? As shown in chapter 6, 78% of working-age women are employed and women formed 50.1% of the total workforce. Statistics on part-time work are not available after 1972 when 36.3% of married women worked part-time. As pointed out in chapter 4, part-time work was originally seen as a way of encouraging women into the workforce who would otherwise not work at all, but is not encouraged, and, it is claimed, has declined over recent years, especially after the reduction in the working week for women in 1977.²⁴ In fact, the unofficial figure for part-time workers was given to the author in an interview with Professor Herta Kuhrig in 1986. She said that about 28% of working women work part-time and that

these women are usually in the older age group, a group which does not benefit from all the pro-natalist policies for young mothers.

Why do women choose to work part-time? In a survey conducted in 1971 among women and printed in the 'Sozialistische Arbeitswissenschaft' No. 1, twenty reasons are given, ranked in order. The primary reason given is that a woman's obligations to her family, her home and in employment can be combined if she work part-time. This would suggest that the attempt to reconcile family duties with full-time work has not succeeded. The second most common reason given is illuminating: the husband wants his wife to work part-time so that she will have more time for the home - and presumably for him - and will not over-exert herself. Other reasons include the necessity to look after children, not because of inadequate childcare facilities but due to a belief that this is preferable and is a mother's duty (ranked 6 & 7). Also of importance are concerns about health and about educational advancement (ranked 3 & 18). These reasons indicate that women find it difficult to cope with their dual role.

The concern of the GDR is that women fulfil their role as mothers, not as housewives. There is no necessity therefore that it should be women who do the housework. However, the roles are entwined, and a breakdown of the time spent on household duties indicates the problem.²⁵ The socialist solution of collectivised housework is not a reality and some figures suggest that time spent on housework has actually increased despite the fact that, for example, the percentage of households with washing machines had risen to 91% by 1985.²⁶

The amount of time spent on housework per day varies between full-time, part-time and non-employed women, as would be expected.²⁷

FIGURE 4.

F/T	P/T >30hours	P/T <30hours	N/E
3:57	4:54	5:34	6:43

In the same survey, 6% of full-time working women and 41% of part-time working women were totally responsible for housework. From the figures the author concludes that childcare is not included, as non-employed women would presumably be looking after their children all day. Figures based on another survey show a breakdown of housework hours worked per week by men and women. They also indicate an increase in total household hours worked up to 1972:

FIGURE 5.

	1965	1970	1972
Women	37.5	37.1	39.9
Men	5.5	6.1	11.9
Others	4.3	3.9	6.3
Total	47.5	47.1	58.1

A further survey carried out between 1972-75 among 1,200 women employed in 88 different jobs revealed that in 46.4% of these families the wife was totally responsible for housework, compared with 1.2% where the husband was totally responsible. 5.7% of the women did the work with a parent or in-law, and in 46.7% of the families the whole family took responsibility for housework. Whether or not the division was equal in the latter category was not stated.

Whatever the problems about what constitutes housework, the enormous difference between time spent by women and by men is very significant and must have enormous consequences. Some, as indicated, have to do with women's health: their health is affected by overwork, and this causes them to have more time off

work which in turn reinforces their lack of advancement and male prejudices. Women do not have time to pursue their education or to participate in union activities. Things that do not show up in the surveys are questions around who would stay home to babysit in the evenings when adult education classes and political meetings take place. Given the fact that women are encouraged to be, and see themselves as, the principle childcarers, it can be assumed that it is usually them. The results of a survey carried out by Humboldt university, Berlin in 1972 among 1,007 men and 992 women (797 of whom were employed) supports this. They were asked who was responsible for the upbringing of their children. The response was as follows (in percentages)³⁰:

FIGURE 6.

	men	women
me	1	8
my marriage partner	4	1
me more than my partner	4	32
my partner more than me	28	2
both share it equally	63	57

In the same survey the respondents were asked who looked after the children when they were ill. 3% of men and 78% of women said they did all or most of the time. This would also have consequences for women's employment, for although they are allowed time off to look after sick children, it reinforces the attitude that women are not such reliable employees as men and can damage promotion prospects.

To what extent do women cope with the demands on them in their dual roles? A survey carried out among 3,600 women and discussed in Herta Kuhrig's book illustrates the problem.³¹ Women from all professions and jobs were asked to rate the ease of combining work and domestic responsibilities: 31% said it was easy, 62% said it was

sometimes difficult and 7% said it was always difficult. Not surprisingly, the more children a woman had the more difficult was the task - of women with four or more children, 21% said it was always difficult. The survey also measured the amount of free time each day that women had, and this declined with the more children they had - of women with more than three children, 23% said they had no free time.

FIGURE 7.

no. of children	No freetime (%)	1-2 hours (%)	2+ hours (%)
0	4	33	63
1	13	59	28
2	16	64	20
3+	23	63	14

Unfortunately in this survey, as in others, there is no comparison with men. The fact that a parallel survey for men is not even considered is indicative of the lack of serious attention given to ensuring men's involvement in the domestic sphere.

The problem of inequality in the home is addressed by people in the GDR and it must be assumed that there has been an improvement, especially among young couples. In fact, people are almost obsessed with the issue and it was a constant affirmation in discussions, often without being solicited, that young couples were equally responsible for the domestic sphere. At the same time, however, people were equally adamant that they did not believe in the 50-50 principle, i.e. that everything had to be shared equally before true equality exists. This illustrates the rejection of the principle of 'Gleichberechtigung als Gleichmacherei' (equality as sameness). However, despite official protestations, a hint that all is not as it should be emerges from a paper given to the author at the Pädagogische Hochschule

'Henrietta Goldschmidt' in Leipzig where it is stated that, despite the tremendous advances in equality:

*"Also today, and even in our society, 80% of housework and childcare is undertaken by the woman alone, despite the fact that she works."*³³

Handwritten note:
This was the result of 700 pages

The question might usefully be asked: given that women feel themselves to be responsible for their families, why do they want to work full-time at all? According to the survey in Kuhrig, the reasons given fall into two categories: economic and societal. The following were given as motives for working full-time (not in any rank order).³⁴:-

1. To comply with society's norms and expectations. (these 'norms' had only been in existence for thirty years at the time of the survey it should be remembered).
2. To guarantee a living (this was only stated by women living on their own or by single parents).
3. To achieve financial independence.
4. To fulfil a need to be useful and to contribute to the work collective.
5. To have a wage that would increase the standard of living of the family.

These reasons would suggest that, firstly, the social pressure on women to conform to the socialist ideal has been successful, and, secondly, that there is not always a material necessity for married women to work. In another survey published in Helwig, 52% of married women and 85% of unmarried women gave the need to maintain a subsistence level as a motive for working.³⁴ In chapter 6 it was argued that women's average earnings are less than those of men. There is some evidence therefore that men receive a 'family wage', which is contrary to notions of women's equality. The following table shows the relationship between the income of the husband, the

number of children in the family and the percentage of wives working.²⁵ Amongst low-paid men, a high proportion of wives work, and this increases with the number of children, suggesting economic necessity. However, amongst the wives of higher paid men, the proportion working decreases as the number of children increases. This suggests that these women do not work out of economic necessity - their husbands earn a 'family wage' - and that increased domestic responsibilities tend to discourage women from working. Amongst middle-income families there seems to be a balancing act between work and domestic responsibilities according to the numbers of children. It would appear from these figures that many factors operate in the decision by women as to whether or not to work. If official policy were accepted and if women's dual role were successfully reconciled, there would be little variation in the proportion of wives working across the categories.

FIGURE 8.

% of wives working:

no. of children	Net income of husband (Marks/month)				
	<400	400-600	600-800	800-1000	>1000
0	78	73	69	65	57
1	88	84	78	73	64.5
2	91	81	75	64.5	52
3+	92	75	67	58	40

If, as suggested, the combination of women's two roles results in women suffering from overwork and ill-health as well as their inability to compete on equal terms in the employment field and to take a full part in social and political life, then the policy has not succeeded. This is recognised in the GDR but the solutions tend towards enacting policies in the work sphere, e.g. the housework day, shorter working week etc., which will facilitate a woman's role in the family. On the

ideological level there are attempts to encourage men to share housework, but as long as their own structure of employment is unchanged, as long as policies are not extended to them, and as long as there is no positive discrimination for women, the argument of this thesis is that complete equality cannot be attained.

To what extent has the 'cultural revolution' changed people's attitudes? On the ideological front the propaganda is directed mainly towards women: they must be encouraged to work, but they must also be encouraged to have children and be effective mothers and educators of them. They must therefore fulfil a modern and a traditional role at the same time. It is the attempt to maintain a traditional role that blocks a thorough analysis of the sexual division of labour and of sex-role stereotyping. Thus, legislation to protect women from the dangers of certain jobs perpetuates these things, as do the role-models offered to children in their experience of education and of real life.

The accepted 'natural' differences between men and women has led to the exclusion of women from certain jobs through protective legislation, and to the feminization of certain job categories. Thus teaching and medicine are seen as extensions of women's natural role as carers, and work as secretaries and laboratory assistants is seen as suited to women's 'naturally' greater co-ordination and dexterity. The result has been a sexual division of labour with attendant inequalities in pay structure. That women have to be 'protected' from certain jobs is also made clear:

*"From the start women should have access to all professions within agriculture (except those for which she is not suited for reasons of anatomical and physiological restrictions)."*³⁶

A more lucid example of attitudes comes from an interview with a female East German teacher at the Party Vocational School of Economics and Market Research, when talking about choice of profession:

"If (women) are allowed to decide for themselves, many of them would choose the harder jobs because of better pay. And there simply is no accepted socialist position that women have the right to ruin their health. Women are the weaker sex and they must be protected for their own sake and the sake of their children."

Obviously, not too much store should be put on the comment of one individual, even if she is a Party intellectual, but the comment does seem to reflect the sentiments of the official position.

Another indicator of the depth of traditional sex-role stereotyping is the way that males and females are portrayed in the media, in the general culture and in learning materials. If language is taken as belonging to the general culture, the way traditional attitudes are reflected in everyday usage can be identified. The German language is much more sexually differentiated than the English, and this can cause problems for those trying to combat stereotyping. Most professions, job titles etc. have a male and a female form, the latter being an addition to the male form. However, there are certain categories of job which do not have a female form, for example the word Minister (minister), so female ministers become 'Genossin Minister', whilst the male can have the pure title which has been appropriated for him. The problem of having no neutral terms has not been tackled (as it has in the FRG), and is apparently not considered a problem. Teachers are almost always referred to in the female form, Lehrerin, at least in the Kindergarten and the Unterstufe, and job

advertisements appear, for example, for a 'Putznerin' (female cleaner) and a 'Verkäuferin' (saleswoman).⁴⁰ This issue was brought up by the author in several discussions and was usually met with a shrug of the shoulders, indicating it was considered trivial, or with the retort that it reflected reality. Herta Kuhrig did, however, agree that not enough attention was paid to the question of language. The authors's reply was usually that it may reflect the reality of the situation, but does nothing to change it.

It has already been noted that women and men can choose either surname on getting married, but that they must have the same one.⁴¹ A textbook on family rights indicates what this means in reality:

"Because of tradition, partners decide on the name of the man as a rule, whilst that of the woman is chosen in a few hundred cases for various reasons."⁴²

In fact the man's name is chosen in 95% of cases and the 'various reasons' in the other 5% would include, for example, a female writer keeping her name for professional reasons. Again, the fact that this is following 'tradition' is seen as unproblematic.

The fact that two-thirds of divorce applications are filed by women may indicate that they are not prepared to tolerate the strains put upon them and the maintainance of 'tradition'. That men's attitudes to women have not altogether changed is indicated by the fact that in 10% of divorce cases, alcoholism and brutality towards wives are cited as grounds.⁴³ The traditional role of the wife as the main parent is illustrated, and perpetuated, by the fact that in over 90% of divorce cases the wife has custody of the children.⁴⁴ The divorce rate in the GDR is the third highest in the world (after the USA and the USSR). In discussion with Herta Kuhrig, who has done a lot of

research on the topic, she put forward the view that the rate is so high for five basic reasons: 1.the breakdown of tradition; 2.the end of discrimination against women; 3.the fact that women are economically independent; 4.the fact that they work brings them into contact with more people; 5.as the State does everything for young people, they are not used to dealing with problems and cannot therefore handle domestic strife. She rejected the idea that people might get married as the easiest way of getting a flat, and have children as a way of getting money, and pointed out that 30% of first-born children are born outside marriage (although presumably many mothers then go on to marry the father). Professor Kuhrig also accepted the contradiction involved in claiming that men take equal responsibility for childcare, but that they have custody of the children in less than 10% of divorce cases. She agreed this must change, but didn't offer any solutions to this problem.⁴⁵

It has been mentioned that male brutality is a factor in divorce cases. To what extent does this illustrate the continuance of male power relations towards women? The existence of violence towards women is acknowledged, but rape statistics are not published. There is no doubt that this crime is treated harshly by the authorities, and the fact that pornography is illegal and is not openly, if at all, circulated, indicates a real advance in the attempt to combat male sexual oppression of women. Women do occasionally get sexually harrassed, for example in bars, but there is little documentation of this problem and it can be assumed that it is far less of a problem than in the West. Certainly, the author's own personal experience as a woman alone in Berlin and Leipzig was one of total confidence to be alone at night.⁴⁶ There is no attempt to question such things as make-up and fashion. These may appear insignificant

remnants of pre-socialist times, but the author believes the issue to be less straightforward: to some extent these things are indications of the sexual role of women which need to be examined at least.

If it is accepted that sex-roles and attitudes are learned to a large extent during childhood, an examination of educational practices and teaching materials will give an indication of the extent to which traditional ideas are reinforced, and an understanding of the limits to change in the GDR. The problem is seen in terms of how to instill into girls the desire to marry and have children as well as the desire to participate in the economic and political life of the country - i.e. how to fulfil their dual role. Given that the contradictions inherent in this policy are not recognised, attempts to instill these attitudes are muddled. It is, on the other hand, explicitly stated in educational policy and in training courses that sex-role stereotyping must be combatted. Co-education is seen as the foundation, and educators from nurseries through to universities have been trained and are under instruction not to allow discriminatory sex differentiation.⁴⁷ This concern about sex-roles and the concern over the privileges of the middle classes led to the early discrediting of child-centred learning, cornerstone of the 'Reformpädagogik' of the Weimar era, which did not allow for the teacher to direct pupils towards the building of socialism.⁴⁸ In terms of play, boys and girls are encouraged to play with the same toys, be they dolls (which appear to be plentiful) or building blocks. The strong influence of textbooks and primers is recognised, and these are being slowly revised to depict boys and girls doing the same things: they play together, work together, do housework together. However, in a discussion on this, an East German educationalist says:

*"Certainly it shows in this textbook that the mother performs more of the care and upbringing of the child in the pre-school years than the father because she is much more often in contact with the child, even though the mother is almost always in employment as well as the father."*⁴⁹

There seems to be some conflict here between trying to present alternatives and reflecting reality.

There has been much discussion in the GDR about sex-role models offered to children, and some East Germans appear anxious that boys and girls might lose their sexual identity, and that boys who do 'women's work' will become effeminate. The educationalist cited above responds by pointing out that these critics fail to see that 'traditional' qualities of men and women are dangerously sex-stereotyped and that women need 'male' qualities such as "determination, leadership and initiative".⁵⁰ She does not, however, suggest that men, and therefore society, might benefit if men acquired some 'female' qualities. She does go on to say that there are certain 'female' qualities, especially those concerning motherhood, which should not be lost in women. This is the second half of the cultural revolution, maintaining women's maternal qualities in order to sustain the population. Motherhood is made into an honour, with not only payments and special privileges for 'kinderreich' families, but also a 'motherhood medal' for those with ten or more children.

how is this defined?

Co-education and polytechnical education are seen as effective equalisers in providing girls with the opportunity for studying 'boy's' subjects and learning 'male' trades. Again the opposite, i.e. providing boys with the opportunity of learning 'female' trades, is never mentioned.⁵¹ Some school subjects are seen as providing opportunities for discussing sex-roles:

*"The subjects of History and Civics contain topics which can be used in preparation for marriage and family, i.e. the development sex-roles, questions of equality of the sexes, and the principles of socialist morality and way of life."*⁵²

However, an examination of the teaching plan for Civics for classes 8 and 10 revealed no mention of these themes whatsoever.⁵³ The authors own study of the textbooks used throughout the age range for Civics revealed only one or two specific refer^ences to women's equality. A similar study of the History textbooks showed that the history learned by pupils is almost exclusively a 'male' history. In Britain there are attempts to rewrite history to include the female half of the population, and it was noticeable that the GDR books were far behind those used here. An example is that in classifying the population of Ancient Greece into 'citizens', 'foreigners' and 'slaves', it was not pointed out that women were not considered to be citizens.

There has been some limited work both inside and outside the GDR analysing teaching materials and readers. In 1970 Erna Scharnhorst, a member of the GDR Academy of Sciences' Scientific Council on the topic 'The Woman in Socialist Society', surveyed reading books used in years 1-4 in the POS. She found that, with few exceptions, the women portrayed were employed in traditional women's work. Within the realm of the family, the mother and grandmother were outstandingly the most visible charaters.

"In more than sixty textbooks or illustrations in which the home environment is the central point, the mother and grandmother are predominant. In comparison the father is only mentioned ten times, and then only as a contact person to the child.

*Such a depiction no longer reflects current reality in our young families, still less the exigencies of the future. A new stress must be put into the reading books."*⁵⁴

In the light of other evidence in this thesis, perhaps this still does reflect reality. However the importance of changing textbooks is obviously recognised by some GDR theorists.

A study carried out by Donna Slepach for her Ph.D. thesis concentrated on readers for years 1-6.⁵⁵ Out of the 374 stories depicting main characters, 48% were male, 17% were female and 35% were 'other'.⁵⁶ Out of the 955 career roles depicted, males were engaged in 69% of them and females in 31%, with an increased male dominance towards the higher status jobs. Of the career options presented, 260 of them in all, 65% of them were identified as being for men and 35% for women. The male dominance can be explained by the fact that there was a high incidence of military stories, fairy tales and Greek myths which have traditional sex-role stereotyping. What was not brought out in the study was how these readers were used in the classroom, as sex-role stereotyping in books can be a useful discussion point in lessons. The fact that they were being used, however, suggests that the GDR is more concerned to reflect reality than to seek to change it through ideological means, or that the writing and publishing of new teaching materials to help the progress of the cultural revolution is not given priority. It could be argued that the survey is now outdated and that the GDR, with its admirable intentions to change the books, must have done so by now. However, the author carried out a brief survey⁵⁷ of the reading books used in the 'Unterstufe' which revealed that in book 4, for example, for nine-year olds, out of the twenty-four stories, twenty were written by men and nineteen were about

men/boys. For twelve year-olds, out of the twentieth century fiction section, three out of thirty-one pieces were by women and six pieces were specifically about women. The very first reading book for children portrayed men and women in the following roles:

FIGURE 9.

<u>Roles of women</u>	<u>Roles of men</u>
Collecting children from school	Policeman
Hanging out the washing	Zookeeper
Serving tea/coffee	Traffic policeman
Teacher	Teacher
Pig feeder	Soldier
Check-out person	Decorator
At home with children	At home with children(1)
In the bakery	Removal man
Sewing machinist	

A comparative survey of teaching books carried out by a West German educationalist, Briegel, revealed the following about Maths books, Maths being a subject that the GDR are encouraging girls to do well in in order to take up technical careers.

*"Thus in the GDR, 96% of current maths books used by all pupils in schools are drawn up, both the text and the pictures, by men."*⁵⁸

*95% Maths
written by men*

The reality of the child's world is one where its teachers are women, and its needs are catered for by its mother. Undoubtedly, the genuine attempt to challenge sex-role stereotyping in kindergartens and schools, and its success say in terms of encouraging boys and girls to play with the same toys, (although in practice this does not seem to happen, as already noted), are a real advance. The author would argue, however, that the reality encountered by the children must have a much stronger influence, and play observed in a kindergarten, when not being structured in the classroom, was very

definitely along traditional sex-role lines. The effect of school teaching materials is noted by Briegel:

*"For the girls this means that they have far fewer possibilities to identify with and prepare for simply because they exist far less in the school books than boys do."*⁵⁹

Hope, in terms of creating new social relations between men and women, is seen to lie in the younger generation, and the education system is seen as a crucial element in this socialisation process. But which is having the greatest effect on children, the intentions and efforts of teachers, or the structures and relationships within which the children exist? In terms of how children see themselves and their role, various studies have been carried out which give some measure of the change taking place.

A GDR psychologist, Heinz Dannhauer, asked over 300 third and fourth years whether they would rather be boys or girls. 92% of the boys and 84% of the girls asked chose their own sex. It was not revealed explicitly why more girls would rather be boys than boys girls. Similar surveys in the West suggest that factors such as better opportunities and more fun would come into it. The point of the survey was to show that a substantial minority of the positive respondents gave sex-identification reasons, which followed almost the same pattern as in capitalist countries. Thus 20% of the boys said they wanted to be boys because boys were stronger, had better professional opportunities and didn't have to help as much at home. Of the girls who identified with their own sex, 17% said girls could dress more nicely, and 36% said they didn't want to be boys because they were "fresh and ill-mannered".⁶⁰ This would indicate an identification with so-called 'natural' differences and expected behaviours, a lack of positive identification

among girls and a recognition that men have a better deal in society.

Teachers are supposed to instill a consciousness of equality to compensate for family influences. But educationalists have been criticised for perpetuating stereotypic attitudes. A study was carried out in 1963 at Humbolt university in which the question "Do you like Physics?" was put to schoolchildren.⁶¹ Thirty out of sixty boys but only eleven out of fifty-five girls, replied positively, and typical attitudes were found to be "Physics is more for boys" and "Physics is a technical subject that girls aren't interested in". Teachers are largely held responsible for these attitudes:

*"Here we often still find this false belief, sustained either because preconceived ideas about sexspecific behaviour are acceptable without criticism or because the teacher himself [or herself?] has still preconceived ideas about the two sexes."*⁶²

Differences in discipline have also been noticed:

*"The boys are conceded, through education and general publicity, a greater freedom, whilst girls' behaviour is overall much more constrained."*⁶³

Teachers, and especially female teachers it would seem, perpetuate the situation with their stereotypical ideas about personal characteristics. Helwig, in conversation with teachers, found the following characteristics being ascribed to pupils: boys were 'untidy', 'rebellious', 'rude' and 'cheeky', whilst girls were seen to be inclined to 'cliquiness', were 'spiteful', 'chatty', 'silly' and 'flippant'. The situation should be familiar to us as teachers: pupils display certain behaviour, we respond in certain ways and come to expect the same behaviour in the future, children fulfil our

expectations and the traits become even more strongly developed. By the time the children get to school age, the process has already started and is reinforced by teaching materials, teachers' attitudes and role models. The first sentence pupils learn to write in the GDR is still often 'die Mutter kocht, der Vater arbeitet' (mother cooks, father works).⁶⁴ This indicates to children that a) cooking is not work, b) that women's main sphere of activity is the home, men's is work.

Another consequence of the socialisation process is that within the family, girls do much more housework than boys. Of 14 year olds, boys do fifteen minutes per day compared with an hour done by girls.⁶⁵ Apart from the effect this has on the reinforcement of stereotyping, it means that girls have less time for other activities, be they to do with schoolwork or leisure, a parallel situation to the adult world of their parents. In fact, it is females throughout their life who have less free time. A recent study from the GDR showed the freetime (minutes per week) of the following groups:⁶⁶

FIGURE 10.

	female	male
pupils(classes 9&10)	328	377
apprentices	288	383
workers	247	298
students	286	319

Men and women also spend their freetime differently, women doing cultural and artistic things, writing letters, going for walks, men doing scientific or technical things, visiting sport's centres or bars, doing DIY.⁶⁷ The kind of books read by children differed very early on, also setting a pattern for later interests: (% read by)⁶⁸

FIGURE 11.

	class 6		class 7		class 8	
	m.	f.	m.	f.	m.	f.
Technical literature	16	11	15	0	17	0
Romantic fiction	12	16	0	10	0	36

As children get older and can exercise more choice over their activities, they opt for sex-stereotypic subject areas and choose 'traditional' careers. In career guidance in schools and in the community as a whole there is a general drive to encourage girls into the technical professions. There is not a similar drive to persuade boys to take up 'female' careers. The reason for this is that there is an overall shortage of labour, but particularly in technical areas. A consequence of this fact and of the rigid planning of the GDR system is that many apprenticeships are gender-specified, for example, only 10% of building places are kept open for women. The rationale behind this is that the planners believe (probably correctly) that no more than this number of girls will want to choose this trade, so they cannot afford to reserve them any more places. This, of course, is a 'Catch 22' situation, and inhibits change.

A survey published in 1971 revealed that most children (79% in year 7 and 97% in year 10) had a clear idea by the end of their schooling of what career they wanted to follow. The following proportion of girls wanted a technical career:-

FIGURE 12.

Year 7	19%
Year 8	21%
Year 9	21%
Year 10	19%

The main reasons given were lack of interest and technical instinct, poor pay, and shift work. It was

pointed out in the survey that youth groups do not actively encourage girls into technical careers and that the family, in particular the mother, remained the strongest influence on career choice.⁷⁰

Polytechnical education is geared towards traditionally male jobs: the industries used by schools in their programme are metallurgy, electronics, construction, chemicals, textiles and clothing, timber, leather, farm machinery maintenance and agriculture.⁷¹ In theory there is no differentiation between male and female students, but the reality is different and there seems to be little understanding of the problems of trying to fit girls into male-defined areas of work.

An article in January 1979 in 'Neues Deutschland', the major daily paper and organ of the SED, entitled "Production tasks in Polytechnical Centurms" included the following statement with no comment whatsoever:

*"70,200 girls and boys from the 7th-10th classes receive polytechnical instruction in 85 industrial learning centres in the capital... Pupils participate in production... girls from the 9th and 10th classes do finishing work on men's jackets. Boys work in shipping and technical divisions."*⁷²

Not only are the problems of fitting girls into male-defined jobs not discussed; it seems that girls are not even entering these areas and are restricted to a small proportion of the industries involved in polytechnical education. It may be argued that girls 'choose' to do these kind of jobs. Problems of talking about choice when a socialisation process is in operation have already been noted. It is not only through choice, whatever that may signify, that girls find themselves in certain areas of work in polytechnical education. It is also due to the attitude of teachers, as Klein

illustrates in her description of a visit to a year 9 polytechnical workshop: the workshop was equipped with lathes and drill presses, the former being much more complicated machinery. She was informed that girls, since they tended to be initially inhibited when confronted with complex equipment, were generally assigned to the drill presses at the beginning of the school year, and could, in theory, 'advance' to the lathes later.⁷³ The questions as to why girls were 'initially inhibited' and why the teacher just accepts this nervousness instead of trying to overcome it are not asked. The effect on girls' confidence of being put on the inferior machines to begin with and being told they can 'advance' later to what the boys are already doing, is not questioned. The rhetoric of encouraging girls into technical careers is not being translated into practice due to the sabotage of teachers caught in their own socialisation and male prejudices, as well as by the lack of awareness of the subtle psychological forces at work in any 'choice' by girls and boys about their role in society.

On the one hand there are men's attitudes towards women, illustrated above. There are also contradictions arising from the needs of society, as shown by the further example of the acknowledgement in the GDR that there are managers who hold the view that "emphasis on increased training of female production workers will tend to endanger plan fulfilment"⁷⁴, and who therefore postpone their legal obligations. Thirdly there are the self-perceptions of women and the confusing picture they have of their own place in society.

The question must be asked, whether this hidden and overt socialisation has any effect on the performance of girls at school, either generally or in particular subjects, and whether they develop different skills. There is very little work on this as it is not seen as

relevant in the GDR. Thus there are no statistics that break down, for example, examination results by sex. There has been a study which shows that in the 5th grade in the POS girls get better marks than boys in all subjects, including maths, but that after this they even out and by the final examination there is no difference.⁷⁵ Discussing this point with educationalists in the GDR was difficult, as it was seen as irrelevant. However, in one discussion the author was told that girls were more hard-working in the lower classes, but that by the tenth class boys have overtaken their marks, in general, in Maths, technical subjects and Physics. This educationalist's opinion was that mathematical interest came from an interest in technical things, and that this had to be instilled much earlier on.⁷⁶

Overall the problem is seen as a problem of women, and it is women who are being asked to change, by fitting themselves into pre-existing male-defined structures and by changing their attitudes and perceptions. The extent to which men are challenged is very limited indeed.

In the preceding two chapters there has been an attempt to provide a picture of the reality of women's role and position in the GDR: a reality constructed out of official GDR statements and statistics as well as out of critical observations. Having already outlined the normative context in which to judge this reality, it would appear that there is some contradiction, even in the GDR's own eyes. Throughout the discussion, problem areas have been identified. Whilst there may be little argument between the author and the GDR about the reality that exists, and even about the problem areas, the analysis of the contradictions and failures, and the possible solutions proposed to the continuing problem of women's lack of equality, will differ. In the following chapter there will be an examination of the analysis given in the GDR, followed by an analysis that is based

on Western socialist feminism, in the belief that we
have much to learn from each other.

*The state is not a neutral
entity. It is a product of class struggle.*

Notes to chapter 7.

1. See Figure 13.
2. See Introduction.
3. M. Duverger, 'The Political Role of Women', Paris, 1955.
4. J. Lovenduski, "The Distaff Syndrome", The Guardian, 14/1/1986.
5. Ibid.
6. It would not be expressed in this way in the GDR, see Introduction.
7. Women in the GDR, Panorama GDR, Verlag Zeit im Bild, Dresden 1983. P. 4.
8. UN Report, Women in the GDR, op.cit. P.10.
9. Statistisches Jahrbuch 1981, op.cit. P. 387.
10. B.W.Jancar, op.cit. P.215.
11. H.Kuhrig et.al., op.cit.
12. UN Report, Women in the GDR', op.cit. P. 11.
13. R.Wiggerhaus, op.cit.P.184.
14. Ibid, P.184.
15. See Figure 15, Page 221..
16. Women in the GDR, Panorama GDR, op.cit. P.4.
17. UN Report, Women in the GDR, op.cit. P.11
18. Women in the GDR, Panorama GDR, op.cit. P.12.
19. H.G.Shaffer, op.cit. P. 78.
20. These figures were given to me by Dr. Klaus Achtel, responsible for Vocational education in Berlin in 1986.
21. H.G. Shaffer, op.cit.
22. By Günther Menke, Studienrat, Haus des Lehrers, Berlin, 1986.
23. UNESCO figures for 1981. The latest available figures are for 1982 and these are similar.
24. H.Kuhrig et.al. Zur gesellschaftlichen Stellung der Frau in der DDR, op.cit. P. 118-124.

25. There is a problem here of what is meant by 'housework'. In none of the studies is it defined, and therefore different studies could be including different things. Judging by the figures childcare is not included. In one study cooking is described as a leisure activity and not included as housework. The dividing line between 'leisure activities' that have to be carried out and 'housework' is very thin.
26. GDR '86. Facts and Figures, op.cit, P.37. This suggests that the GDR is following Western patterns with individualised rather than collectivised household tasks. See Introduction, Note 9.
27. Figures are averaged for the years 1970-74. 'Non-employed' does not include students. H.Kuhrig et.al., op.cit. P.123.
28. G.Lippold, op.cit. See Figure 14 for a comparison with other countries in the socialist and capitalist blocs.
29. H.Kuhrig et.al., op.cit. P.102.
30. Ibid.P.235.
31. Ibid. Pp. 363-5.
32. Research group at the Pädagogische Hochschule für Kindergärtnerinnen 'Henrietta Goldschmidt', Leipzig. Die Bedeutsamkeit der Entwicklung des Geschlechterrollenverhaltens und der psychischen Geschlechterdifferenzierung bei Vorschulkindern für die Formung der sozialistischen Persönlichkeit. 1985.
33. H.Kuhrig et.al., op.cit. P.104.
34. G.Helwig, Zwischen Familie und Beruf: Die Stellung der Frau in beiden deutschen Staaten. Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, Köln 1974, P.94.
35. M.Fogarty, R.Rapaport & R.Rapaport, Sex, Career and Family: International Review of Women's Roles. Allen & Unwin, London, 1971.

36. "Von Anfang an sollte der Frau der Zugang zu allen Berufen der Volkswirtschaft (außer denen, für die sie auf Grund ihrer anatomisch-physiologischen Bedingungen nicht geeignet ist) geöffnet werden."
H.Kuhrig et.al. op.cit. P.60. My emphasis.
37. One might ask whether men have the right to do so.
38. H.G.Shaffer, op.cit. P. 27.
39. R.Wiggerhaus, op.cit. P. 162.
40. As seen on visits to the GDR.
41. See chapter 4.
42. "Durch die Tradition bedingt, entscheiden sich die Partner in der Regel für den Namen des Mannes, während der der Frau in einigen hundert Fällen jährlich aus verschiedenen Motiven gewählt wird."
F.Schubert, op.cit. P.118.
43. C.Sudau, op.cit. P.76.
44. J.Menschik & E.Leopold, Gretchen's rote Schwestern: Frauen in der DDR. Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, Frankfurt am Main. 1974. P.55. In a situation where women do take prime responsibility for the children, when both parents are working, I believe they should nearly always have custody of them if they want it. In a situation of real equality in a family (and this might be in a situation where a woman is a 'housewife'), custody should be decided on different grounds, and should be granted to the father in around 50% of cases. *Michael?*
45. Interview with Professor Kuhrig in September 1986. Her work on divorce is also printed in "Liebe und Ehe in Sozialismus", Einheit, No.7/8, 1982. Pp.800-809. *Michael*
46. It has been suggested to me that this situation is due to a lack of change and of the degeneration that has taken place in the West. I agree to a point, but feel that that the fact that the GDR has escaped this degeneration is in part due to its positive

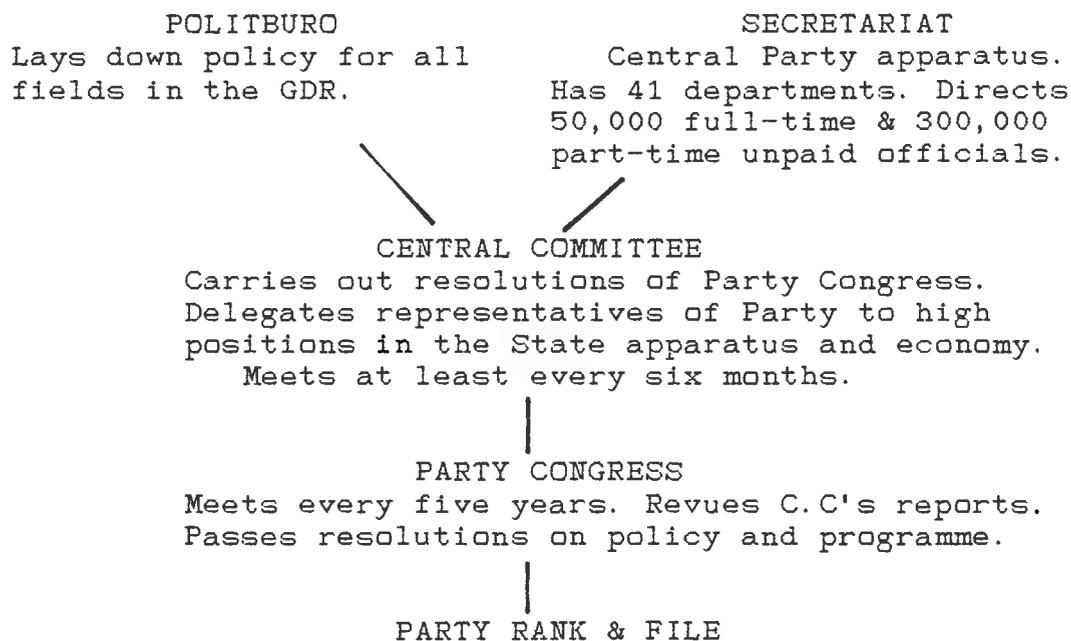
Kind. Eine solche Auswahl entspricht nicht einmal mehr der gegenwärtigen Realität in unseren jungen Familie; viel weniger der Erfordernissen der Zukunft. Hier müssen neue Akzente in den Leserbüchern gesetzt werden." G.Helwig, op.cit. P. 53.

55. D.Slepack, Women in the GDR: a field study and comparative analysis of sex bias in USA and GDR readers. Doctorate of Education, University of Cincinnati, 1976.
56. By 'other' I presume she means animals, but she neglects to inform us whether these animals are male or female: human sex-role stereotyping is usually carried over into the fantasy animal world.
57. In the library of the Pädagogische Hochschule 'Clara Zetkin' in Leipzig in 1986.
58. "So sind sie in der DDR für alle Schüler einheitlich geltenden Mathematikbücher in Text und Bild zu 96% von Männern konzipiert. Bei den ausgewählten und untersuchten bundesdeutschen Mathematikbüchern sind ungefähr 89% der für Text und Illustrationen verantwortlichen Personen Männer." E.Briegel, Das Bild der Frau in ausgewählten Schulbüchern der BRD und der DDR. Eine vergleichende geschlechtsrollenspezifische Analyse. Ph.D., Munich, 1982. P. 263
59. "Für die Schülerinnen bedeutet dies, daß sie schon bereits aus quantitativer Sicht sehr viel weniger Möglichkeiten der Identifikation haben, weil sie einfach in der Schulbuchrealität viel weniger existent sind als die Buben." Ibid, P.272.
60. H.Dannhauer, Geschlecht und Persönlichkeit. Cited in J.Menschik & E.Leopold, op.cit. P. 149.
61. H.Hörz, Die Frau als Persönlichkeit. Cited in G.Helwig, op.cit.
62. "Oft finden wir hier jedoch noch eine Unterstützung der falsche Auffassung, entweder dadurch,

- daß Vorstellungen über das geschlechtsspezifische Verhalten kritiklos übernommen werden, der weil beim Lehrer selbst noch falsche Vorstellungen über die beiden Geschlechter bestehen." Quoted in G.Helwig, op.cit. P.52.
63. "Den Jungen wird durch die Erziehung und gesamer Öffentlichkeit ein größerer 'Spielraum' zugebilligt, während man die Mädchen in ihrem Verhalten allgemein weit stärker einengt." K.Otto. Geschlechtsspezifische Unterschiede in Disziplinverhalten bei Schülerinnen und Schülern. Cited in G.Helwig, op.cit. P.52.
64. G.Helwig, op.cit. P. 53.
65. K.Otto, Disziplin bei Mädchen und Jungen. Cited in C.Sudau, op.cit. P. 74.
66. U.Schegel & O.Kabat vel Job, Junge Frauen Heute. Verlag für die Frau, Leipzig, 1981. P.56.
67. Ibid.
68. This point was discussed with Dr. Klaus Achtel.
69. H.J.Langhammer, "Zur Gewinnung von Mädchen für technische Berufe." in H.Kuhrig, Probleme der Frauenqualifizierung. Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1971.
70. Lehrplan Staatsbürgerkunde, Part 2, op.cit. P. 5.
71. M.S.Klein, op.cit. P.59.
72. Ibid. P.70.
73. Einheit. October 1972. Quoted in H.G.Shaffer, op.cit. P.75.
74. U.Schegel & O.Kabat vel Job, op.cit. P.41.
75. Discussion with teachers at the Bezirkskabinett für Weiterbildung, Leipzig, 1986.

FIGURE 13.

The SED.



From: E. Schneider, Chapter 3.

FIGURE 14

Housework hours of men and women in different countries.
1970

COUNTRIES	HOURS/WEEK		%	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
Bulgaria	24.5	11.8	67.5	32.5
USSR	28.7	9.8	74.7	25.4
Hungary	32.2	11.2	74.2	25.8
FRG	33.1	7.7	81.1	18.9
USA	33.2	7.7	81.2	18.8
France	37.5	10.5	78.1	21.9
Belgium	37.5	5.6	87.0	13.0
GDR	37.1	10.5	78.0	22.0
Czech.	35.7	14.0	71.8	28.2

Figures are from UNESCO and are taken from one or cities in the country rather than averaged over the country as a whole. From: Menschik & Leopold, P. 146.

FIGURE 15.

Female Membership of the Central Organs of the SED
1946-1980 (%)

YEAR	A		B		C	D		E	
	1	2	1	2	Sec.	1	2	1	2
1946	14.3	-	13.7	-				16.7	
1950	0	16.7	15.7	10.0	9.1	12.5	-	20.0	66.7
1958	0	25.0	9.9	22.7	0	11.1	40.0	19.0	-
1967	0	16.7	12.2	12.0	0	11.1	40.0	14.3	25.0
1971	0	14.3	13.3	13.0	0	11.1	33.3	20.0	40.0
1976	0	22.2	13.1	8.8	9.1	11.1	28.6	26.6	33.3
1980	0	25.0	13.3	7.7	9.1	11.1	16.6	26.6	16.6

A = Politbüro/Central Secretariat.

B = Central Committee/Parteivorstand.

C = Central Committee Secretariat.

D = Central Party Control Commission.

E = Central Party Revision Commission.

1 = Members.

2 = Candidate Members.

From: M. Dennis, "Women and Political Leadership Positions in the GDR", GDR Monitor, No. 3, 1980. P.25.

CHAPTER 8.

The previous chapters attempted to show that, judged within their own terms, the GDR has not yet succeeded in affording women an equal position in all spheres of society. To this failure they would, in varying degrees, admit. It is attributed to a 'time lag' between the changes in the base, which have taken place, and those in the superstructure which should follow. The degree to which these latter, cultural, changes have already taken place, and the amount of conscious effort needed to ensure them, are points of debate in the GDR. At first glance, Honecker himself does not seem to have any reservations about the progress so far:

"The equal rights of men and women belong to the greatest achievement of our State. The extent to which women make use of their assured right to work shows in the fact that half of the working population in our State are of the female sex."

The more subtle problems with the term 'equal', and the fact that some women work part-time have already been pointed out. At face value, Honecker seems to be saying that everything has been solved. However, he does admit to lingering pre-socialist residues.

"We truly appreciate the self-confidence with which (women) also solve the 101 apparently small problems they are faced with every day in the household and the family... the important thing now is the gradual solution of all those problems which determine to what extent women can make use of their equal rights."

His identification of some of these "apparently small problems" as the fact that women are mostly responsible for housework and that some women cannot work due to

insufficient crèche places seems to be in contradiction to the opening sentence of his speech:

*"It is in fact one of the greatest achievements of socialism to have realised equal rights for women legally and in everyday life."*³

This sentiment is repeated by the authors of 'Zur gesellschaftlichen Stellung der Frau in der DDR', the official work on women, who state in their introduction:

*"The equal rights of women have been realised, not only in law but also in life."*⁴

Others are more aware of the contradictions still existing in GDR society. Helga Horz, an East German philosopher, has said in her book:

*"There are no arguments against the social liberation of the woman. But the second side of oppression, namely the subjugation of the woman by the man, is often looked upon as unproblematic and natural."*⁵

Whilst being sceptical about the first part of her statement, there is no doubt that the more subtle problems of the relationship between men and women have been neglected. She goes on to say:

"This can give rise to a situation in which social policy embodies views about the abilities and qualities of women which emphasise their subordinate role in relationship to men: for example, few women study scientific and technical subjects; sometimes men are frightened of women as competitors; women are not systematically qualified; often they are, on grounds of feminist considerations, put into positions for which they don't have the necessary qualifications; it is sometimes considered

*that leading positions are better occupied by men.*⁶⁵

This statement at least shows an awareness of some of the problems facing women.

On the whole, although the failings are recognised, it is within the framework of a Marxist theory. The way they are explained and the way they should be tackled will follow the same line as during the previous thirty years. Thus, firstly, the problem is seen as one of time, and women must be patient; secondly, women are holding themselves back by clinging to traditional views of themselves and must be helped to break out of this; and thirdly, as the solution is seen ultimately to lie in the completion of the socialist stage and the advent of communism, women must give precedence to this goal. These ideas cross the spectrum of opinion from establishment figures to those more critical of the socialist state, for example the novelists Imtraud Morgner, Maxi Wander and Christa Wolf.

In terms of the problem of cultural lag, Politburo candidate member Inge Lange advises that:

*"We won't accomplish anything at all with pressure and force. These problems will take more than one generation."*⁶⁶

These sentiments are echoed, from a more critical standpoint, by Imtraud Morgner:

*"The DDR today is of course still also a man's state - the leading positions in state economy and culture are filled in the majority by men - that is not astonishing. Our State is not yet thirty years old."*⁶⁷

The author would certainly agree that to expect a society to change so fundamentally and so quickly would be optimistic, if not to say unrealistic. However, it is not acceptable to say that this change can come about without "pressure and force", or that it will inevitably

follow economic change. The need to change consciousness actively is accepted by some, e.g. Karlheinz Otto.

"It is false to assume that people's consciousness changes spontaneously at the same time that social relationships are transformed. The process of changing consciousness is developed systematically, actively and with a great deal of patience as comprehensible measures for education and re-education (in the broadest sense) are introduced and carried out."

"Patience" is again advised, and the importance of education for changing consciousness correctly stressed. But whose consciousness must change? It has been shown that the implicit assumption is that girls/women must change to take an equal role in the pre-existing structures. Inge Lange again:

"The woman must free herself from old habits as well as from a certain feeling of guilt that because of her professional activity she neglects her family."

She fails to see that it is precisely because of the contradictory message being directed towards women, which on the one hand encourages her to work and fulfil her economic duty, and on the other hand idealises motherhood, that women feel guilty. No-one ever speaks of men's guilt feelings towards their families.

Morgner has a deeper analysis. She explores her ideas around women's emancipation in her novel 'Leben und Abenteuer der Trobadora Beatriz nach Zeugnißen ihrer Spielfrau Laura.' She believes, as a Marxist, that in order for a woman to realise herself as a 'Mensch', she must become a subject in society, in history. This is only possible under certain specific historical conditions, which she claims are satisfied in GDR

copy of film statement

forced to consider how men might be without explaining the process by which they become that way, and she thus becomes ahistorical and betrays her original claim that women must make history. She does, thankfully, reach the conclusion that men must change as they exercise male power, but as yet men have not changed and even the new generation displays traditional prejudices as has been shown. Morgner does not accept the idea that women must exert "pressure and force" on men, that they must act together as a group, that society will only change if men give up their power. Women cannot accept this due to their adherence to the belief that only socialism will liberate them and they need to struggle for this with men. As Herta Kuhrig states in her introduction

"The solution of the women question is inseparable from the fulfilment of the historical mission of the working class. It cannot be achieved in a war of the sexes - a fight of women against men - as it is loudly proclaimed by the representatives of the feminist orientated women's movements - but only in the combined battle of women and men for social advancement, for the abolition of the civil circumstances under which humans are subjugated and suppressed beings." 15

This view is also expressed by Morgner and by another 'critical' writer, Maxi Wander. Morgner says:

"It is no longer a question of the continuation of the war of the sexes, for we know, and have done for a long time, that it is coming to an end... emancipation of women cannot be achieved without the men and vice-versa." 16

The author would agree that the emancipation of women is not obtainable without the 'emancipation' of men, but the latter entails the surrender of power by men. To

this extent there must be some kind of struggle between men and women. This is what is denied in the GDR. Wander:

*"Not against men can we emancipate ourselves,
but only in league with them."*¹⁷

Official thinking has not changed over the recent years. As far as Herta Kuhrig is concerned, and she is the official spokesperson on women's equality, equality cannot be achieved in any kind of conflict with men. However, she does recognise that whilst women have legal equality they do not have an equal standing in society, and even admitted that the problem is taking longer to solve than she originally thought.¹⁸

In terms of education, whilst it is regarded as crucial to the cultural revolution in the GDR, there is little serious thought about how best to educate boys and girls to become truly equal in society. Any suggestion that girls and boys were not having the same educational experience was scorned and there has been no attempt to research the effects of education as there has been in the West. The author believes that much could be gained by applying some of this work to the East German experience. Here there will therefore be a brief look at some of the research and theoretical work concerning the education of girls in Britain.

Much has been written on the education of girls and women in Western capitalist societies (though very little on the education of boys). The subsequent role of women in the labour market and in society in general has also been explored. Some of this work has been carried out within the framework of a Marxist critique of capitalist society as well as within a feminist framework. As the author has already indicated, one of the conclusions of this dissertation is that a feminist as well as a socialist revolution is necessary to the emancipation of women. Thus Western writings which offer

a socialist feminist analysis of women's oppression have some relevance to the situation in the GDR.

In terms of the relevance of education for the future role of men and women in society, certain issues debated by Western feminists have been selected as pertinent to the issue. Firstly, the notion of co-education, which was automatically assumed in the GDR to be necessary to ensuring equal educational opportunities for boys and girls, has recently been open to question in Britain. Secondly, and linked to this, has been the debate around subject choice and achievement by boys and girls in the different subjects. The author concedes that a common curriculum, as in the GDR, renders the question of subject choice in school irrelevant. It does, however, make subject choice differentiated by sex in post-compulsory education more interesting. It was shown in chapter 6 that such a differentiation does exist in the GDR, although it is less than in Britain. Even if the curriculum is common to both boys and girls, the content of that curriculum may vary in some way. (The curriculum is not the same for boys and girls)

If a common curriculum does not break down sex-stereotypical choices of subject or career, or the gender inequalities of performance, an explanation has to be sought elsewhere. The 'hidden curriculum' has been pinpointed in the West as having various educational effects. Classroom practice and the relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers are bound to have a socialising influence. Role models and teacher expectations are also important.

The debate around co-education will be dealt with first. As already mentioned it is automatically assumed in the Soviet model that co-education is a necessary, and for some a sufficient, condition for equality of opportunity. In the 1960's a belief grew in Britain that girls could only have equal educational opportunities within a co-educational system. Girls and boys were to

be educated in mixed classes and would have the same subjects open to their choice. These ideas were expounded in the classic study by R.R.Dale.¹⁹ For Dale the advantage of mixed schools were that they reproduced 'normal life'. Unfortunately for women, this life has negative features which Dale failed to explore. The main obstacle to the equality principle in practice has been the element of choice. Subsequent studies have shown that, contrary to expectations, single-sex schools tend to weaken the gender pattern of subject choice. Thus more girls choose technical and scientific subjects in all-girl schools than in mixed schools, and their results in these subjects tend to be better.²⁰ Many feminists took up this research to argue for single-sex schools on the basis that girls would achieve more.²¹ However, there are fundamental problems with the argument. Firstly, in terms of the validity of the research, the class nature of most single sex schools, i.e. middle and upper, is not taken into consideration. Secondly, and this argument is relevant in the GDR also, the question is not asked whether the increased access for girls to hitherto male preserves actually changes patriarchal society or just places girls in an inferior position within it. The author would argue that it is important for girls to participate and succeed in scientific and technological fields, but that it is also vital to change the nature of those fields and ensure an equal place within them for women. It is also vital that men participate in traditionally female areas.

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Most feminists in the West, as well as educationalists in the GDR, fail to address the issue of boy's education. Radical responses in Britain to the co-education argument have been that mixed schools reproduce the patriarchal relations of domination. Girls schools, it is argued, would better prepare girls to fight male domination in later life as girl's

consciousness would be raised when away from the undermining effects of boys and of male teachers.²³ The problem with this analysis is that it assumes that girls in girls schools would be taught by feminists, which is unrealistic, and it ignores the fact that boys schools would be created in which women, let alone feminists, would have little role. Girls might change, but boys would not. However, some of the points made by radical critics of co-education are relevant to this discussion of GDR schools.

It is argued in the GDR that girls have equal educational opportunities as they study an identical curriculum to that of boys. Even in the GDR, however, subject choice in further education, and career choice, follow sex-stereotypical lines, although not to the same extent as in the West. Interestingly, a common curriculum does not seem to make much difference to subject and career choice among girls in Western systems.²⁴

If girls are given the same curriculum, why do they perform less well in and fail to follow up science and technical subjects? One answer may lie in the content of the curriculum. Textbooks and readers have come in for much criticism as under-representing women and/or putting women in stereotypical roles.²⁴ Research on the GDR has concluded that readers and textbooks are also stereotypical, as has been shown. The result of these kinds of teaching materials is to consolidate girls' feelings of unimportance and the irrelevance of certain work and interests to them. Their performance in these areas suffers as a result. Besides teaching materials, the content of lessons is often important in socialising pupils. For example, often problems are set within a context which is more relevant to boys' experiences, and the use of the 'generic' term 'man' also serves to exclude women. As Buswell puts it:

"All subjects, at all levels, are conceived within the 'male-as-norm' framework which always leaves females as the deficient group."²⁵

Project and topic subjects often appeal more to boys than girls, sometimes deliberately so set by teachers in order to 'keep the boys happy'. This leads to a second question, that of boys' dominance in the classroom. Research has shown that not only do boys tend to have a greater disruptive effect in the classroom, but also that teachers tend to spend more time talking to and helping boys.²⁶ The authors own observation in the GDR was that boys were much more forthcoming than girls in class discussion.

Often the classroom is segregated by gender in all sorts of practical ways, and girls and boys are given different tasks to do. Role models are also very important: the National Union of Teachers has produced a pamphlet which gives a statistical analysis of teaching posts held in Britain. The pattern which emerges is that male teachers are over-represented in the higher scales whilst female teachers, who are the majority, are concentrated in scale 1 posts.²⁷ This perpetuates the idea among pupils that men are somehow 'better' teachers and that they need not take any notice of the female teachers. It also reflects the rest of society where men are in positions of power and influence and children take note of this also. In the GDR women form the vast majority of the teaching profession - the 'teacher' being a woman's 'natural' role along with the 'nurse' and the 'office organiser'. Although figures which break down the career structure are not available, it has been shown in chapter 6 that the proportion of women teachers declines as one moves from the pre-school sector to the more prestigious higher education sector.

Of course it is not envisaged that men and women should become the same, and the existence of certain innate differences is ascribed to in the GDR. As the author has already mentioned, she also accepts the existence of certain innate differences. Males and females supposedly have different educational aptitudes, and debates about this still rage on in the West.²²⁸ Even if it is accepted that girls have a lower spatial ability than boys, the difference that has been measured is not enough to account for the large differences in achievement in the physical sciences. As Margaret Sutherland points out:

"The research does give some support to the view that social conditioning has been built on cues offered by innate factors: differences normally occurring between the sexes have been developed and exaggerated by social attribution of roles and characteristics. Such development of a dichotomy has failed to recognise the large intra-sex differences that do occur... the choice of educating either to reinforce possible innate differences or to eliminate weaknesses and foster individual aptitude rather than sex-group membership is a decision which remains widely open to society and its educators."²²⁹

That concludes a very brief outline of the kind of research which is being carried out in Britain to help determine why boys and girls follow particular educational patterns and what can be done to achieve more equality. These debates are relevant to this thesis on the GDR in that similar patterns emerge which a socialist society has not been able to eradicate. In the GDR, however, these debates are not seen as relevant: girls and boys are given the same education therefore

eventually they will have the same opportunity to do the same things. Whilst visiting the GDR, the author was constantly asking whether there was research on what was happening in the schools that might give clues as to why girls did not enter technical careers and why women were not represented in the top levels of the hierarchies and in politics. Research from the West was mentioned but was obviously considered irrelevant to the GDR situation, and no research along these lines is being undertaken there: it is not an issue.

This dissertation argues that the GDR works hard to advance the position of women, whilst accepting the existence of many innate differences which act to inhibit that progress. It is further argued that the attempt to change society is constrained by a socialist analysis that does not recognise the existence of patriarchal power and hence the need for some kind of feminist revolution and a programme that will change both women's and men's role in society. Applying some of the educational analysis and practices of the West could only accelerate the process of change that the GDR appears genuinely to want.

Notes to chapter 8.

1. "Die Gleichberechtigung von Mann und Frau gehört zu den größten Errungenschaften unseres Staates. In welchem hohem Maße die Frauen von ihrem gesicherten Recht auf Arbeit Gebrauch machen, zeigt die Tatsache, daß die Hälfte aller Berufstätigen in unserer Republik weiblichen Geschlechts ist. Sie finden sie in allen gesellschaftlichen Bereichen und allen Berufen. Dabei ist es selbstverständlich, daß sie gleichen Lohn für gleiche Arbeit erhalten... Mädchen und Jungen genießen die gleiche Ausbildung und werden gleichermaßen gut auf das Leben vorbereitet." E.Honecker. Reden und Aufsätze, Vol. 4. op.cit. P. 84-5.
2. Report of the Central Committee to the 18th SED Congress 1971. E.Honecker, The GDR: Pillar of Peace and Socialism. International Publishers Co. Ltd. N.Y. 1979.
3. Ibid.
4. "Die Gleichberechtigung der Frau ist in der DDR verwirklicht, und zwar nicht nur im Gesetz, sondern auch im Leben." H.Kuhrig et.al., op.cit. P.9.
5. "Es gibt keine Einwände gegen die gesellschaftliche Befreiung der Frau. Aber die zweite Seite der Unterdrückung, nämlich die Knechtung der Frau durch den Mann, wird häufig als unproblematisch oder aus natürlich angesehen." Quoted in R.Wiggerhaus, op.cit. P. 173.
6. "Das kann dazu führen, daß Anschauungen über die Fähigkeiten und Eigenschaften der Frau, die die untergeordnete Rolle gegenüber dem Mann betonen, direkt in die gesellschaftliche Problematik eingreifen. Wenige Frauen studieren beispielsweise naturwissenschaftliche Fächer und Technik, manchmal fürchtet der Mann die Frau noch als Konkurrenten;

Frauen werden nicht zielbewußt qualifiziert; oft werden sie auf Gründen der Frauenförderung in Funktionen eingesetzt, für die sie die notwendige Qualifikation nicht besitzen; leitende Stellung werden lieber mit Männern besetzt, usw., usf..." Quoted Ibid P.173.

7. Quoted in C.Sudau, op.cit. P. 72.
8. "Die DDR ist heute natürlich auch noch ein Männerstaat - die führenden Positionen in Staat, Wirtschaft und Kultur sind noch überwiegend von Männern besetzt - das ist nicht verwunderlich. Unser Staat ist noch nicht mal dreißig Jahre alt." Quoted in R.Wiggerhaus, op.cit. P.156.
9. Quoted in C.Sudau, op.cit. P. 79.
10. Quoted in H.G.Shaffer, op.cit. P.148.
11. The following is based on a review of the book by A. Bammer in Alternative Futures, Vol.3. Part 1. Pp13-25.
12. Homosexuality was decriminalised in the GDR in 1968 but is still frowned on.
13. Cited in C.Sudau, op.cit. P. 77.
14. See chapter 2.
15. "Die Lösung der Frauenfrage ist untrennbar mit der Erfüllung der historischen Mission der Arbeiterklasse verbunden. Sie kann nicht in Geschlechterkampf, im Kampf der Frauen gegen die Männer, erreicht werden - wie das in der Gegenwart lautstark von den Vertretern der feministisch orientierten Frauenbewegung verkündert wird - sondern nur im gemeinsamen Kampf der Frauen und Männer für den sozialen Fortschritt, für die Beseitigung der gesellschaftlichen Verhältnisse unter denen der Mensch eine geknechtetes und unterdrücktes Wesen ist." H.Kuhrig et.al., op.cit. P.14.
16. "Es geht nicht um die Fortführung des Krieges der Geschlechter, denn wir wer weiss, wie lange schon

haben, es geht um seine Beendigung, endlich... Emanzipation der Frauen ist ohne Emanzipation der Männer unerreichbar und umgekehrt." Quoted in R.Wiggerhaus, op.cit. P. 168.

17. "Nicht gegen die Männer können wir uns emanzipieren, sondern nur in der Auseinandersetzung mit ihnen." M.Wander, Guten Morgen, du Schöne. Sammlung Luchterhand, Darmstadt, 1979. P. 7.
18. In an interview with me in September 1986.
19. R.R.Dale, Mixed or Single-sex Schools, 3 Volumes. RKP, London, 1969-74.
20. DES Circular, "Curriculum Differences for Boys and Girls", Educational Survey No.21, HMSO, London, 1975. and B.Onerod, "Subject Performance and Choice in Co-educational and Single-sex Secondary Schools", British Journal of Educational Psychology, 1975.
21. See M.Arnott, "Cultural and Political Economy: Dual Perspectives in the Sociology of Women's Education", Educational Analysis, Vol.3, No.1, 1981.
22. See E.Sarah, M.Scott & D.Spender, "The Education of Feminists: The Case for Single-sex Schools." In D.Spender & E.Sarah(ed), Learning to Lose. Women's Press, London, 1980.
23. M.Sutherland. Sex Bias in Education. B.Blackwell, Oxford, 1981. A.Kelly, Girls and Science: An International Study of Sex Differences in School Science Achievement. Almquist & Wiksell International, Stockholm, 1978.
24. M.Scott, "Teach Her a Lesson: Sexist Curriculum in Patriarchal Education." In D.Spender & E.Sarah, op.cit. G.Lobban, "Sex Roles in British Reading Schemes", Forum. Vol.16, No.2, 1974. M.Butler & W.Paisley, "Women and the Mass Media", Sourcebook for Research and Action, Human Sciences Press, N.Y., 1979. Children's Rights Workshop, Sexism in Children's Books: Facts, Figures and

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25. C. Buswell, "Sexism in School Routines and Classroom Practices", Durham and Newcastle Research Review, Vol.9 No.46. Spring 1981.
26. The following studies show the extent of boys' disruption in the classroom, their noisiness, their sexual harrasment of girls and female teachers and their degrading attitudes towards the girls: S. Delamont, Sex Roles and the School. Methuen, London, 1980. D. Spender, S. Sarah & M. Scott, op.cit. K. Clarricoates, "The Importance of Being Ernest..Emma..Tom...Jane: The Perception and Categorization of Gender Deviation in Primary Schools", IN R. Deem, Schooling for Women's Work. RKP, London 1980. V. Walkerdine, "Sex, Power and Pedagogy", Screen Education, Vol.38, Spring 1981. M. Stanworth, Gender and Schooling. Hutchinson, London, 1983. M. Fuller, "Black Girls in a London Comprehensive School", In R. Deem, op.cit.
27. NUT, Promotion and the Woman Teacher. NUT, London, 1980.
28. See especially F. Maccoby & C. Jacklin, The Psychology of Sex Differences. Stanford UP, California, 1975. For a review of various research see A. Kelly, op.cit. and M. Sutherland, op.cit.
29. M. Sutherland, op.cit. P.107.

CONCLUSION

As already mentioned, it is not easy to obtain material on the GDR in this country. It is not easy to obtain critical material on the GDR in the GDR. It is also not easy to break through the deep suspicion (often quite justified) there is there amongst officialdom of people from the West. The author has made two visits to the GDR, the second in September 1986 as a guest of the Ministry of Education, organised through the British Council. I had made it clear that my main wish was to spend as much time as possible as an observer in schools. In fact I only managed to do this on one day, and it was made clear to me that I was very privileged to be able to do so. Interviews with various notable people were set up for me, and I had a number of specific questions that I asked everyone, apart from the more general discussions. I have inserted the material gathered from this trip throughout the dissertation, and it has been notated. Here I would like to make a few general points. During most of the interviews I conducted I received the 'official line' which I was familiar with anyway. In general I found that those people who were not from the Ministry were more open minded and felt freer to be critical. But in general my questions and comments were met with incomprehension, genuine or affected. The exception to this was Herta Kuhrig with whom I felt slightly more at ease as she was familiar with the arguments of Western feminism. My personal experience in the GDR was useful only to update my material and to gain some general impressions. I feel these impressions are useful to the thesis but they in no way constitute an empirical study. To do this one would have to live in the GDR for a length of time and become acquainted with the more 'dissident' members of the society. However, my experience in the GDR did help

me to understand their position better and has provided some useful illustrations for the points made in the thesis.

The responses to my questions can be categorised fairly neatly. Any criticism of the lack of equality of women in society, for example that women were not to be found at the top levels of the hierarchies, was met with the comment that it would obviously take longer than forty years to achieve such drastic changes. Any questioning of the means of achieving these changes was usually countered by the phrases that 'equality does not mean sameness' or 'fifty-fifty is not equality'. Any suggestion that perhaps the education system and education in general was not providing equal opportunities was met with incomprehension and a refusal to consider the significance of the curriculum and the 'hidden curriculum' for equality. It is this reluctance to go further than a time-lag theory in explaining the continuing inequality of women which is blocking the solution to the problem. The GDR has made tremendous advances and the position of women is far in advance of our own, allowing for the relative economic position of the GDR. To summarise the main arguments in this thesis:

1. Socialism has successfully brought women into the economic sphere, but has not reconciled her dual role.
2. The failure to acknowledge the existence of patriarchal power and the insistence on 'non-antagonistic' contradictions renders much of the legislation meaningless.
3. The concentration on changing the role and the consciousness of women will only serve to make women fit into a male world, it will not fundamentally change that world and many important 'female' attributes will be lost.

4. The inability of women to organise themselves independently as a sex-group will hinder their self-development and the progress of equality.

5. The cultural revolution that follows the economic transformation of society takes place mainly in the educational sphere. The education system in its structure, content and methods has not been adequately conceptualised so as to maximise the changing of consciousness of women/girls and of men/boys.

The more general political point that has not been explored here is that authoritarian regimes, as the GDR is, ultimately become conservative, however revolutionary they are at their conception. Thus the position of women was drastically and profoundly altered immediately after the war in the GDR. The legal and institutional roots for the flowering of women's equality were laid down. The fact that the plant has not flowered is not a question of lack of time - it needs new soil. Society has changed and theories of equality have developed, but the GDR has largely ignored these changes as the political structure cannot accommodate them. In the West, Marxist theory has been developed to fit the new circumstances and in the light of new knowledge: the original Marxist theory on women's emancipation has been shown to be inadequate. The application of the theory in the East, by men, has also been inadequate. It is the author's contention that some liberalisation of the political system will take place in the socialist world, especially in the GDR where it is perhaps most needed. If this is done without losing the strengths that come from a centralised system, and without damaging the foundations of equality that have been laid, and if an independent feminist movement is eventually allowed to take root, the solutions to the problem of the continuing lack of equality of women will

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emerge. The place of education in this process will be central.

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