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Norman M. Naimark. *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945-1949.* Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1995. xv + 586 pp. $39.00, cloth, ISBN 978-0-674-78405-5.

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Norman Naimark's *The Russians in Germany* is the first history of the occupation of Germany to draw extensively on Soviet and East German archives, including the now-inaccessible records of the Soviet Military Administration in Germany (SVAG). The author, the Robert and Florence McDonnell Professor of East European Studies and Director of the Center for Russian and East European Studies at Stanford University, also made extensive use of American, British, and West German sources, some memoirs, interviews, and a variety of newspapers. The result is a richly detailed and fascinating account of the four and one half year occupation.

The author argues that the Soviets did not occupy Germany with "specific long-range goals" in mind (465), let alone a detailed plan of action. Rather, the occupation was shaped largely by a complex mixture of opportunism, principle, "Bolshevik predisposition," (468) and conflict with the West. The Soviets wanted to edge out the Americans and the British for hegemony over the entire country, eliminate all traces of Nazism, guarantee the creation of a "democratic" and "antifascist" German state, and collect reparations. Perhaps most important, Moscow wanted to build popular support among ordinary Germans for its policies and those of the German Communists (KPD, after April 1946 the Socialist Unity Party, or SED). But the behavior of the Red Army, the activities of several powerful Soviet institutions active in Germany, and the unwillingness of the occupiers and their German clients to tolerate spontaneity made this impossible. As a result, the German Democratic Republic (GDR) was born in 1949 with feet of clay; it was a hollow structure propped up by Moscow's might and by one of the most sophisticated secret police establishments ever created. When these two supports began to disintegrate in 1989, the GDR collapsed virtually overnight.

Naimark begins with the creation of SVAG in the summer of 1945. Assuming that Stalin had no elaborate plan for postwar Germany and given the immediate problems facing the Red Army on the ground, Moscow's first priority was to create an apparatus to administer their zone. With the capture of Berlin, the Soviets also brought in several groups (the *Initiativgruppen*) of KPD leaders

to begin rebuilding German administrations. From the start, however, Soviet efforts proved far from efficient. In the month before SVAG's founding, local Red Army commanders, without the benefit of clear lines of authority or special training, ruled the zone more or less arbitrarily. Even after the creation of SVAG, administrative efficiency in the zone was hindered by tensions between Moscow and SVAG headquarters in Karlshorst and between Soviet administrators in Germany. Even as the Soviets turned administrative functions over to their German clients, they tried to maintain control over even minute details of day-to-day administration. This practice improved neither zonal administration nor Soviet-German relations.

Of particular importance to these relations was the behavior of Red Army soldiers during the initial period of occupation. Naimark's research supports the estimate made by German historians Barbara Johr and Helke Sander that Soviet soldiers raped as many as two million German women between the time their counteroffensive reached German territory and well past the formal end of hostilities (see Johr and Sander, eds., ***Befreier und Befreite, Krieg, Vergewaltigungen, Kinder***, Munich: Verlag Antje Kunstmann, 1992). While Berlin was hardest hit, the problem was endemic in the Soviet zone. Though aware of the mass rapes, SVAG officers in Germany, KPD/SED leaders, and high-level Soviet officials remained unable or unwilling to do much to stop them. The extent to which Stalin was aware of the situation is unclear, but there is evidence he condoned the practice in general. Without question, the implications for Soviet and German Communist rule in the zone (or SBZ) were very serious: "...the Germans resisted rape...by turning it back against the Soviets. So long as Russians ruled in the Eastern zone, there could be no legitimacy for the Communist Party of Germany, which initially might have been counted on to be one of the most promising in Europe" (121).

Other depredations plagued German women and men throughout the occupation period. The Soviets fundamentally altered the economy of eastern Germany by forcibly redistributing land and expropriating factories and production. Meanwhile, soldiers and occupation officials took an enormous quantity of loot -- everything from wristwatches to priceless artwork. After the failure of the Allies to settle the reparations question, the Soviets went ahead with large-scale removals from their zone. No central records appear to have been kept of the often unplanned and haphazard "take" from Germany, but Naimark estimates that the Soviets achieved their goal of ten billion dollars in reparations through removals and ongoing (or current) production by 1950 (168-9). The costs to the German economy were enormous -- Moscow's "insatiable" demand for reparations resulted in the loss of perhaps one third of eastern Germany's industrial base. The SED, increasingly identified by the German public as a tool of the Kremlin, was unable to convince the Soviets to take a more rational approach to securing reparations until a good deal more damage had been done to Soviet-German relations.

The author also provides much new information on the Soviet drive to capture German military and atomic technologies. On this issue in particular, the Cold War began in Germany at the onset of the occupation. American, British, and Soviet officials raced to capture scientists and industrial technology, partly to benefit their own economies, but also with an eye to future East-West military competition. Regarding nuclear science, Naimark's findings comport with those of David Holloway, the historian of the Soviet atomic bomb project. The German contribution here was small but not insignificant: "The Germans' experience in wartime laboratories, backed by modern chemical, optics, and electric energy industries, proved to be a welcome addition to the Soviets' theoretical sophistication, espionage success, and ability to muster the vast resources of the country for building the bomb" (214). Like rape, plunder,

and reparations removals, however, "the Soviet desire to acquire German science, technology, and material, especially uranium, brought the Stalinist terror very close to home for the Germans....As a result, the Soviets seriously undermined their ability to rule the Eastern zone of Germany" (250).

Also critical to the history of the occupation and the GDR was the creation of an extensive secret police apparatus that would become the ***Staatssicherheitsdienst*** (or "Stasi") in 1950. While noting that only part of the East German secret police story can be told without access to KGB archives, Naimark provides us with the fullest account yet of the Stasi's birth. Beginning in the summer of 1945, "the Soviets constructed an impressive police system in the zone in a very short time indeed" (374). The German Communists were determined, of course, to dominate the new system, and built into it several branches designed "`to know everything and to report everything worth knowing'" (366). At the same time, the NKVD/MVD "led an almost completely independent Soviet secret policy operation in the zone" (379) by rounding up a total of 122,671 suspected Nazis and anti-Soviet elements (particularly young people, members of the Social Democratic Party [SPD], and former POWs) and depositing them in "special camps" where as many as 43,889 perished (376). SVAG and SED officials protested to Moscow about the NKVD/MVD's activities, but, again, much damage was done to Soviet-German relations before the Kremlin moved to alleviate the problem.

Naimark devotes two chapters to the relationship between the Soviets and the German Left and the question of who made policy in the SBZ. The author reveals that a great deal of political "spontaneity" and diversity existed among the German Left immediately after the war. Yet SVAG and German Communist chief Walter Ulbricht, both reflecting the "Stalinist distrust of spontaneous institutions," (271) would tolerate neither moderate socialists nor groups of hard-line communists eager to Sovietize Germany. SVAG and the SED's abandonment of "a German road to socialism" in favor of a "Sovietized" SBZ in 1947 and 1948, however, was also the direct result of continued economic hardship in the zone, the unpopularity of the Russians and the SED, and the deepening East-West split.

The author provides many new details about Colonel Sergei Tiul'panov, head of SVAG's Propaganda Administration and the foremost Russian advocate of a Sovietized Germany in the SBZ. By 1946, Naimark argues, Tiul'panov's office "was running politics in the Soviet zone" (322). Despite deep displeasure with his performance among some members of the CPSU's Central Committee, the Colonel survived long enough to shape the SED as "a party of a new type" (346). Tiul'panov probably survived as long as he did not because Soviet Politburo member Andrei Zhdanov protected him (Naimark found no evidence to support this claim), but because "there were no senior officials who could operate in the German environment with the ease that he did" (351). That he was so influential was probably due to his willingness to make hard decisions other SVAG officials wished to avoid. These decisions pointed eastern Germany in the direction of Sovietization. Given Moscow's intense desire for reparations and a demilitarized, neutral Germany, Naimark seems to sympathize with those members of the Soviet Central Committee who sought to replace the hard-line propaganda chief. Perhaps greater "flexibility," he suggests, would have helped prevent the division of Germany. Given the widespread unpopularity of SVAG and the SED by 1947, however, it seems "Sovietization" was about the only choice available to Moscow were it not to leave the SED's fate to the masses.

The Soviet occupation of Germany was a failure for the Soviets and a disaster for the Germans. Moscow obtained extensive reparations only at the cost of nearly crippling the East German econ-

omy. Heavy-handed Soviet and German Communist tactics in the zone encouraged the Western allies (and Western Germans) to accept Germany's division. Terrorized and often deprived of their livelihoods, Germans in the east came to despise SVAG and the SED. The life and death of the GDR, then, can be understood only with reference to its difficult birth.

Despite the book's scope, the relationship among SVAG, the German Communists, and the Church goes largely unexamined. The same may be said for trade unions. Repetitiveness and a few mistaken dates are minor distractions. It is tempting to criticize the author for not providing more extensive speculation as to the Kremlin's intentions in postwar Germany, but Naimark pointedly avoids such speculation for the sound reason that important Soviet records (particularly those held in the Presidential and KGB archives) remain closed. Naimark's book is most valuable for its analysis of Soviet-German relations "on the ground" in the SBZ, and he provides readers with a necessary companion to recent works by Wilfried Loth, R.C. Raack, and Vladislav Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov, among others. In short, ***The Russians in Germany*** will remain the standard source on the Soviet occupation until scholars gain greater access to Soviet archives.