

## **Exhibition script**

History in motion: remember, experience, commemorate.

Migrants in the GDR

Examination of the topic of migrants in the GDR using the example of foreign workers in Erfurt.

Section 1	Historical background knowledge (post-war Germany, GDR, SED, MfS)
Section 2	Foreign working people, bilateral treaties
Section 3	Students and foreign working people in Erfurt, nationalities, locations of companies and dormitories, arrival and departure, life and work, events, culture, publicity
Section 4	Foreign working people targeted by the MfS

Roll-up dimensions: 100x200 to 150x200

Other remarks: A QR code is printed on each of the roll-ups, which leads to the website of Soziale Dienste und Jugendhilfe gGmbH. There, the exhibition will be available in English and Arabic and the bibliography will be deposited.

Space situation

- Size of the exhibition space: up to 150 sqm
- Power sockets
- Exhibition system: roll-ups



## 1 Historical background knowledge

### 1.1 Postwar Germany

After World War II, Germany is divided by the Allied victorious powers (Soviet Union, USA, Great Britain and France) into four occupation zones and Berlin into four sectors. With the help of military governments, they constitute the supreme state power in the country. In the summer of 1945, the heads of state and government of the victorious powers meet to discuss the future of Europe and Germany. The central points are democratization, demilitarization and denazification. Economic and political principles are also laid down.

### 1.2 Foundation of the SED

In the course of history, even before the founding of the German Democratic Republic, the two workers' parties, the KPD and the SPD, were forcibly united to form the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), whose secretary general, Walter Ulbricht, became in 1946. It subsequently becomes the determining force in the Soviet occupation zone and controls the mass organizations Freie Deutsche Jugend, Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund and Demokratischer Frauenbund Deutschlands. The SED is also integrated into all other institutions of life and takes on the task of mobilizing and directing society.

### 1.3 Postwar Germany

In 1947, the foreign ministers of the victorious powers met in Moscow. The division of Germany can be traced back to this conference, since the representatives of America, Great Britain, France and the Soviet Union cannot agree on a common policy toward Germany. The international situation intensifies and so does the Cold War. As a result, different currencies are introduced. This rift between the West Sector and the Soviet Occupation Zone culminates in the total blockade of goods traffic to West Berlin. Between June 1948 and May 1949, West Berlin is supplied with all goods for daily use by means of an airlift.

### 1.4 Foundation of the Federal Republic and the GDR

In May 1949, the Federal Republic of Germany is founded with the promulgation of the Basic Law of Bonn and the Bundestag election, in which Konrad Adenauer is elected as the first Federal Chancellor. The GDR is formally established with the entry into force of the Constitution of the German Democratic Republic on October 7, 1949. Wilhelm Pieck becomes President of the Provisional People's Chamber, and Otto Grotewohl becomes Prime Minister of

the GDR. Walter Ulbricht takes over the leadership of the SED. The GDR becomes a workers' and farmers' state, and fundamental changes in the structures of the economy and society follow, such as land reform, expropriations of industry and the implementation of a school reform. "In camera, the SED leadership's true understanding of democracy was revealed: "When we establish a government, we never relinquish it, whether through elections or other methods.""

### 1.5 Ministry of State Security

With the establishment of the Ministry for State Security (MfS, Stasi) in February 1950, the SED receives a "shield and sword." Wilhelm Zaisser takes over as director. The MfS is granted unlimited powers to monitor the population and combat opposition. Both permanent, so-called official employees, and unofficial employees work for the Stasi. During the 40 years that the Ministry for State Security existed, it was served by around 250,000 full-time and, in 1988, around 189,000 unofficial employees. Initially, incriminated National Socialists, members of East German bourgeois parties such as the CDU who had not yet been brought into line with the SED, but also independent entrepreneurs, craftsmen, theologians and scientists were the focus of the State Security. Later, the circle of those to be spied on was to expand to include critics of the regime and members of the opposition. The Stasi became a comprehensive and systematic reporting system on the mood in the country. Just like the power of the SED, the power of the MfS extended into all areas of the population's daily life.

### 1.6 Planned development of socialism

During the 1950s, the economic inferiority of the GDR compared to the Federal Republic became increasingly apparent. The standard of living falls. The increase in labor standards in the factories is tantamount to wage cuts. Flight movements to the Federal Republic increased dramatically. In contrast, the planned development of socialism is politically propagated by Ulbricht. Private farms are nationalized and merged into Volkseigene Betriebe (VEBs). Private farmers are also merged into agricultural production cooperatives.

### 1.7 June 17, 1953

The GDR's policy is opposed by strikes in all sectors of the GDR economy. On June 16, 1953, East Berlin construction workers lay down their work. In over 700 places in the GDR, the people rise up on June 17, 1953. The revolutionary spark spreads to the entire country. They demand free elections, the resignation of the government and the replacement of Ulbricht. The

Soviet occupiers intervene rigorously and put down the protest. There are many injuries, deaths and long prison sentences are imposed.

### 1.8 Student exchange programs

Exchange programs and trade agreements are concluded with brother countries as early as the 1950s. These include efforts to bring foreign students into the country. After all, today's students are considered tomorrow's employers. The GDR pays the education and accommodation costs of foreign students. Students come to the GDR from over 125 countries. They form the characteristic baseline of the GDR's policy toward foreign working people.

### 1.9 Construction of the Berlin Wall

The construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 and the border security between the GDR and the Federal Republic can be seen as a consequence of June 17, 1953. It was supervised by the People's Police and the National People's Army. There were strong controls at the few border crossings. From a political perspective, the "anti-fascist protective wall" was intended to protect the GDR population from Western influences. Unofficially, the country was on the verge of collapse. After June 17, 1953 alone, 330,000 people emigrate from the GDR. The GDR lacks a workforce.

### 1.10 Labor migration

From 1967 to 1986, agreements for the training and employment of foreign workers were realized with various so-called brother states. The labor migrants come from various countries such as Algeria, Angola, China, Cuba, Mongolia, Mozambique, Poland, Hungary and Vietnam. At the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, more than 192,000 foreign nationals were living in the GDR.

### 1.11 Economy of scarcity

In the 1980s, the GDR government's economy of scarcity became increasingly visible and noticeable to the population. In addition, there was the increasing influence from the Federal Republic through West packages and West television, which more and more GDR citizens were able to receive. The superiority of socialism propagated by the GDR government finds less and less support among the GDR population. At the same time, the state leadership lacks concepts and material resources to raise the people's standard of living.

### 1.12 Peaceful revolution

The GDR population's discontent, previously formed in private and under the umbrella of the Protestant church, penetrates the public sphere. People took to the streets, and the Monday demonstrations emerged after the opposition discovered electoral fraud in the local elections on May 7, 1989. In addition to the Monday demonstrations, there was a mass exodus of the GDR population via Hungary to the Federal Republic in a short time. Hungary opened its borders in September 1989. 15,000 GDR citizens left for the Federal Republic via Hungary within three days. Civic movements formed in the GDR that wanted to restructure the GDR from the ground up. The New Forum was formed. The GDR government, however, stoically stuck to its plan and celebrated the GDR's 40th anniversary on a grand scale with mass marches.

### 1.13 Autumn 1989

In the fall of 1989, events came to a head. Within two days, the GDR government, the GDR Council of Ministers and the SED Politburo resign. In a press conference, the GDR population is informed about the opening of the border. From then on, GDR citizens can leave the GDR without reasons or visas. That very evening, thousands of GDR citizens made their way to the border between the GDR and the Federal Republic. The border guards, caught off guard, opened the borders. Not a shot was fired. Politically, the West German government prepares for the reunification of the two German states. On December 4, 1989, GDR citizens occupied the MfS district administration in Erfurt and saved the Stasi documents from destruction. In March 1990, the first free Volkskammer elections took place. The SED, renamed the PDS, received only 5.3 percent of the vote, the Alliance for Germany 48 percent. SED rule is officially voted out. Signed state treaties between the GDR and the Federal Republic now regulate the reunification of the two German states. On October 3, 1990, Germany is considered reunified, the GDR dissolved and joined the Federal Republic.

## 2 Bilateral intergovernmental agreements / foreign laborers

### 2.1 Bilateral intergovernmental agreements with brother states

Agreements with brother states, so-called bilateral agreements, bring the GDR urgently needed labor. Starting in 1967, they regulated in detail the training and employment of foreign workers in the GDR, as well as living conditions. The people working in the GDR come from various countries, such as Algeria, Angola, China, Cuba, Mongolia, Mozambique, Poland, Hungary and Vietnam. The agreements with the countries of Asia and Africa serve not only to secure the labor force, but also a political goal: the recognition of the GDR by the newly formed states.

### 2.2 What are bilateral agreements?

They serve to import labor into a country. Both the Federal Republic and the GDR began recruiting foreign workers in the 1960s. There are a number of similarities, even if the GDR denies the parallels with the Federal Republic. Recruitment in both German states occurs because of labor shortages. The workers are employed in similar fields of employment, such as in the immediate production area and under the harshest working conditions. In most cases, they work in three shifts and are housed in a concentrated manner in separate dormitories.

### 2.3 Differences Federal Republic vs. GDR

Differences include the GDR's propagated motives; it recruits less than the Federal Republic and embeds recruitment in the context of fraternal state aid. The contract workers of the Federal Republic live in a democracy with enforceable rights. The foreign laborers of the GDR live in a dictatorship and have little legal basis outside of government agreements. In the 1970s, the Federal Republic develops into an immigration country. The GDR adheres to the principle of rotation and temporary residence of foreign laborers.

### 2.4 Content Agreements

In the government agreements of the GDR, points concerning the use of foreign workers are regulated. Thus, the wage and the temporal scope of the assignment are regulated, as well as social benefits, further training and the obligatory language course that the laborers complete. Furthermore, precise details are given on the place of deployment and the accommodation.

## 2.5 Qualification treaties with CMEA states

The first treaties are concluded with Poland and Hungary in the 1960s. They are called qualification treaties with CMEA (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance) states and represent the counterpart to the Marshall Plan. These qualification treaties with CMEA states constitute the first phase of bilateral treaties.

## 2.6 Poland

Initially, Polish and Hungarian workers come to the GDR for one to two years. They are to be qualified in the GDR. The GDR covers the costs of housing and language courses. Travel expenses are also reimbursed. In addition, the Polish and Hungarian workers have a right to vacation. Externally, the promotion of economic and social rapprochement among the CMEA states are propagated as goals of the treaties. The Polish side of the treaty has to provide interpreters in the factories. Later, Poland demands financial equality for Polish workers with GDR workers in the respective companies, 8 marks per day separation pay, and the assumption of costs for a home leave every three months. Poland's other demands on the GDR included payment for training and continuing education, a guarantee of meals on working days and days off, a day off on Poland's national vacation, and a free shuttle to the workplace if the difference between home and work was more than 3 kilometers, the provision of free work clothes, payment for a family vacation during the entire stay, and the assumption of the costs of recruiting and supervising workers in the amount of 1,200 marks per worker.

## 2.7 Hungary

The agreement with Hungary is concluded in 1967 on the Polish model. They are housed in new housing estates with no existing infrastructure or recreational facilities. This agreement is advantageous for Hungary, since there were many layoffs due to economic reform.

## 2.8 Increase in the number of workers

The second phase can be located in the 1970s and serves to increase the number of workers. The agreements concluded are declared as proletarian solidarity and are concluded with young socialist states outside the Eastern Bloc. Among them are Algeria, Cuba and Mozambique. The recruited workers from Algeria are to stay in the GDR for four years. They arrive without family, and a visit from family members is only possible with explicit permission. The Algerian laborers are deployed in industry, construction and transportation. The bilateral agreement



between Algeria and the GDR still stipulates that the laborers can only enter the country if they have no criminal record and have not previously been employed in a capitalist country. In addition, Algerian laborers must pay their own return travel costs. Just one year after concluding the intergovernmental agreement, Algeria would like to expand the deployment, because the agreement is of great importance for Algeria in its external image. It improves the social situation and the qualified workers who were deployed in the GDR contribute to the socialist development of Algeria's national economy after their return. For the GDR, the agreement is also of great importance, as it speculates on Algeria's large oil reserves in order to make itself less dependent on the USSR and thus alleviate its permanent lack of raw materials. Overall, however, the agreement is seen as conflictual because of disappointed expectations on the part of Algeria regarding living and working conditions in the GDR. In the early 1980s, there are significant differences over the treatment of Algerian workers in the GDR. As a result, Algeria enacts a law against the exploitation of Algerian citizens by foreign states. As a result, the agreement with the GDR is terminated and the Algerian workers are ordered back from the GDR.

## 2.9 Cuba

The agreement with Cuba is concluded in 1978 and has great political significance for Cuba. Cuban workers must transfer 25 percent of their net wages to their home country as a savings deposit, but in many cases do not receive the amounts paid in back after their return.

## 2.10 Mozambique

As early as 1979, the GDR concludes an agreement with Mozambique on the temporary employment of Mozambican workers in socialist enterprises in the GDR. The contracts are concluded for a deployment period of five years. In contrast to Polish and Hungarian workers, there are no preliminary checks on qualifications, because the GDR's priority is plan fulfillment and not training. This is because, for the GDR, the focus in the second phase is on increasing the number of workers.

## 2.11 Mass import

Beginning in the 1980s, the third phase of bilateral intergovernmental agreements begins. Treaties are now concluded with Vietnam, Angola, Mongolia and China. From this point on, at the latest, the transfer of labor serves only one goal: to maintain the GDR's ailing economy. It is considered a phase of mass labor import. Qualifications and later further training of the

recruited people play no role. This is also evidenced by the 1985 agreement with Vietnam, which states that professional activity is to take precedence over professional qualifications. It is also stated later within the agreement with Mongolia that linguistic and vocational qualification is to take place outside working hours. The foreign laborers who arrived from the 1980s onward are used in the production process; the economic backwardness of the GDR is to be compensated with the foreign laborers. Importing labor is cheaper than investing in technical innovations.

#### 2.12 Plans of the GDR for the 1990s

Shortly before the Peaceful Revolution, the plan for the deployment of Chinese laborers calls for up to 90,000 Chinese laborers to come to the GDR. They are to be given the opportunity of naturalization. The GDR plans to make a paradigm shift in its migration policy and self-image from a non-immigration country to an immigration country. This change in the GDR's migration policy does not come about as a result of the political turnaround. This in turn confronts the foreign working people with an unclear situation. The GDR's factories close and mass layoffs occur, usually affecting foreign workers first. The government agreements that the GDR has made with the sending countries can only be terminated by mutual agreement. However, the GDR no longer exists, which puts the foreign working people in an unclear situation. Many move to the Federal Republic and receive asylum there; others accept the offer of a one-time payment in 1990 and return to their home country prematurely.

#### 2.13 Status of Foreign Workers after 1990

In June 1990, the Ordinance on the Change of Employment Relationships of Foreign Citizens Employed and Qualified in the GDR on the Basis of Intergovernmental Agreements comes into force. The most important paragraphs state that dismissals are possible for compelling reasons, that workers receive financial compensation of 70 percent in the event of early departure, that they are accommodated in a dormitory until they leave the country, that the company pays the costs of their journey home, and that they are assisted in sending personal belongings. Paragraph six offers foreign workers the option of staying until the official end of the contract. The problem here, however, is that although the federal German asylum law comes into force in 1990 and largely puts the foreign laborers on an equal footing with the guest workers, their right of residence does not constitute a permanent right of residence and they are not entitled to financial benefits if they are unemployed.

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### 3 Foreign Students and Foreign Workers in Erfurt

#### 3.1 Foreign students

The first foreign citizens arrived in Erfurt from Vietnam in October 1966. They work and study at the VEB Funkwerk. They are accommodated in the former district court of Erfurt in Auenstraße 53. However, the accommodation there on the 1st floor on 175 square meters and a room size of 20 square meters on average with a common room of 53 square meters requires a labor-intensive reconstruction of the premises with the installation of supply and sewage pipes and the installation of toilets. In order to accommodate all Vietnamese students, the apartments on the first floor, which are occupied by a married couple and a single person, are to be vacated. Until the premises in Auenstraße 53 are completed, the students will be accommodated in the hotel "Gaedke", whose owners are not pleased about the accommodation of the Vietnamese students.

#### 3.2 Deployment and Accommodation of Vietnamese Students

From November 1966 to September 1967, the 167 students and interns from Vietnam, who were working in Erfurt and the surrounding area in the state-owned enterprises VEB Funkwerk, VEB Rührenwerk Mühlhausen, VEB Fernmelde-Anlagenbau Arnstadt, VEB Chemie-Anlagenbau Erfurt-Rudisleben and VEB Pressen- und Scherenbau Erfurt, were housed on the grounds of the Iga in the "Sternwarte" building. German lessons were held in the horticultural museum. Since the reconstruction of the object in the Auenstraße is delayed and thus the move is postponed, the IGA demands loss of income from the city in the amount of 4,500.00 Marks. The mayor of Erfurt appeals to the "socialist help of our republic to the fighting Vietnam" The move to the building in Auenstraße 53 takes place in September 1967. The Vietnamese newly arrived in June 1967, who are looked after by VEB Pressen- und Scherenbau Erfurt, were given a medical examination. It is stated that "after about 8 weeks [...] the diet, which in part is still somewhat specialized, [can be] adapted to ours."

At the medical academy and at the pedagogical college, among others, there are 100 Vietnamese students each in 1971.

#### 3.4 Angolan students

In 1983, six Angolan students were trained at VEB Mälz- und Speicherbau Erfurt. A handwritten note on the regulations for Angolan scholarship holders abroad grants the

scholarship holders an initial financial allowance of 6,000 Kwanza, which corresponds to 203 US dollars (=487 DM.) In the case of excellent study results, vacation trips to the home country are possible, normally every 2 years. If students study for more than 2 years, they can take between 40 and 80 kg of excess baggage; after 4 years, an additional 100 kg of excess baggage can be exported.

### 3.5 Foreign working people in Erfurt

Between 1967 and 1989, people from Poland and Hungary, Algeria, Cuba, Korea, as well as Angola and Vietnam lived and worked in Erfurt. In October 1989, 7,948 foreign persons lived and worked in the entire Erfurt district. The intergovernmental agreements regulate the place of employment and the accommodation in company-owned dormitories.

### 3.6 Journey home

But also the return journey is meticulously planned, so in 1972 Hungarian laborers were only allowed to travel back by special train. An independent return journey by motorcycle or car is not allowed. They are entitled to breakfast and lunch on the train for a total price of 10 marks. Luggage is also subject to clear guidelines and may not exceed 75 kilograms per individual item. This includes bicycles, scooters, baby carriages, motorcycles without sidecars, sports equipment, etc., which are within the weight limit per individual item. "A list of the expected volume of goods to be transported, specifying the type (motorcycles, bicycles, refrigerators, furniture, personal effects, etc.), is to be sent to the dispatch station (Erfurt main station) [...]."

Vietnamese laborers are even imposed an "export limit for selected consumer goods," as the export of items must be restricted according to the assessment of the MfS. The Vietnamese toilers do not want to accept these changed export regulations and henceforth no longer work overtime.

### 3.7 Life

The foreign workers live in company-owned dormitories, each of which is administered by a supervisor from the home country, a supervisor from the GDR and a dormitory manager. In addition, there are security guards and rules and regulations. These rules stated that visitors always had to announce their arrival. In addition, it was recorded in writing who left and when they returned. In a letter from the VEB Kombinat Umformtechnik "Herbert Warnke" Erfurt to the Ministry for Tool and Processing Machine Construction in Berlin in 1977, the state-owned

company stated that "the accommodation [...] is in a new building block. The apartments are heated by district heating. The housing units are: One-room, two-room, three-room, four-room apartments. Occupancy is according to the apartment size (2-7 persons). Washing machines and drying equipment are installed in the basement rooms. Each apartment has a toilet, a bathroom and a small kitchen. The rent per person is 20,- M per month. Work clothes have to be bought and maintained by the workers themselves. Cleaning of the apartment is done by the residents. The company carries out regular inspections. The distance between the living quarters and the company is about 1 km. In each year of continuous work in the enterprise, the laborer is paid for three trips (II class railroad) to the home town and back. In the year of arrival, travel expenses are reimbursed for the trip home, and in the year of the scheduled return trip for two trips home. Once a year - for the first time after 6 months - Hungarian laborers receive an additional three days of paid leave in the amount of the standard or basic wage for the vacation trip to their home town." For this purpose, they can use club and TV rooms, depending on the equipment of the dormitory. In addition, the foreign workers take part in a German language course at the beginning of their stay.

The VEB Schuhfabrik "Paul Schäfer" Erfurt also states in a 1979 letter to the SED city leadership on the subject of order, security and discipline that "[...] the living conditions for Polish working people in the home were constantly improved. For example, the cellar corridors were covered with flooring, an additional 10 radios with long wave, for listening to broadcasts in Polish, and 20 washing machines were purchased. [Furthermore, new furniture worth 7,000 M was purchased for the dormitory at the beginning of 1979.

In the dormitory, 3 room occupations could be awarded for exemplary order and cleanliness as "Best Housing Collective".

For accommodation in the dormitory, the foreign laborers pay rent. "The rent is graded according to the level of accommodation. For example, Algerian colleagues at the 3 Erfurt construction companies pay 25 marks, at the Weimar combine and the Bleicherode potash plant 20 marks, and at the Waltershausen rubber combine 10 marks rent." The apartments in the dormitory of the VEB Schuhfabrik "Paul Schäfer" in the Rieth Erfurt Nord development area are equipped with a radio and refrigerator. A television and record player are available in the club room, and sewing machines and a photo lab are also available for use.

### 3.8 Eating habits

The different eating habits compared to the GDR population pose problems for the GDR and district administration. For example, pork and potatoes are not considered staple foods. This means that other foodstuffs, which are the staple foods of the foreign working people, must be provided in larger quantities by the HO (stattliches Einzelunternehmen Handelsorganisation). Thus, the HO was informed by the operational enterprises to stock more white bread and rice, tropical fruits, pasta, spices, tea (infusion bags), butter and margarine, fat, eggs, sugar, broilers, beef and vegetables. This increase in food in stock is also important for the operational catering of the workforce. The companies VE Wohnungsbaukombinat Erfurt, VE Straßen- und Tiefbaukombinat Erfurt and Bau- und Reparaturkombinat Erfurt share the hot meals for their foreign workers in 1975. A multipurpose hall is made available as a supply facility for this purpose. A total of 110 portions are prepared daily over a period of about six months. Providing one hot meal a day costs the three companies a total of around 18,000 Marks, including all wage and material costs.

### 3.9 Cultural and recreational activities

The plants are motivated to care for their foreign colleagues in their free time as well. For example, VEB Talsperrenbau Weimar submits a detailed plan of action for the care of Vietnamese workers to the council of the Kühnhausen municipality, who are housed in Erfurt Kühnhausen. This also includes a daily plan for the first days in the GDR. Excursions are made and table tennis is played, but also recruitment interviews are held and health examinations and staggered clothing trips to the department store are carried out with the foreign laborers in groups. For the purchase of warm winter clothing, each foreign worker receives an earmarked one-time payment of 500 marks, which does not have to be repaid. The factories are urged to coordinate the additional distribution of goods with the trade organizations so that supplies for the entire population can continue to be guaranteed.

In addition to the care provided after arrival, the foreign workers are to continue to be cared for in their free time. This is documented in a letter from VEB Stahlbau Erfurt to the FDGB Erfurt city executive committee. Despite the accommodation in the most modern new building complex in Nordhäuserstraße in Erfurt, the VEB complains about a high fluctuation of foreign workers and states that a sensible and organized leisure time activity will put a stop to excessive visits to pubs and alcohol consumption. Thus, a "Plan of Cultural, Educational and Sporting Events for the Polish Workers Employed in VEB Thüringer Stahlbau" is presented. It includes



cultural and sporting leisure activities, dance evenings and film screenings in Polish, hikes and soccer matches. Further training courses and competition evaluations as well as festivities and general assemblies are also planned. A short time later, the evaluation of "the cultural, educational and sporting events of the Polish working people employed at VEB Thüringer Stahlbau" takes place. The fluctuation of foreign workers decreases. The VEB "Paul Schäfer" shoe factory also intensifies the "meaningful leisure activities" of its foreign workers. The Algerian workers at the Erfurt construction and repair combine even set up a music group. Overall, the care of the foreign workers in their free time is intensified. They go on excursions and even have the opportunity to take a swimming course.

### 3.10 Events

In addition to the accounts of the FDGB and the SED, which suggest that the foreign workers were well integrated, other sources must also be pointed out. For example, there were repeated disputes and conflicts between Erfurt's population and foreign workers. For example, an Algerian worker was refused service in a restaurant. His German supervisor then complained to the Erfurt city council.

The following submission to the HOG Gaststättenbetrieb Erfurt is also about a leisure activity. The reason for the complaint is the fact that there is a big crowd in front of the restaurant "Drushba" and that the complaining couple, who are in possession of tickets, arrive late at the dance club together with their West visitor and with broken pantyhose.

Further documents prove that there were other incidents in the HO restaurant "Drushba". As a solution, special passes are to be issued, which allow the attendants of the Algerian workers to enter the respective restaurants. In addition, a log book is to be kept in the restaurants. These exemplary situations did not occur until 1977 and must be viewed in the context of Erfurt's more recent past.

In August 1975, a summer party was held on the cathedral square. At this summer festival, an Algerian laborer under the influence of alcohol tried to kiss a young GDR citizen. A brawl then broke out between GDR youths and the Algerian. He suffered a fracture of the nasal bone during this brawl. By 8:45 p.m., a major brawl had developed between GDR youths (who outnumbered the Algerian laborers), resulting in about 40 arrests, with 30 GDR citizens being taken into custody. According to the Stasi, the youths from Erfurt, who were negatively disposed towards the Algerians, were responsible for the brawl.

Immediately, the Stasi pulls together all available forces. It tries to maintain full control and searches for the ringleader. In the city center and in the Rieth development area, unofficial personnel are stationed at key points. But the factories and dormitories where the Algerian laborers work and live are also secured. This is to prevent the incidents among the Algerians from triggering negative consequences. There are no indications from the operational network that the confrontation in Cathedral Square was planned. Since only two unofficial employees dealing with the case speak French, the Stasi's liaison with the Algerian laborers is still weak. But the MfS knows how to remedy the situation and decides, "in addition, A-orders have been placed on the telephone connections of the residential properties of the Algerian laborers, which enable operative control of the interpreters and supervisors as well as the Algerian laborers." "In the KD Erfurt and the KD Gotha, overviews of all Algerian laborers with personal data and place of employment (brigades, construction sites, etc.) are available."

In the days that followed, there were repeated clashes between young GDR citizens and Algerian workers. On August 12, 1975, 50 to 60 youths attempted to provoke five Algerian citizens and drove them through downtown Erfurt. Security forces brought the Algerian laborers to safety on the Anger in the main post office and from there to their dormitory via the back exit. A real chase developed. While people were evacuated via the back exit, the crowd in front of the main post office continued to swell. "The approximately 150 youthful Erfurt residents gathered in front of the main post office provocatively demanded the surrender of the Algerians. Chants indicated their hostile intention against the Algerians. Statements were made such as:

- "Algerians out, Germans out, Algerians in chains, hand them over to us, we want to hang them."

- "Beat the Algerians to death, chase them home, let them go back to the bush."

With chants like.

- "Now we'll show the cops, we'll get the Algerians out now."

The hooligans attempted to enter the main post office, which was prevented by the security forces present. The youths succeeded in smashing the window of the office guard by throwing stones, and a member of the criminal investigation department was slightly injured.

On August 13, between 10:00 p.m. and 12:00 a.m., groups of youths again formed, equipped with sticks among other things, and headed for the Algerians' dormitory in order to provoke fights.

Thanks to the consistent measures taken by the security authorities, it was possible to identify a total of 132 people who were directly or indirectly involved in the riots.

#### 4 MfS Perspective

In general, the Ministry for State Security is intensively concerned with foreign working people. Thus, from 1984 at the latest, "information in the year 1984 operationally noteworthy dates and special anniversaries in connection with the stay of foreigners in the GDR" are collected and provided to the district service offices. Based on the year, all dates and anniversaries of various countries are tabulated. e.g.:

07.02.1984 Algeria, 5th anniversary of the inauguration of the president

30.04.1984 Vietnam, 1975 day of the complete liberation of the south

08/01/1984 Angola, 10th anniversary of the foundation of the People's Army FAPLA

28.08.1984 Kurds, West Berlin, 1979 (5th anniversary) about 30 Kurds occupied the Iranian Consulate General in West Berlin

01.09.1984 Mocambique, 15th anniversary of the victory over the Portuguese colonialists

25.09.1984 Mocambique, 20th anniversary of the People's Liberation Forces of the Mocambiquan Revolution

12/22/1984 Vietnam, 40th anniversary of the Vietnamese People's Army.

#### 4.1 Nationalities

The Ministry of State Security records specific cultural characteristics for each country of origin from its perspective.

##### 4.1.1 Algerian laborers:

- From imperialism,

- completely different habits of life

- No collective spirit, each individual wants to be noticed and respected
- Problem of work discipline
- Live in extended families, when clan elder calls, call is command, they go home
- Have a completely different view of marriage, marriage at 15
- "In Algeria, people marry at the age of 15. So it is understandable that men between the ages of 20 and 40 will also have a special preference for the 12/14 year old girls from Erfurt."
- "The whole sexual problem must not be underestimated. (Should a German girl be pregnant by an Algerian, she will not receive alimony, nor will the intention to enter into marriage with an Algerian and apply for departure to Algeria be approved by our state organs)."
- Lack of sense of time
- Completely underdeveloped understanding of the principle of achievement
- Problems with rations, mutton and poultry meat, fruit and white bread
- Prevent contact with city and propane gas, are strangers to them, danger of poisoning
- Can tolerate little alcohol, drink beer
- In the event of an accident at work, the company must pay a one-time settlement: 8,000 marks
- Send medicines home, especially pills
- Like to walk barefoot, danger on construction sites

#### 4.1.2 Polish Workers:

- High level of qualification
- Difficult to replace where employment ends
- Smuggling
- Profit with up to 1000% when sold in Poland

#### 4.1.3 Cuban laborers:

- Major problems
- In 1986 there were about 1000 early repatriations for disciplinary reasons
- In the criminal statistics they appear most strongly
- Often the cause of conflicts
- Because of their mentality and habits, it is difficult for them to adhere to daily routines.

#### 4.1.4 Mozambican laborers:

- Modest
- This group of foreigners is increasingly exposed to provocations
- Population is afraid of AIDS and demands medical examination before entering the country
- Material interest not as pronounced as with other foreign laborers
- In the Erfurt district in 1989 1439, 1384 male, 13 female

#### 4.1.5 Angolan laborers:

- Similar to Mozambique
- Problems with health status and sense of their stay in the GDR not explained properly
- Are of the opinion that they are coming to study

#### 4.1.6 Vietnamese laborers:

However, the most material on foreign laborers can be found in the Stasi archives on Vietnamese laborers. This is because they put the GDR economy in a difficult position.

- Ostensibly material interest
- Sewing and sale of jeans clothing, sales in buying and selling shops
- Targeted purchases of consumer goods in demand = discontent among GDR population

- "The behavior of these foreigners is characterized by extreme material interest, caused by the economic situation in the home country."

- Difficulties acclimatization phase

- Tensions North-South Vietnam

- Interest in Western way of life and goods

- Petty bourgeois possessiveness

- Good communication system among Vietnamese

- Search for extra income

- Before return trip, main focus on procurement and packing of goods that are urgently needed in Vietnam:

o Fabrics

o Soaps

o Bicycles

o Sewing machines

o spare parts

o Vitamin tablets

o mopeds

o Shoes and leather goods

o Children's clothing

o household appliances, gas and electric stoves

o car spare parts to high quality NSW home electronics

o sugar

o medicines

- Untaxed sideline activities

- Smuggling

- Attempt to smuggle goods into the GDR on entry, past customs:

o Kimonos

o Jeans clothing

o cosmetics

o Quartz watches and batteries

o Bloussons

o Plastic shoes

o Jewelry

o patches

o Rivets used for the production of jeans clothing in the GDR and then illegally distributed

As to why the Vietnamese laborers were buying up exorbitant amounts of goods and trying to transfer them to their homeland, the Stasi also records, "The aftermath of the Vietnam War is still coming to light. [...] Problems exist in the production of foodstuffs, in exports, in the introduction of economic accounting, in housing construction, and in the transformation of the domestic market. For example, the average living space in cities per person is 2.7m<sup>2</sup>." In addition, there are constant crop failures in 1987, 1988 and 1989, resulting in a deficit of basic foodstuffs. Living conditions in Vietnam are deteriorating. Officially, there are 1.5 million unemployed, but according to the MfS, the number is much higher at 15 million.

Salary of an officer in Vietnam

45,000 dong per month (10,000 dong equals 29.63 marks),

1kg rice 1000 Dong

1kg meat 5000 Dong

1 cigarette 2600 Dong

First treatment for broken leg 150,000 dong

"A Vietnamese citizen who was able to buy a 5-year stay in the GDR with the help of his village for the equivalent of about 8,000 Dong (this does not include the bribes usually paid), works about 2 years to pay off his debts, about 2 years for his family and 1 year for himself, according to Vietnamese studies that coincide with GDR findings. After his return, he is among the potential unemployed because he is expected to provide for himself and his family in the 5 years. This is emphatically reflected negatively in the willingness of SRV workers in the GDR to qualify."

Now it becomes clear why Vietnamese laborers in the GDR are so eager to generate as much money as possible and to transfer it in "hard currency" to their home country.

"Vietnamese laborers work in the GDR in order to be able to pay their debts at home and to provide themselves and their family members with the basic necessities of life for the longest possible period of time. Therefore, all their efforts are directed toward obtaining money and converting it into goods, of which they try to obtain the dispatchability by all means."

Situation development in the Erfurt district

"Working people from the SRV are increasingly participating in illegal street business, both in speculative trading and, for example, as black taxi drivers, but also in prostitution, some of which is already organized by pimps. Occasional violent confrontations have their causes repeatedly in the insufficient educational work and inclusion of foreign workers in social life in the GDR on the one hand, and in the insufficient preparation in the GDR population on the other."

"The insufficient political-ideological preparation of the population and, in some cases, considerable burdens in the infrastructure led to isolated manifestations of mostly hidden xenophobia. This manifests itself in particular in discriminatory behavior in the leisure sector."

"Due to the introduction of limits on the export of selected goods to the SR Vietnam, the willingness of Vietnamese working people to perform is impaired. Anticipated unemployment in Vietnam further restricts the desire for qualification. Here, the unconditional political and ideological influence of company and social forces is necessary."



#### 4.1.7 Sick leave for foreign workers against payment

According to MfS information, there is a doctor in Erfurt who writes Vietnamese workers off sick for ten days for a fee of 100 marks. Just in time for the Têt festival in 1989, 17 Vietnamese workers are written off sick by this doctor in one day for payment or alcohol. No reports are made by the VEB Feuerungsanlagen and VEB Kombinat Umformtechnik enterprises because no Vietnamese workers want to testify, fearing physical or psychological pressure.

#### 4.1.8 Pregnancy of Vietnamese workers in the GDR

Unmarried Vietnamese workers are permitted to marry during their assignment in the GDR, provided they have the necessary documents. If the woman becomes pregnant, she will be sent back home. Those who enter into marriage must observe Vietnam's Law on Marriage and the Family. Pregnant Vietnamese women should generally give birth in Vietnam. If this is not possible, they will receive pregnancy and weekly leave in the GDR. During this time, they can keep their child in the dormitory with the approval of the company doctor. After the weekly leave, the employment relationship ends and the Vietnamese mothers must leave the GDR and return to their home country or bring the child home and then continue to work in the GDR's factories.

#### 4.1.9 Home leave

According to the "Fundamentals of the Deployment of Foreign Laborers in the GDR," Vietnamese laborers are given home leave once during the five-year deployment period, at the earliest in the second year of deployment.

"In particular, Vietnamese laborers are instructed that they are entitled to return from home leave to the German Democratic Republic only if they report to the departure camp in Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh City at least 4 days before the return date."

In the departure camps they are admitted, registered and looked after.

"In the event that Vietnamese laborers do not report to the departure camp 4 days before their return to the German Democratic Republic, the Ministry of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam shall ensure that an appropriate number of Vietnamese laborers fly to the German Democratic Republic as new arrivals."