

## THE STAND OF THE GFR GOVERNMENT TOWARDS THE ODRA AND LUSATIAN NYSA FRONTIER

(1949—1966)

### SUMMARY

The book presented here to readers is an attempt at a synthetic approach to the question of the revisionism of the GFR government towards Poland after the Second World War. The author presents — from the Polish point of view — the official stand taken by Bonn and criticizes the different kinds of arguments (political, legal, economic, demographic, etc.) officially put forward by the government of the GFR in different years to justify its territorial claims against Poland. The process of evolution of the stand taken by western Germany is examined against the background of the development of the international situation, above all, in the field of the alignment of forces between the East and the West and the policy of the big powers towards the German question, and also against the background of the development of the internal political situation in the GFR and Poland. The problem of the attitude of the west German government towards the western frontier of Poland, established at Potsdam, is therefore shown not only within the framework of Polish-German bilateral relations but also in the context of the whole of the eastern policy of Bonn and the question of European security.

By critical analysis of the principles of the official stand of Bonn and confrontation of the revisionist theses of western Germany with the Polish point of view regarding the present Polish-German frontier, the author comes to the conclusion that the stand of the GFR government towards Poland in the years 1949—1966 was marked by territorial revisionism, officially presented as from the moment when the west German state was proclaimed.

This stand is the result of the state programme of the GFR, for the west German government set itself as the chief task of its foreign policy "the restoration of the unity of the German Reich" at least within the frontiers of 1937. For this reason the demands for a revision of the post-war frontiers of Germany in the east was the rule in almost all official enunciations in the GFR in the years 1949—1966.

The whole of the post-war period — in the aspect of the attitude of the official authorities of the GFR towards the frontier on the Odra and

Lusatian Nysa — can be divided into two periods: 1949—1955 and 1955—1966. The first period, preceded by the shaping of the programme of revisionism in the western occupation zones of Germany (the years 1945—1949) can be called the stage of "passive revisionism" and the second stage — that of "active revisionism" on the part of the GFR towards Poland.

The ever more active proclamation of slogans for the revision of the Polish-German frontier established at Potsdam has been accompanied by a process of modification of the arguments put forward by west German circles to justify their territorial claims against Poland. Altogether, during the post-war years, there has been a significant process of an almost complete reversal of the proportions between the various kinds of arguments put forward in western Germany in favour of a change of the present line of the Polish-German frontier: from a domination of economic and humanitarian theses, a secondary role being given to legal arguments and very little emphasis being laid on political postulates (in the years 1945—1955) — to absolute hegemony of political and legal argumentation in the last years of the "Adenauer era" and during the chancellorship of Erhard.

Analysis of the stand of the GFR government towards Poland's western frontier also proves that the west German territorial claims are an external manifestation of the "state revisionism" of the GFR, that is, the practical activity carried on by the west German authorities in the GFR itself and outside its frontiers to promote the unification of Germany at least within the frontiers of 1937. In the GFR, territorial revisionism has become a reliable political doctrine for a number of basic fields of west German life — it is a binding directive not only in the field of Bonn's foreign policy, but also in its internal policy (particularly in the fields of culture, education, schools, transport and public relations).

The persistent and consistent refusal of the GFR government to recognize the frontier on the Odra and Nysa as final in the years 1949—1966, based on the principle of usurping for itself the exclusive right to represent the whole German nation has meant that in the whole scheme of the Bonn eastern policy there is actually no place for a real normalization of relations between the GFR and Poland. Bonn's negative attitude in this question has therefore been a function of its stand towards the Polish-German frontier.

The attitude of the GFR government to the GDR is of fundamental importance for the problem of the Polish-German frontier, too. The fact that the GFR has usurped for itself "the exclusive right to represent the German state and nation within the frontiers of 1937" is aimed not only at preventing the recognition of the GDR as a second German state with equal rights, but is also a manifestation of the revisionist attitude towards Poland. For the annexation of the GDR by the GFR is treated as a premise of the preliminary restoration of the frontiers of Germany, at least those of 1937. After the "small unification" (the GFR with the GDR), Bonn would aim at the "big unification", among others, by way of a revision

of the frontier on the Odra and Lusatian Nysa. Thus, in the event of the general recognition of the GDR (also by the GFR), the "all-German" postulates of the GFR would not only have the character of open territorial revisionism, but would also be suspended in a geographical vacuum.

In view of the territorial claims of the GFR towards Poland, the question of the Polish-German frontier also plays a certain part in East-West relations. As the GFR grows in strength and importance within the framework of the western community the dilemma becomes more and more evident: will west German revisionism play the role of a political instrument, binding the GFR and subordinating it to the anti-communist coalition of the West, or will the western community become a political instrument in the hands of the GFR for gaining the support of the western states for the Bonn policy of undermining the territorial *status quo* in Europe? In view of the growing internal contradictions in the western camp, the possibility of recognition by the West of the final character of the frontier on the Odra and Lusatian Nysa may turn out to be one of the effective ways of checking the excessively high political aspirations of the GFR in the West. The creation of a united Germany, among others, by way of realization of the territorial claims of the GFR against Poland, would also be aimed against the vital interests of the states of western Europe, as it would lead to the supremacy of the "Great German State" in the whole of Europe.

The revisionist stand taken by the GFR government towards Poland is a manifestation of the general strivings of Bonn to annul the results of the Second World War by means of changing the existing *status quo*, which means that, in a way, it goes beyond the problem of Polish-German relations. In a situation when the postulate to maintain the existing *status quo* in central Europe has risen to the rank of a basic condition of international security, the territorial claims of the GFR towards Poland are a threat not only to the security of the Polish nation, but also a threat to the general interests of peace and security in Europe.