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CIRCULATION OF ALUMINIUM COINS AS AN TOOL OF TOTALITARIAN POLICY OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Summary

The historical prerequisites for creation and decline of the GDR currency are outlined, using the example of which totalitarian approaches in state monetary policy are generalized.

An analysis of the news publications of the USSR in the last years of its existence regarding the socio-political structure of that time German countries, as well as of the historical processes of their territorial division, starting from the introduction of the Allied Military Currency, is carried out.

The research reveals peculiarities of the Soviet principles of organizing financial and monetary relations in subordinated countries, and identifies the unchanging characteristics of their historical development.

The pros and cons of payment use of aluminium as the primary reason for involving alloys based on it to cash circulation are emphasized, as well a method of quantitative calculations of its volume using conventional value measured in coin-years is proposed. The regularities of introducing aluminium coins into circulation depending on the socio-political system of the state are revealed.

It is made attempt to identify the underlying causes of the extensive use of aluminium alloys in GDR coinage. The methodological framework combines historical-comparative, quantitative types and content-analysis.

The findings demonstrate that the mass issuance of aluminium coins in the GDR (over 5.3 billion units) was not merely a technical or resource-based decision but correlated with a broader tradition of monetary devaluation characteristic of totalitarian economic systems. The study proves that precedents of hyper-emission initiated by the

Bolshevik government in 1918–1920 influenced subsequent monetary approaches implemented in Soviet-controlled territories of Germany after World War II.

Quantitative global comparison reveals that the highest “coin-year” indicators are predominantly associated with socialist-bloc states and countries with totalitarian or authoritarian legacies, whereas market-oriented economies tended to employ aluminium coinage only temporarily and in limited denominations.

It is concluded that the dominance of aluminium in the GDR’s coinage system reflected not only economic or technological constraints but also deeper political principles prioritizing state interests over individual economic rights. In this perspective, the structural weakness of the East German mark and its voluntary displacement by the stable West German currency appear as a logical consequence of the chosen monetary model.

Keywords: *GDR, FRG, USSR, monetary circulation, change coin, aluminium.*