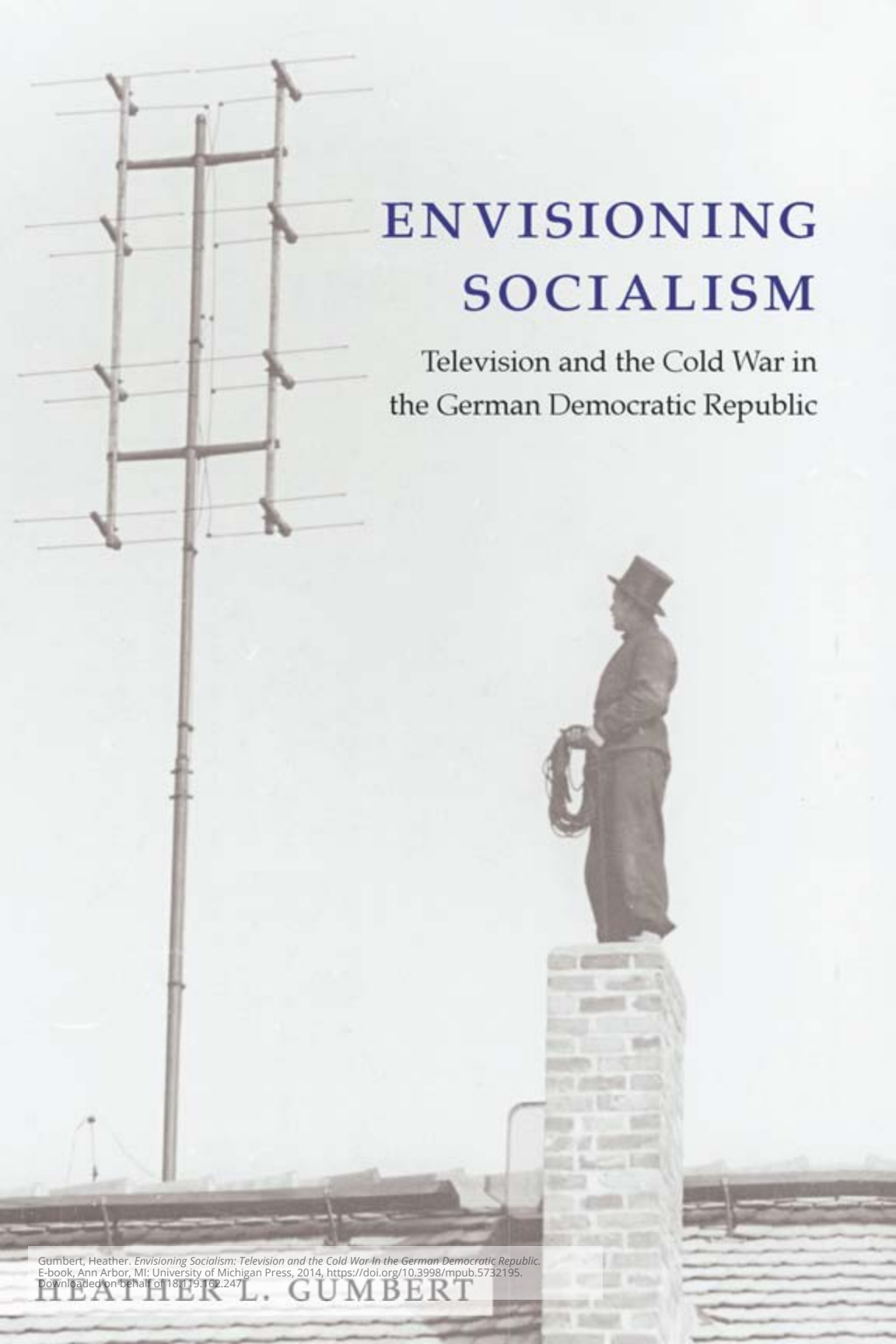

ENVISIONING SOCIALISM

Television and the Cold War in the German Democratic Republic

HEATHER L. GUMBERT

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Heather L. Gumbert

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For my parents

Contents

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Abbreviations

ARD	Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland
BPO	Betriebsparteiorganisation
DDM	East German Mark (currency)
DEFA	Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft
DFF	Deutscher Fernsehfunk
DFG	Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft
DIAS	Drahtfunk im amerikanischen Sektor
DM	West German Mark (currency)
DRA	Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
FDGB	Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund
FDJ	Freie Deutsche Jugend
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GDR	German Democratic Republic
HICOG	United States High Commissioner in Germany
ITV	Independent Television
MDR	Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk
MPF-BRF	Ministerium für Post- und Fernmeldewesen—Bereich Rundfunk under Fernsehen
NBC	National Broadcasting Corporation
NDR	Norddeutscher Rundfunk
NPR	National Public Radio
NWDR	Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk
OIRT	International Radio and Television Organization of Eastern European states
RIAS	Rundfunk im amerikanischen Sektor

SED	Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands
SKF	Staatliches Komitee für Fernsehens
SMAD	Soviet Military Administration in Germany
SRK	Staatliches Rundfunkkomitee
UHF	Ultra-High Frequency
VdK	Verband deutscher Künstler
VDK	Verband Deutscher Komponisten und Musikwissenschaftler
VHF	Very High Frequency
WDR	Westdeutscher Rundfunk
ZDF	Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen
ZPKK	Zentrale Parteikontrollkommission / Central Party Control Commission
ZZF	Zentrum für zeithistorische Forschung

Introduction

I had been in the archive not more than a month when I found a peculiar fragment of the past. In the late 1950s the East German television service had received a letter from an enthusiastic viewer proposing the scenario for a new show. The action revolved around a strong, male protagonist who fought for justice, vigilante-style, settling scores in a manner akin to a cinematic gangster. Television staff had passed on this "riveting" piece of work, which they deemed as wholly inappropriate material. Though it was not more than a fragment—literally a scrap of paper—that I barely recorded in my archival notes, it was incongruous and yet evocative enough that I have remembered it for more than a decade. On the face of it, the letter is hardly evidence of anything, but it is highly suggestive of different threads found throughout this book. First, it suggests the emergence by this time of an active and interested audience willing to help shape the future of East German television programming. But, and this is a second important theme, the story this viewer suggested troubled television staff: with its lone wolf protagonist and abundant representation of violence, it flew in the face of the kind of stories the DFF had been trying to tell for some time, drawing instead from the narrative treasury of the capitalist West. Somehow, this clearly avid viewer had failed to get the message they sought to convey.

This is a book about television and the power it exercised to define the ways in which authorities, audiences, artists, and others could envision what socialism meant in the German Democratic Republic (GDR). It traces how, when, and in what ways television emerged to become a medium prized for its communicative and entertainment value. It explores the difficulties GDR authorities had defining and executing a clear vision of the society they hoped to establish. It explains how television helped to stabilize GDR society in a way that ultimately worked against the utopian vision the authorities thought they were cultivating. To this end, this book considers television as a technology, an institution, and a medium (or mediator) of social relations and cultural

knowledge; it examines television from the perspective of television producers, audiences, technicians, and regulators; and it explores narratives by and about television.

At first glance the GDR may not seem the most likely ground for a fruitful study of television and its power and influence in the postwar world. By the end of the Cold War, both the state and its television appeared to be woefully backward, the product of an older, authoritarian, boring, and less colorful time. GDR television was unmoved by the commercial television explosion of the 1980s that had resulted from the emergence of cable television, for example, and, since 1969, had offered programming on only two channels. By the time the Berlin Wall fell, the lion's share of this programming was still broadcast in black and white. More important, popular and scholarly interpretations held that GDR television was both closely controlled by the state and unable to command significant audiences from among its own citizens.[1]

This picture fits with, and was shaped by, post-reunification scholarship on Germany that argued for the exceptional nature of the GDR in comparison with its normative West German other. In the 1990s, historians of the GDR revived "totalitarianism" as a way to explain the emergence, persistence, and subsequent end of the East German state. The fall of communism in Europe encouraged some historians to reassert the fundamental illegitimacy of the East German state, a position that had been undermined in scholarship during the era of Détente.[2] Increasingly, the GDR came to be understood as the "second German dictatorship," comparable to Nazi Germany in the goals, means, and practice of power. Early works focused in particular on the repressive apparatus of state power and political histories investigating decisions made on high.[3] Such studies often seemed driven by an ideological commitment to delineating the boundaries between the "democratic" Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the "illegitimate" East German state.[4] Not only the Nazi state but also the Soviet Union have figured prominently in studies investigating the administrative and cultural origins of the East German state, with early works presenting the East German state largely as a product of the aims and intentions of the Soviet Union.[5]

But the vision of a straightforwardly repressive and bureaucratically regimented police state has been steadily challenged since the mid-1990s, as scholars more interested in social history and the experience of everyday life have considered the ways in which the regime attempted to build consensus for its rule. The GDR came to be understood variously as an "education dictatorship," a "modern dictatorship," or a "welfare dictatorship," for example.[6] By the late 1990s, historians had begun to delineate the "limits of dictatorship," including

the difficulties East German authorities had in overcoming the continuities of the past, as well as the problems posed by postwar political, social, and economic upheaval.[7] Building on the tradition of the history of everyday life, scholars at the Center for Contemporary History (*Zentrum für zeithistorische Forschung*, or *ZZF*) in Potsdam, in particular, began to investigate the "social practice of authority," revealing the complicated ways in which the regime and its citizens exercised power.[8] At the same time, Anglo-American research began to appreciate the contingent nature of the development of East Germany both before and after the establishment of the Republic in 1949.[9]

The most recent scholarship presents a very different picture of the GDR, one that is much more dynamic and even "modern." Though informed by post-reunification debates about the coercive power of the dictatorship, this scholarship is most strongly influenced by the cultural turn.[10] It uses cultural analyses to explore previously under-appreciated areas of research, examining a variety of aspects of the lived experience of East German socialism, complicating the oft-imposed juxtaposition of state and society, and revealing the existence of a much more vibrant society than previously assumed, characterized by "a surprising amount of conflict and texture."[11] Studies of East German fashion, sport, women, plastic consumer goods, and popular customs, for example, have made the case that social and cultural change was both more prevalent and much more influential in guiding policy than has previously been recognized. The government achieved significant social transformation, altering class relations, gender relations, and regional and national identities, for example, but not without adapting their program of social change to the needs and desires of people living the GDR.[12] A new, specifically East German society emerged from the forge of the Ulbricht years, which offered a certain degree of stability to the state.[13] But even this seemingly harmonious state of affairs held within it the seeds of its own destruction: the state could not imagine—much less envisualize for East Germans, or bring to fruition—an alternative to liberal-capitalist modernity.[14] Not just East German citizens, but also the state itself, persistently held the GDR up against the example of the West, which gradually eroded the legitimacy of the state. This recent literature has begun to "normalize" the study of the GDR, moving beyond the framework of dictatorship to suggest ways in which the GDR fits into the larger framework of the history of modern industrial societies.[15]

This book similarly rejects the interpretive framework of "two dictatorships," which compares the GDR to Nazi Germany and suggests that both were aberrant stages on Germany's long path to Western liberal-capitalist democracy, instead situating the GDR firmly in the history of Western modernity. In

this way, my book fits into a growing, multidisciplinary literature that seeks to reclaim the modern project from the triumphalist liberal narrative that emerged at the end of the Cold War. Writing ten years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Susan Buck-Morss pilloried the "often-repeated story of the West's winning the Cold War and capitalism's triumph over socialism" and argued instead that "the historical experiment of socialism was so deeply rooted in the Western modernizing tradition that its defeat cannot but place the whole Western narrative into question."[16] That is, the story of modernity is not just the story of liberal capitalism; it is the story of liberalism and socialism and their relationship to one another. More cautiously, and looking at the specific context of the GDR, Katherine Pence and Paul Betts have sought to "broaden the idea of modernity" by interrogating the ways in which the GDR can be seen to have been fundamentally modern.[17] Works by Buck-Morss and Pence and Betts identify the program to reshape society as one of the central characteristics of modernity, but locate that program not (just) in the spheres of politics or economics, as most studies of "modernization" do.[18] Instead, they demonstrate the centrality of culture to the creation of the "dreamworlds" of socialist modernity.

Central to the creation of twentieth-century dreamworlds are the modern mass media and television in particular, and the GDR thus provides a good context within which to examine the operation of the media in the postwar period. The GDR was a modern industrial society with a well-developed (and well-received, as I will show) television service. That service was embedded in a number of different contexts, including a longer history of media development in Germany before the Second World War, a cross-border competition (and exchange) with the fraternal FRG, and a similar competition and exchange with the countries of the Eastern bloc. It operated as a mediator of political, cultural, and social knowledge and power in ways comparable to the Anglo-American context. If it seems to the Anglo-American reader to be more heavy-handed and, above all, political, than in other contexts, that reveals more about our notions of what television is "supposed to be" and, in particular, what we define as political. East German television participated in the attempt to revolutionize the values and worldviews of an entire nation of people, and its story exemplifies the possibilities and limits of mediated cultural change. Finally, for the historian, the source base is as complete as it could be, given the opening of the entire archive of the defunct state in the 1990s.

What did the dreamworlds of the twentieth century look like? Pence and Betts argue that we find them not in elite, avant-garde culture but in the lived experience of socialism, where East German identities were formed and articulated. They seek the sites of lived experience in "private life," among particular

social groups, and in consumption practices. "Popular music, fashion, consumption, and film," they argue, are "particularly telling sources for exploring the individual articulation of identities." Film and other mass media appear only briefly in the volume, despite their centrality to the question of identity formation, individual and collective. It was, after all, the "audiovisions" of the GDR that saturated East Germans' waking lives and were the increasingly important means by which they ordered and understood their worlds.[19] Part of the editors' reticence to consider the mass media is likely due to their (paradoxical) fear that the GDR was, in fact, aberrant. For example, they claim the GDR "largely did away with civil society and a classical public sphere, which liberal theorists have long viewed as fundamental to the formation of modern selfhood"; it was "a nonsocial society, a de-politicized polity, *a nonpublic public sphere*."[20] This view builds on the work of Jürgen Habermas, who theorized the inception and transformation of a "public sphere" that was specifically bourgeois and played a decisive role in the development and, in the twentieth century, deformation of the political process.[21] Significantly, Habermas's work on the public sphere set out to explain the rise of National Socialism, among other problems, at a time when scholars interpreted Nazism as a failure of modernity, rather than, as it is now understood, as a "pathological" variant of modernity.[22] Critics maintain that Habermas's conception of the public sphere is, at best, partial, because it is exclusionary—women and minority groups were denied the kind of participation in public life that was fundamental to Habermas's conception of the bourgeois public sphere—and argue that it was but one example of what were likely many competing public spheres.[23] Pence and Betts suggest, then, that without a political public sphere, challenges to the state had to be found in sites of consumption, privileging individual experience and the performance of individualized identity, and certainly not in world created by the "state-controlled" media.[24]

A much more fruitful conception of the operation of the media in modern societies is found in the work of Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci similarly sought to explain the success of fascism, and his work explored the ways in which particular social groups could seize and, more important, maintain power.[25] Gramsci's thought does not present a fixed model of power but rather suggests possibilities for interpreting state power based on shifting blocs and alliances. This is particularly important for the study of modern state power, for three reasons. First, it undermines the ideologically laden rhetoric of malicious (specifically state socialist) manipulation of society, since the balance of consent and coercion described above results from any given regime's need to legitimize itself; second, it suggests that the transmission of power in regimes across

Eastern and Western Europe can be theorized the same way; and third, it allows us to explore the extent to which citizens exercised agency and constructed their own meanings.[26]

Gramsci is but one of many influences, including the Frankfurt School, Pierre Bourdieu, Michel Foucault, and others, that have shaped two generations of cultural studies. I see this book as a contribution to what Scott Denham, Irene Kacandes, and Johnathan Petropolous call "German cultural studies," a field that has recently come into greater focus.[27] Similar to Anglo-American cultural studies, though less well known, the German variant explores the nature of culture, power, and communication. For Kacandes, specifically *German* cultural studies should be defined by (collaborative) interdisciplinarity, an interest in texts, and scholarship that does the "theoretical and analytical (work) required to position specific cultural practices."[28] Among German historians, it has taken some time for cultural studies approaches to emerge, due, in part, to the political implications of exploring the culture of "dictatorships."[29] Hopefully this book will contribute to overcoming any divide (real or perceived) between German studies scholars and historians, dispelling the notion that "historians can't do culture."[30]

It is time that historians overcome their fear of cultural studies and, given the centrality of the media in twentieth-century culture, television as well. We must historicize television, so that we can better understand—and indeed, reevaluate—the history of the postwar period. Despite its power and influence since the Second World War, historians have largely ignored television.[31] There are a number of reasons for this. First, television history is difficult. "Television" is conceptually slippery: it is a technology of communication, but also a medium of entertainment and information. The conditions of its production and transmission have changed fairly drastically over the last sixty years. It operated within a set of industrial relations, ideological structures, and commodity flows that were historically specific and defined by differing geopolitical contexts (sometimes deceptively easy to identify), yet also part of a larger transnational flow. Second, writing about television forces scholars to mobilize a number of different questions, methods, and approaches. It involves the study of institutional structures, regulatory frameworks, and infrastructural factors, while it also demands that we find effective ways to "read" programming, ask conceptual questions about the medium, and get some sense of audience reception when we can.[32]

More important, for historical work, is the problem of breadth and depth of archival sources. Early broadcast-era television was ephemeral and therefore is hard to come by: it was relatively cheap to perform and transmit live, but

was also immediately lost. Early production documents often disappeared as well. On the other hand, there was a lot of material produced for television, so looking at a significant "sample" can be daunting. Moreover, if material produced for television still exists, it is often considered proprietary and thus is difficult to access. In the GDR, for example, few efforts were made to preserve the artifacts of early television.[33] In the first few decades of television service, the only documents the DFF routinely kept were lists of shows transmitted on any given day. Few production documents have been archived, and only a fraction of the mail that the DFF received from viewers still survives. Many of the production documents that made this book possible were relics of Cold War conflict. German broadcasting authorities in both East and West "recorded" (by means of kinescope) and, in some cases, transcribed fragments of programming transmitted by their counterparts on the other side of the border. These were returned, archived, and (at least partially) catalogued after reunification, providing historians of early German television an enviable treasure trove of sources.

As early as 1974 Raymond Williams wrote one of the first, best books tracing the emergence and impact of television in the broadcast era, which has long provided scholars with a number of avenues to navigate the difficulties outlined above. In it, he argued against technological determinism—that television's significance could not be reduced to its technological characteristics—and for the study of television as social practice. That is, the basic science behind television had long been understood, but television did not really emerge as a powerful tool of communication until modern societies found a social purpose for the technology.[34] He theorized television's "particularities," including its "flow," its forms, and television's ability to provide a stunning, new, visual experience.[35] He considered the numerous forms television programming had taken by the early 1970s, including those it had borrowed and modified from other media and forms that were wholly new to television.[36] He considered the medium, which made possible "moments in many kinds of program when we can find ourselves looking in what seemed quite new ways." Television could provide "an experience of visual mobility, of contrast of angle, of variation of focus, which is often very beautiful."[37] These insights flew in the face of the mass communications approach that had dominated television research since the 1940s, and laid the foundation for the study of television as a new field, distinctly different from film studies.[38]

Despite Williams's early intervention, "television studies" as a distinct field has just begun to coalesce in Anglo-American scholarship. This likely seems a relatively late development to the reader, given that scholars had begun

investigating television almost from the moment of its inception in the 1940s and 1950s.[39] But, by 1989, there was still "no regular forum for current research on television."[40] By that time, Horace Newcomb's *Television: The Critical View* was in its fourth edition, but current television scholarship was still published in (primarily) film journals such as *Screen* or *Cinema Journal*.[41] It was not until the late 1990s that the emergence of a "loosely organized protocol for understanding television as a cultural, social, political, aesthetic, and industrial form" pointed to some sort of consensus about what constitutes television studies.[42] There are no "Departments of Television Studies" and few independent professional organizations, but there is other evidence for the emergence of a coherent field: in the past decade scholars have been able to disseminate their work in new journals, such as *Critical Studies in Television* or *TV and New Media*, in the highly regarded online forum *Flow TV*, at the feminist television conference "Console-ing Passions," or through publication in television series housed at distinguished university presses such as Oxford and Duke.[43]

This rise of television studies, perhaps unsurprisingly, coincided with rising interest in the national audio-visual heritage in a number of Western industrialized countries, which led to government support for television research in the United Kingdom, France, and Germany, for example.[44] Although television is a "young" field, there is some consensus among its practitioners. Proponents of "television studies" do not simply use television as evidence of historical events, but rather place television at the center of interpretations of society and culture. Such scholarship is not about programs, audiences, producers, history, context, or institutions, but it considers all of these in explaining the "operation of identity, meaning, community, politics, education, play," and so on.[45]

Study of GDR television began in West Germany in the 1960s, when the West Germans still referred to the GDR as "the zone."[46] This early work was characterized by a Cold War framework of analysis that took the illegitimacy of the GDR as a starting point and sought to ferret out the political implications of a dictatorial television system.[47] East German scholarship on television first emerged in the 1970s, with the work of literary scholars Ingeborg Munz-Koenen and Käthe Rülicke-Weiler and the institutional histories of Heide Riedel.[48] By the 1980s, members of the East German television service and the Association of Film and Television Producers had begun to compile their own history of the East German medium collecting oral recollections of the early period of television.[49] Peter Hoff, who collaborated on this project, became a sort of "dean" of GDR television studies, writing prolifically until his death in 2003.[50] Rising interest in the study of the GDR after the fall of the Berlin Wall

brought some attention to television, but shaped by the politics of the waning Cold War. Scholarly assessments described television as, at best, part of the failed socialist experiment and, at worst, an instrument of dictatorial control.[51]

In the late 1990s, a number of nostalgic works appeared that began the process of trying to knit back together the German-German televisual past.[52] Most recently, the German government-sponsored research group "Program History of GDR Television—Comparative" has examined the East German television service and its programming in more than forty books and other publications.[53] The project has performed a great service in laying a foundation for understanding the inner workings of the apparatus of television in the GDR, as well as excavating, identifying, classifying, and interpreting programming that had been more or less consigned to the "dustbin of history" less than two decades before.[54] The body of work, at least in the period under discussion in this book, suggests a general consensus that the DFF developed in a manner not unlike other modern television services, although overlaid with a political bureaucracy and mandate that it could not escape. This government was illegitimate and repressed artists, but it did manage to entertain parts of the population and even, inadvertently, transmitted images and incidents that were at odds with the government's claims to power (*Machtanspruch*).

Contemporary political debates have shaped this work. In the twenty years since the end of the Cold War, it has been difficult for German scholars to argue a position any less damning than the one above, which would open such scholarly work (and popular memory, in the case of *Ostalgie*) to the charge of "gilding" and "glamorizing" (*verschönern* and *verschönen*), or normalizing the dictatorship, especially in a "soft" field like television history.[55] At the same time, the project was guided by the deliberate decision to examine DFF programming specifically in comparison to its West German counterpart.[56] That was understandable and even fruitful, but it also suggests that the project (or the government sponsors, perhaps) held GDR television to a normative standard of development (as it did in other areas at the time).[57] Certainly, the television service responded to developments in the West, but there is something to be said for approaching it on its own terms, lest we simply conclude that its difference was evidence that it could not live up to a normative Western standard.

It is my intention, in this book, to try to extricate television from the (persisting) politics of the Cold War, while at the same time demonstrating just how, and in what ways, it contributed to those politics. Thus, it is a history of ideas, values, and perceptions, grounded in the structures and material conditions of the (East) German postwar world, and the world of the burgeoning

Cold War that examines both "real" and mediated historical conditions.[58] Since historical scholarship turned toward interpretations that privileged the linguistic and cultural construction of reality, there has been a suspicion of cultural analyses among those who still hew to strictly materialist history. In a recent *American Historical Review* forum on "historiographic turns," American anthropologist Gary Wilder noted that the assumption still exists that if "historians by definition analyze archival documents, then historians must be able to answer their questions with archival evidence," which "implies a certain understanding of actors, agency, and causality . . ." and "means that questions that cannot be answered archivally are not worth asking. . . ."[59] But analyses that mobilize cultural methods have much to say about the history of politics, power, and the structures of social life, especially during the Cold War.[60] In the postwar period, television increasingly shaped people's understanding of the world, birthing new "imagined communities."[61] But, paradoxically, given the context of increasing state power in the postwar period, it did so in a way that often undermined states' ability to define the social world of their nations.

Envisioning Socialism is the first book in English to discuss television as an institution, a medium, and a center of social and political power in the GDR. But more important, it is a contribution to a nascent body of work that demonstrates why the historical study of television—no matter what the domestic political situation—is so important to understanding the postwar world. Television in the GDR was an important component of the SED's rule. It played an important role in mediating the state's attempts to shape and discipline competing visions of socialism in the 1950s and 1960s. But the medium that emerged was not defined by its technological characteristics or a repressive political mandate, but rather through the confrontation with the social and political context of the GDR. It took on meaning and became a certain kind of medium in response to a particular set of circumstances. In short, it did not emerge with a set of fully formed expectations and rules, but was "invented" in response to a particular set of ideas, pressures, and aspirations.

It was the specific context of 1952 through 1958, in particular, that allowed television to take the shape that it did in the GDR. While the DFF concluded fairly early on that television could be a medium of political transformation and should be developed in that direction, by 1956 it also became clear that television had to negotiate audience expectations and desires, a tension that persisted throughout the period under examination in the book. Also in 1956, DFF coverage of the Hungarian Revolt laid bare for the ruling SED a certain set of "deficiencies" in television broadcasting, mostly technological and political, that the Party set out to solve. They did so in ways that gave the

television service a narrowly defined (and technologically determined) political mandate and pulled it into the same kind of ideological war that radio had been fighting in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The television service enthusiastically took up the challenge to build socialism and intervened in the Second Berlin Crisis with popular programming that also built a narrative explaining the state's decision to build the Berlin Wall. As programming reached more viewers, it invited more scrutiny. Discussion of the state of television reached a high point in December 1962, when a showpiece program set off a firestorm of criticism that reverberated through the television service, SED meetings, and the press for months afterward. At the center of this maelstrom was a controversial television opera. *Fetzer's Flight* was "experimental" (and modernist) in nature, but the crux of the debate really had to do with the emerging notion of the "right" of the viewer to be entertained. The *Fetzer* aesthetic was confusing and non-naturalistic, and the depiction of an "anti-hero" ran counter both to authorities' desire to see uplifting stories of communist growth *and* to audience taste. If the battle to discipline artists to accept and develop an effective socialist realist aesthetic that appealed to both state authorities and audiences was under way, in the early 1960s television won this battle, becoming the preeminent medium of socialist realism in the GDR. This victory was short-lived, however. Caught between the ambiguous political mandate to draw viewers, build socialism, and provide uplifting stories of socialism across the "friendly fraternal states" of the Soviet bloc on the one hand, and the ever-increasing pressure of the television schedule on the other, the television service ultimately undermined the nation-building project it had pursued so enthusiastically. Increasingly, the DFF relied on cheap, unobjectionable material. The socialist spectaculars that had played such an important role in building both the television audience and the sense of a particular, East German, culture gave way.

This story is comprised of a number of important threads. In the first chapter, I explore the development of the infrastructure of broadcasting between the 1940s and 1958. Debates and conflicts over transmission towers, receivers, and especially the airwaves of the first decade had little to do with providing a full and entertaining program day. Instead, they represented the SED's instrumental view of the medium, which defined the development of television *transmission* (not programming) as the goal of state policy. The "zero-sum" logic of the Cold War spurred this on, defining the airwaves as "territory" to be conquered and occupied in the ideological contest between two opposing worldviews.

The second chapter examines the creation and expansion of the DFF

(*Deutscher Fernsehfunk*, or German Television) between 1952 and 1958.[62] This was the institution responsible for creating (and transmitting) television programming. East Germans' early expectations of television, which had been defined by their experiences with older media, quickly gave way to new expectations about the "live" experience television offered. As television producers grew more confident with the new medium, they began to make a case that television could contribute to building socialism through political agitation. During these early years, audiences embraced television for its cultural programming, light entertainment, and representation of the "live."

In the third chapter, I explore the role of politics and especially the ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED) in shaping the early development of television between 1950 and 1958. In the early 1950s, state authorities defined television as a medium of transmission. They understood any political missteps as the fault of either undeveloped infrastructure or politically unreliable staff. In response to the June Uprising of 1953, the SED took steps to ensure the political reliability of the service, installing "cadres" specialist Heinz Adameck as director of the DFF. Adameck professionalized the service, making sure that it could fulfill the instrumental task set out for it. But exploiting the "live"—the most anticipated novelty of television—remained difficult, and (non-)coverage of the Hungarian uprising drew the SED's attention and ire. The government thereafter redoubled its efforts to develop the infrastructure and political reliability of television transmission, while the DFF developed more topical, youth-oriented, entertainment and educational programming that could contribute to building socialism.

The final three chapters trace the emergence of television as an important political and cultural force in the GDR. Chapter 4 examines the cultural influence of television programming. In it, I dissect the interplay between topical, political programming, such as the nightly news *Current Camera* (*Aktuelle Kamera*), and entertainment genres, especially the crime thriller, exemplified by episodes of *Blue Light* (*Blaulicht*). Both drew from the context of the Second Berlin Crisis, and they did so in a way that naturalized geopolitical conflict and, ultimately, the construction of the Berlin Wall.

In the fifth chapter, I explore the repercussions of the heightened tensions surrounding the construction of the Berlin Wall for television programming and infrastructure. Events of this period, such as the *Ochsenkopf* campaign (targeting reception of West German programming among East Germans in September 1961) and the censure of the DFF's *Fetzer's Flight* in December 1962, have frequently been mobilized as examples of the repressive nature of the East German state. But both of those stories are much more complex and

reveal, instead, a government that eschewed outright measures of outright coercion in favor of organizing consent. They also illuminate an emerging consensus about the "right" of the viewer to be entertained.

Finally, I place the uproar over *Fetzer* in the wider context of debates raging over cultural policy in the early 1960s. During this period television producers faced the twin challenges of finding enough programming—original or acquired from other sources—to fill the television schedule, just as the boundaries of televisual narratives became clear. The DFF increasingly relied on historical melodramas depicting stories of socialist conversion, as well as topical shows and entertainment spectacles that explored and modeled viewers' everyday lives, to appease audiences and state authorities alike.

The history of television in the GDR cannot be reduced to the caricature of a deeply unpopular medium and unrelenting repression perpetrated on a largely disinterested public, just as GDR history cannot be reduced to persistent crisis and opposition. Instead, we can find the GDR in the myriad ways the state and its citizens came to terms with one another. In particular, the state leadership's strategy for socialist success in the 1950s and into the 1960s was constructive, not destructive: their goal was not to repress liberalism but rather to create a society of convinced socialists with well-developed socialist personalities. The story of television is key to understanding the ways in which this enterprise succeeded *and* failed.

Chapter 1

Cold War Signals: Television Technology in the GDR

On 2 June 1952, the director of the State Broadcasting Committee (SRK) Kurt Heiss called the recently appointed head of the provisional television center Wolfgang Kleinert and declared, "We must start broadcasting tomorrow, as if we have a real program!"[1] These first broadcasts were haphazard. They were not intended to transmit a coherent political message, cultivate an audience, or provide viewers with an alternative to nascent West German programming. Neither did they reflect a dramatic increase in the production of television shows or access to television receivers. Instead, the decision to begin television broadcasting was a matter of occupying valuable "territory" in the Cold War: the airwaves. Faced with new international conventions governing the allocation of the European airwaves, state authorities had to use the frequencies allotted to them or lose them to other state broadcasting services. Above all, GDR authorities feared losing those airwaves to West Germany or her allies. In other words, the decision to begin broadcasting television signals in East Germany had nothing to do with the artistic, communicative, or even ideological value of the medium of television; it reflected instead the increasing importance of the airwaves in the context of the German-German Cold War.

For the GDR's Socialist Unity Party (SED) in the early 1950s, "television" was a technological problem that, if solved, could ensure nationwide and, even more important, pan-German reception of East German television signals. But early broadcast television was an enigmatic technology, and East Germans working in television spent much of the 1950s inventing the medium. Television workers focused on one of two things. Technicians and engineers developed the technology of transmission and reception, including cameras, television receivers, and transmitters capable of spreading television signals across the country. Writers, directors, actors, and cameramen, on the other hand, faced the difficult problem of creating a viable program and constructing

the norms of a new medium. Though these two groups often worked in isolation from one another, television only emerged as a viable means of communication as a result of both groups' efforts to invent a new medium. This chapter traces the work of the technicians and engineers who created a system of distribution that spread television throughout the country, catching and ultimately overtaking radio as the preeminent medium of information, entertainment, and ideology in the GDR. The following chapter focuses on those who created a new system of production, inside and outside of the studio. Only by the end of the decade did the system emerge as a widespread and increasingly popular medium.

This chapter explores this remarkable expansion in the technology and infrastructure of television broadcasting over the course of the 1950s, which was an essential precondition for the emergence of television as a potent social and political force in the postwar period. Television technology had been under development for some time in Europe and the United States. But it had not yet been "invented": that is, technicians (primarily) had been experimenting with the technology enough to discover its particular characteristics, but no real consensus had yet emerged as to the purpose or potential of this new medium. In addition, television technology of the postwar period differed significantly from the prewar mechanical-electrical hybrid technology developed by the Nazis, for example. Television, like other aspects of socialist administration in the GDR, grew hesitantly and haphazardly in the first decade after the war. Authorities sought to solve the technological difficulties of distribution and reception in a context defined by the shifting territorial consensus of postwar Europe and the emerging Cold War competition with West Germany. This competition was both real and imagined. It took place on the ground, in the expansion of networks of transmission and the means of reception. But it also was reflected in—at the same time as it shaped—each side's *perception* of the threat of the opposing broadcasting system. At this early date, television was hardly conceived as an instrument of a manipulative, authoritarian message. Rather, it was a means to stem the tide of West German encroachment on the newly founded Republic, while laying a foundation for pan-German reception.

Inventing Television Technology

Before the Second World War, television technology was ill suited for broad use as a medium of entertainment or information. Scientists across Europe had begun experimenting with television transmissions in the late nineteenth cen-

tury. By 1914, they had invented a variety of systems that could transmit little more than indistinct shadows no farther than across the room. By 1926, it was a little better: for observers at a public television demonstration in England, "gradations of light and shade were reportedly visible, as opposed to only crude outlines."[2] The first public exhibitions of television transmissions like this one, undertaken at technological fairs such as the Berlin Radio Exhibition in the 1920s, introduced mechanical television to the public[3] and inspired amateur imaginations about the utopian possibilities of the new medium.[4] Enthusiasts could buy kits to build television receivers, and at least one devotee called for others to "build television communities."[5] Some identified lofty purposes for the technology, including shrinking the distance between far-flung family (through "visual telephony") or making possible greater understanding between peoples through programming exchanges.[6] By 1929 the mechanical-electrical hybrid television system—which used a mechanical camera but reconstituted the image by means of an electronic cathode ray tube—could transmit relatively recognizable images. But the complexity of solving the problems of early television technology—poor picture quality and limited transmission range—dampened popular enthusiasm.[7] In 1931 the *Berliner Tageblatt* reported, "It was not long ago when one heard almost daily about some kind of 'completely revolutionary' television invention, whose introduction would occur in only a few weeks. But the weeks became months and the months became years and then everything became quiet. . . ."[8] The pace of television development slowed until the late 1930s when the transition from mechanical to electrical television began to revolutionize the way that the images were produced and thus what people could see.

The relatively quick transition from experimental technology to viable mechanical-electrical system in the 1930s was due to the massive investment of European governments, especially in Germany (through the German Postal Ministry) and the United Kingdom, as well as private capital. By 1931, the German postal service had spent over two million Marks on television technology, without ever introducing the medium to viewers.[9] Public and private capital's rising interest in television technology lay primarily in the promise of the potentially huge profits to be had. Fresh from their success in marketing radio receivers, the German electronics industry held out similar hopes for the German television receiver market.[10]

After the National Socialists came to power in 1933, television technology became integral to their economic policy, military preparedness, and cultural politics. Nazi economic plans for the development of television included subsidies and tax incentives for production of television receivers, which could

both serve as a symbol of German technological superiority and go some way toward subsidizing the business community, which was struggling in the context of the Great Depression.[11] But the commercial model advocated by the Postal Ministry—the development of private reception in the interests of selling receivers—conflicted with the National Socialists' own, narrower goals for television. The Nazi government privileged military applications of the new technology, for example, investing in the development of television-related instruments of warfare such as guided bombs, radar and radar detection systems, and applications for visual reconnaissance.[12] The Propaganda Ministry also worked toward introducing public viewing facilities, hoping to disseminate "propaganda" in what it perceived as the more politically reliable environment of public reception.[13]

Public viewing began in Berlin in 1935, and the Nazis introduced a "regular program" in time for the Berlin Olympics in 1936. On the occasion of the first German television broadcast, the Nazi official responsible for television development, Eugen Hadamovsky, wrote to Hitler: "Now, in this hour, broadcasting is called upon to fulfill its greatest and most sacred mission: to plant the image of the *Führer* indelibly in all German hearts."[14] But the Nazis never quite achieved this grand vision. Only 200 receivers were sold, mostly to television facilities in Berlin, limiting television's new audience.[15] The invasion of Poland cut short the further spread of television; government plans for mass production of the "Unity Television" (*Einheitsfernseher*), scheduled to begin 1 September 1939, never transpired. Public viewing in Germany quickly ended, and most of the extant television receivers ended up in the hands of government officials. Though television became a fixture in military hospitals in Berlin and in occupied Paris (broadcasting from the Eiffel Tower), Hadamovsky's vision of widespread political agitation remained unfulfilled.[16]

Germany was not alone: the onset of war forced other European governments to shelve their plans for television and transformed the direction that American television would take as well. The British and the Soviets, in particular, had been working on the technology. These efforts focused largely on the hybrid mechanical-electronic system and differed substantially from the all-electronic systems that came into widespread use after the war. The BBC quit broadcasting in 1939, and Soviet television, which had fleetingly provided a home for German communist émigrés (and the first director of East German television) in the 1930s, went off the air in 1941.

In the United States, the war effort mobilized television technology for military use, but by war's end it had come to be defined as a medium of commerce.[17] In 1946, a year after the war ended, there were just six television sta-

tions in the United States, broadcasting mostly local programming, to twenty thousand sets in New York City, Chicago, and Philadelphia. Work on a nationwide network of transmission grew hesitantly in the late 1940s. Rising signal interference led the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to suspend the process of applying for new station licenses between 1948 and 1952. In 1953, the number of American television stations tripled, unleashing a "TV-buying frenzy" that led to television ownership for 60 percent of American families.[18] But American consumers often found television receivers in stores before there was much programming to tune in.[19]

By the time the Germans capitulated to the Allies in May 1945 the constituent parts of the media system were either in ruins or thought to be so thoroughly intertwined with the Nazi regime that the Allies decided they would have to be rebuilt completely. The postal and telegraph systems had collapsed, and Allied authorities closed down other elements of the media system considered to be politically suspect, such as radio, the print press, film production, and cinemas. But the media could be useful in the postwar occupation of Germany, so plans for reconstructing the media system began immediately. Allied forces seized extant media facilities across the country, haphazardly repairing damaged transmitters and equipment to get their message out to Allied troops and German citizens alike. The British launched radio service from the Hamburg transmitter with a broadcast of their national anthem on 4 May 1945.[20] That same day saw the revival of film production, when Wolfgang Staudte received permits to begin filming his famous indictment of the recent past *The Murderers Are Among Us* (*Die Mörder sind unter uns*) in the rubble of East Berlin.[21] The following week, the Soviets began broadcasting radio programming using a captured transmitter near Tegel airfield in Berlin. And by November, the American authorities had established DIAS ("Wired Radio in the American Sector," or *Drahtfunk im amerikanischen Sektor*),[22] later expanded into RIAS ("Radio in the American Sector," or *Rundfunk im amerikanischen Sektor*).

While the reconstruction of radio broadcasting, film, and the print press began immediately at war's end, television received little attention before 1948. This was a matter of using the few available resources to the occupation's best advantage. Most of the fledgling television infrastructure had been destroyed during the war, and re-development would prove both costly and time-consuming. But, more important, television seemed to have little to offer the Allied authorities. It could not do much to facilitate the military occupation of Germany or play much of a role in democratizing Germany. Film, press reports, and especially radio could publicize information on the occupation, or-

ganize teams of "rubble women" who cleared the debris from German streets, and broadcast reeducation programs that both explicitly reminded Germans of their defeat and attempted to reinforce democratic thought.[23] Given the lack of infrastructure, programming, or even a sense of television's potential, television could not.

All four occupying powers agreed that the media could be the cornerstone of democracy in Germany, but the liberal-democratic principles of freedom of speech and information were hardly the guiding principles of the media systems they each created. Instead, each sought to achieve a balance between freedom and control over broadcasting in their zone of occupation. Each hoped to inculcate democracy by allowing some freedom of information, while at the same time maintaining strict control over the kinds of things that could be broadcast over the German airwaves. They prohibited criticism of the occupation, for example, and sought to keep the language and values of National Socialism out of radio, film, and the print press. Moreover, Allied authorities sought to purge those associated with the Nazi regime from the German press and broadcasting. New screening procedures denied press licenses to anyone who had been involved with the Nazi Party, for example.[24]

If the Allied authorities could generally agree on the goals of the postwar media—to democratize Germany—as well as the limits of the media's freedoms, they differed on the kind of media system that could achieve those goals. Unsurprisingly, each favored its own media system as the model for postwar Germany. There did not *have* to be four separate services, but the Allies' inability to share broadcasting space made it so.[25] American civilian officials attempted to export American commercial broadcasting to Germany, while the British strongly advocated replicating their own model of public service broadcasting, wherein messages were much more centrally controlled. On an administrative level, American officials introduced a decentralized system in which the four American-occupied postwar German states operated their own broadcasting services, while the British, French, and Soviets implemented much more centralized systems of administration in their zones of occupation. The major concern of each of the four occupation authorities at this early date was simply to resurrect a viable media system, yet to accomplish this, they often worked at cross-purposes. The decentralized broadcasting system operated by the Americans, for example, required more, weaker transmitters (and thus more frequencies), leading to quarrels among the Allies regarding the distribution of broadcasting frequencies.[26] French administration officials fought against the encroachment of the Allied Control Council to keep exclusive control of their zone's broadcasting system. The regional disparities in media structure of the

1950s, then, were not "East" or "West" German in character, but rather characteristic of the idiosyncrasies of four separate zones of occupation.

Thus, the decisions the Allies made between 1945 and 1948 in the context of growing Cold War antagonism laid the foundation for the disparate media systems found in postwar Germany and held profound consequences for the development of television technology in the early 1950s. In 1945 the goal of "one Germany" established on the basis of liberal democracy was still possible. Occupation authorities made policy in response to postwar conditions in Germany—the administrative chaos, economic devastation, conditions of scarcity, and collapse of the German state—while pursuing the fundamental aim of creating a stable, passive, and antifascist Germany. This was particularly true of the early phase of the occupation, before the onset of the Cold War, when even the Soviets still envisioned Germany's postwar democracy along the lines of a bourgeois-liberal state.[27] Soviet control over the media, imposed between 1945 and 1948, was not out of line with the approach of other occupying powers and was not initially intended to establish a "dictatorial" broadcasting system. But, by 1947, the boundaries between East and West Germany had begun to harden, and Cold War conflict increasingly shaped Allied plans for the postwar German state.[28] The Bi- and then Tri-zone agreement united the Western Allies and created a media system characterized by a regional structure that was relatively free of the control of the federal government (and its messages).[29] Left on its own, media in the Soviet zone was a tightly managed system that broadcast a centrally controlled message. These distinct differences in media structure in East and West by 1948 did not result from an inherent political divide between liberal democracy and communist dictatorship but rather reflected the exigencies of the emerging Cold War. Television's role within this system would be defined by the increasingly aggressive and hostile relationship between the Allied powers.

Broadcasting and the German Cold War

By 1948, the emerging Cold War superseded the spirit of cooperation that had characterized the Potsdam Conference and changed the character of broadcasting on both sides of the border. The Marshall Plan, debates over superpower involvement in the Greek Civil War and the resulting "Truman Doctrine," and stalinization in Eastern Europe typified the growing antagonism between the American and Soviet "Allies." The Anglo-American allies took measures interpreted by the Soviets as steps toward the permanent division of Germany, such

as the Bi-zone Agreement and, later, the subsequent currency reform in the Western zones, exacerbating Cold War conflict and leading to the Soviet blockade of Berlin (1948–49). With rising Cold War conflict, the goals of the Allied authorities and the Germans under their control had become more consistent. Anglo-American authorities increasingly viewed a strong, liberal-democratic West Germany as a bulwark against communism in Europe, while Soviet authorities, previously focused on denazification and instilling anti-fascism, became much more interested in supporting the goal of the German "Muscovites," to establish a communist state in Germany.[30]

Germany had become the front line of the emerging Cold War. But the Cold War was fought not on the traditional battlefields of European wars, but rather increasingly through narratives disseminated over the airwaves. Over the postwar period, the capitalist and communist worlds advertised competing visions of economic power and political freedom—the achievements of Western consumer society and liberal democracy set against communist successes (in the space race or arms production, for example) and anti-fascism. But the propagation of these competing visions could not succeed without the incredible expansion of the technology of broadcasting—harnessing the middle and very high frequency waves, setting up a network to distribute those signals, and, finally, enabling reception. Thus the broadcasting war was not just about programming but also about constructing a viable system of distribution. Between 1948 and 1952, European broadcasting and especially the German airwaves became a new and unprecedented battleground.

Since the popularization of radio broadcasting in the 1920s, Europeans had struggled over the expansion, dissemination, and use of broadcasting frequencies. During the Weimar Republic and under the National Socialists, Germany had enjoyed a disproportionately large share of the airwaves. In 1926, the first European regulatory plan gave Germany a considerable share of European frequencies, because of its relatively well-developed broadcasting apparatus. After 1939, when the Nazis went to war to expand their "living space," they conquered the remaining airwaves and could broadcast across most of Europe. In 1945, the defeat of Germany opened up the possibility of redistributing the European frequency spectrum, making it available to other countries. Between 1948 and 1953, European broadcasters convened a series of conferences to achieve a number of goals. First, they discussed the possibilities of defining a single, universal standard for television transmission; on this they could not come to consensus, however, resulting in two separate European standards. Second, they sought a solution to the problem of equitably redistributing long- and middle-wave radio frequencies to manage the massive signal interference

problems in the crowded area of continental Europe. Complicating this was the "German question": how to provision the country adequately when the Allies were advocating more for their own purposes—the occupation and the growing Cold War.[31]

The Copenhagen conference, convened in 1948, was very much a product of this period of transition between the end of the war and the beginning of the Cold War. European authorities were most concerned with increasing their share of the airwaves and were uninterested in restoring Germany's disproportionately large share of the frequency spectrum. Cooperation among the Allies had broken down so far by this time that the Allied Control Council (ACC), which still held responsibility for the administration of broadcasting in occupied Germany, was powerless to advocate for Germany's long-term interests. Instead, delegations from all four Allied powers participated in the conference—the American delegation as a non-voting observer—and independently sought frequencies in Germany for use within their own zones of occupation.[32] The American delegation requested fifteen frequency bands, almost three times as many as the British or French authorities and almost twice as many as the Soviets, including eight for American forces radio and the "propaganda" broadcaster Voice of America. Yet, to the dismay of the American authorities, their allies—the Soviets, but also the British and French—hoped to minimize the number of frequencies awarded to the United States.[33] American authorities complained to the state department that, in their view, "thus far, the British and French have not viewed German frequency problem in true light as a facet of East-West problems [*sic*]."[34] European and American delegates had diverging geopolitical interests in this debate that resulted from the burgeoning Cold War.

In the end, the conference allocated just two frequencies to each zone; the Americans received one extra, designated for military broadcasts. They were not alone in their disappointment: many European states were unsatisfied with the results of the conference—Greece, Portugal, and Luxembourg, among others, refused to sign or adhere to the agreement.[35] Rampant disregard for the provisions of the conference followed, and by 1954, illegitimate use of European frequencies had affected 45 percent of European middle-wave frequencies.[36] American authorities exacerbated this problem, developing a plan to meet their broadcasting needs by persuading "friendly" neighbors to "lend" their frequencies to the United States, through the application of economic pressure if necessary. Thus conflict over the airwaves was yet another aspect of the emerging Cold War. It was opportune for the development of television: the limitations of the middle-wave frequency spectrum led Europeans to develop

the use of the very-high frequency spectrum, making modern television transmission possible.[37]

The Copenhagen meeting and similar conferences laid the groundwork for both the technological foundation and the geopolitical rivalry of television broadcasting. Soviet authorities in Germany began developing television technology in 1949, when they instructed Director of Broadcasting Hans Mahle to assemble a staff of experienced broadcasting personnel.[38] Many were technicians who had begun working in television under the Nazis, such as Ernst Augustin and Walter Bruch. A year later, the government approved plans to build the Television Center (*Fernsehzentrum*) at Berlin-Adlershof. By that time, the area around the port city of Hamburg in the former British zone of occupation in West Germany also had become a media center. On 12 July, NWDR (*Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk,* or Northwest German Broadcasting) successfully broadcast the first postwar German television picture. In August, the regional directors of West German broadcasting founded the ARD (the Association of German Public Broadcasting Corporations, or *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*), a federal institution to coordinate regional television production and broadcasting across the FRG.[39] The following year NWDR began broadcasting test signals on an experimental basis and some programming as well to the neighborhoods around Hamburg-Lokstedt. By June 1952, the GDR broadcast its first test signals from the "Berlin Transmitter" between the Television Center in Adlershof, in southeast Berlin, and the city center.[40]

In the GDR, television officials within the Postal Ministry were preoccupied with the expansion of the transmission network over the next few years. They allocated funds to develop television technology and signed agreements with East German industrial partners to build and deploy transmitters around the country. This effort faced several structural difficulties that led to unexpected "delays" in the expansion of the system. In the early 1950s, television technicians found it difficult to access the technical research that would help them construct a viable system. The Cold War had isolated East Germans from the resources of the international scientific community, preventing scientists and technicians from attending international conferences on television technology and exploring the advances made in what was a rapidly changing field in more developed centers, such as Britain or the United States.[41] East German television technicians were able to visit the Moscow television center in July 1951.[42] But unlike the Russian system, the East German broadcasting system was built on the basis of VHF broadcasting; this was a technical standard left undeveloped by the rest of the East European community to which the GDR

belonged.[43] Until embargoes against the GDR were lifted, allowing the import of newer equipment, technicians were left to replicate outmoded Nazi transmission technology such as the iconoscope (an early electronic camera) or experiment on their own with newer technology, which took time.

New transmitters gradually expanded the network, despite the difficulties inherent in meeting planning priorities with limited resources. They were able to erect transmitters of increasing strength that expanded broadcasting throughout Berlin and beyond. Through one transmitter relay, they were able to broadcast to Leipzig by August 1953. That year the Postal Ministry also contracted the construction of several transmitters to expand the network into Thuringia and central Germany. Located in the Harz mountain range and the Thuringian Forest, the transmitters Brocken and Inselberg were the crucial link between these areas and the Berlin broadcasting center. They even promised to reach parts of the Federal Republic. At 10 KW, they would be much stronger than the Leipzig Transmitter, could broadcast farther, and would prove much more valuable components of the transmission network. Yet production delays thwarted the Ministry's plans. The State Planning Commission had incorporated the transmitters into the production schedule, only to eliminate them later.[44] It took considerable correspondence among the Sachsenwerk Radeberg factory, the State Broadcasting Committee, the Ministry for Mechanical Engineering (*Maschinenbau*), and the State Planning Commission before production could be rescheduled. The transmitters then were slated for completion in October and December 1954, but those deadlines also passed without delivery.[45]

By the time that Brocken and Inselberg were up and running in 1955, authorities in the Postal Ministry were convinced that East German industry was completely unprepared to develop the requisite technology for a domestic television service. The contractors simply had not been able to deliver the Brocken and Inselberg transmitters, as well as other technology the Ministry had ordered for the Television Center, in a timely fashion. Officials further claimed that, "after small successes in 1950–1, industrial interest in our developmental task essentially plunged to zero."[46] They traced the lack of success in developing television technology to the fact that "the economic importance of the industrial production of radio and television equipment is not appreciated. . . ."[47] The development of radio and television was not the highest priority of industrial planners because East German industry had other, often more pressing, problems. Contractual obligations to the Soviets often took precedence over domestic production. The Sachsenwerk Radeberg factory, for example, was only able to build the Brocken and Inselberg transmitters after Soviet authorities withdrew their own orders for materials that fulfilled the GDR's

postwar reparations obligations.[48] And by 1956, postal officials noted that *Republikflucht* (flight from the Republic) of workers with specialized skills had taken its toll on the technical development of the service.[49]

When it came to television, East German industry was caught in a dilemma of resources: exploiting the few that were available at home, or spending valuable currency to acquire technology from abroad. More often than not, the answer was to rely on imported technology. When an economic embargo against the GDR in place in the early 1950s ended, the East Germans bought most of the necessary technology from the West. Already in 1956, the Postal Ministry had decided that fulfillment of the mandate to expand television could only be achieved through the procurement of technology such as transmitters and transmission trucks (used to broadcast signals from locations outside of the studio) from outside the GDR. Indeed, in September, the Central Committee approved the purchase of a transmitter from the West German firm Siemens in order to improve television reception in the area around Berlin.[50] In 1959, the Ministry still had to import key parts, from antennas to entire transmitters, from elsewhere including Czechoslovakia.[51]

For television officials, the development of the transmission network suffered from an apparent lack of direction in this state-controlled planned economy. By 1955 they warned that television technology was developing "along the lines of least resistance."[52] A report before the State Broadcasting Committee identified a lack of coordination among the responsible ministries, which were more interested in their own agendas than the larger plan. Lack of communication had resulted in the construction and deployment of a haphazard network of mismatched transmitters. Television sets that were built to receive a specific frequency could receive signals from one or another of the transmitters, but not all of them.[53] To East German officials this was no small problem, since it hindered reception of East German signals. But their concern went much deeper than that: in particular, officials noted that the standards of the newer transmitters made it impossible for West Germans to tune in the East German television program.[54]

The haphazard development of the transmission network complicated the expansion of reception in the GDR. This was exacerbated by the existence of a West German transmission relay, dubbed the "Broadcasting Bridge" (*Funkbrücke*) by East German authorities, that broadcast radio and television programming, along with other wireless communications (for various West German agencies and Allied troops stationed in Germany, for example) across East German territory to West Berlin. This transmission network interfered with East German signals broadcast centrally from the Müggel Hills in southeast Berlin,

making reception all but impossible west of Potsdam, and affecting signals as far south as Leipzig. But GDR authorities devised a plan to fix the situation: they would build small transmitters and place them strategically to interfere with West German transmitters, thus freeing up Berlin airspace for East German signals. This plan never came to pass, however. If implemented, East German officials would have had to give up on reaching Germans on the other side of the border, which was just as important to them as domestic reception. Focused on reaching and building a pan-German audience, they decided instead to improve reception by coordinating East and West German frequencies, converting GDR transmitters to the West German standard.

Once the transmission network was in place, the East Germans still had to equip viewers and mobilize audiences in East and West to tune in. In 1952, television reached only a handful of viewers. This was partly due to the limitations of the transmission network, but, even if television signals could have been broadcast widely across the GDR, there were few television sets to receive those signals. In July 1952, the East German television audience was so few in number (there were seven registered viewers), that when technical problems forced the DFF off the air, DFF employees reportedly could inform each by telephone that there would be nothing more to see that evening.[55] Within six months, there were seventy regular viewers; a year later, there were at least six hundred. By 1960, there were one million registered receivers in the GDR. This remarkable expansion of reception was essential for the development of television as an important tool of communication in East German social, political, and cultural life.

By the time the television program went on the air in 1952, the Postal Ministry had been developing the technology of transmission for several years, without much sense of what a television program would look like. Nor had they spent many resources making sure that, when the time came, East Germans would get the message. Domestic reception was not much of a priority for government authorities before the late 1950s. In the early 1950s, East German industry was manufacturing thousands of television sets, but these Leningrad T-2 receivers followed a Soviet design and were destined for export eastward in fulfillment of reparations agreements with the Soviet Union. In fact, before 1953, the GDR produced no sets for the domestic market.[56] Those who could boast of early access to East German programming often had one of the few remaining Nazi-era television sets, had procured one from the black market, or had bought one in the West.

The initial structural limitations on the growth of the audience persisted for some years as East German industry worked to produce sufficient sets in-

Fig. 1. Leningrad T-2 television receiver on display at Leipzig Trade Fair. September 1953 SLUB/Deutsche Fotothek, Roger and Renate Rössing.

expensively enough to satisfy East Germans' demand for them. Early receivers were expensive: the outmoded Leningrad T-2, with its tiny screen and bulky casing, still cost more than 800 DDM to produce.[57] The Leningrad model was manufactured primarily for Soviet consumption, so those that were diverted into the East German market had to be reconstructed to receive signals in the East German frequency range, which added up to 500 DDM to their expense.[58] When they hit stores in 1953, they were sold for 3,500 DDM, an impossible price at a time when the average monthly salary was about 300 DDM.[59] East German authorities encouraged manufacturers to cut the cost of producing televisions to make them more affordable, hoping to drop prices to not more than 800 DDM.[60] Alongside these basic receivers, they mandated the production of a more expensive "luxury" model, "Rubens." In January 1954, the Council of Ministers ordered fourteen thousand of the new "Rubens" television sets, which cost the consumer 900 DDM (only 120 DDM more than it cost to produce), and five thousand of the "Rembrandt" model, for about 1,300 DDM apiece.[61] At the time, West German sets cost between 700 and 1,700 DM. The more significant difference between the two markets became clear by 1957, however, when West Germans could choose from 130 different sets.[62]

Receivers were expensive, and they bore all the hallmarks of the early broadcast period, with small screens and inconsistent reception. In 1953, the screen on the common Leningrad model was about eight inches (measured, as receivers are, on the diagonal), or not much larger than a contemporary postcard.[63] Television officials hoped to grow them to sixteen inches by the end of the year; by contrast, screen size had already expanded to twenty-two inches in the West.[64] Not just screen size, but a number of other factors affected reception of broadcast-era (very different from cable, or now, satellite) television signals. The relatively weaker transmitters of the early broadcast period produced signals that were more vulnerable to interference. Delayed signals could produce "ghosts" (secondary, shadow images that appeared to repeat the broadcast, when the set received the delayed signals.[65] Contemporary viewers complained of frequent service outages and variable reception. Viewers often described the picture as "*leicht verrauscht*" (noisy or snowy). The weather seemed to interfere easily with reception: "in humid weather—without rain—the picture and sound are good; with rain or dry, clear air there is bad reception," viewers reported.[66] Passing trucks could disturb reception. On the other hand, good reception required a significant amount of effort and some knowledge on the part of the viewer regarding the proper situation of the antenna and tuning of the receiver. Some "problems" with reception really resulted from viewers' unfamiliarity with the technology: one director of a public viewing room complained that the picture "was always distorted towards the vertical," likely caused by improper tuning of the receiver.[67] It was difficult for people to fix these problems themselves, in part because so few had any experience with television sets at all. If a receiver "broke down"—whether the fault of the viewer, the receiver, or the transmission network—the television could end up sitting in a corner, unused. Due to these issues, repair shops were overwhelmed with work orders, many of which went unfulfilled for months if the repair required replacement parts.[68]

Despite the price of the sets and the conditions of reception, there was an insatiable demand for receivers. Liaisons from the television service were pleased to discover a sort of "television hunger" in places like Frankfurt an der Oder.[69] Yet, the limited production of sets could not hope to keep up with domestic demand.[70] By early 1956, manufacturers estimated that ten thousand sets had been sold, though according to government statistics, there were more than thirteen thousand televisions in the GDR.[71] Over the next few years, television officials found that demand grew in direct proportion to the availability of receivers and tried in vain to meet it through the expansion of production

and the introduction of imported receivers.[72] Accordingly, the audience grew between 1955 and 1957 from around thirteen thousand television owners to over three hundred thousand. This number doubled by 1959, when television ownership grew to just less than six hundred thousand sets. In 1960 television ownership rose above one million sets.[73] Despite the high prices and relatively low quality of East German receivers, television ownership rose sharply, even more so than in West Germany.[74]

The Politics of Broadcasting

For some time, historians of the Cold War have operated on a number of specific assumptions. The Cold War was an intensification of long-standing conflict between East and West that predated the Second World War.[75] It was comprised of a set of events that transpired generally between the end of the Second World War in 1945 and the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. The United States and the Soviet Union were the primary players in the conflict, though more recent scholarship is internationalizing this picture by considering the agendas, intentions, and actions of "regional" players in Europe or Africa, for example.[76] It was characterized by costly and potentially devastating economic, scientific, technological, and military competition, exemplified most dramatically in the nuclear arms race. Despite consensus on these factors, the Cold War remains a "bundle of contradictions" that historians have not yet been able to periodize with authority.[77] That is, in part, due to the fact that scholarly understanding of the Cold War has not yet fully integrated social and cultural analyses.[78] Not just treaties and summits comprised the Cold War, but "virtually everything, from the Olympics and opera to literature and space travel, assumed political significance and hence was deployed as a weapon both to marshal opinion at home and to subvert societies abroad."[79] Already in 1992, diplomatic historian Arthur Schlesinger argued that this "old-fashioned geopolitical rivalry" had intensified to the point that it threatened our very existence precisely *because* the superpower blocs were "constructed on opposite and profoundly antagonistic principles. . . . divided by the most significant and fundamental disagreements over human rights, individual liberties, cultural freedom, the role of civil society, the direction of history, and the destiny of man." Each side "saw the other as irrevocably hostile to its own essence." For Schlesinger, the "war" resulted from mistakes such as "over-interpreting the enemy," engaging in "arrogant prediction" and "national self-righteousness,"

and approaching the conflict as a "zero-sum game."[80] That is, the Cold War was a war of ideology that was shaped by perception, speculation, conjecture, and presumption. The media were central to this war of ideology and perception.

The story of the German airwaves demonstrates the importance of perception in Cold War battles in the early 1950s. For the Germans and their allies, competition over broadcasting was the front line of the Cold War, with the goal of occupying the "territory" of the airwaves. German authorities could never be sure of where they stood in relation to their counterparts on the other side of the border. But they were often sure they were "behind." In the early 1950s, East German authorities feared the broadcasting successes of the West; by the end of the decade, however, the tables had turned. In 1958, Western commentators began warning of an East German "television offensive." Commentators believed that DFF television was not only reaching West German viewers but also seducing them with an appealing program. The Postal Ministry and other East German authorities had managed to achieve this feat by solving a number of problems that expanded the distribution and reception of television signals across the country.

In the early 1950s, radio remained the preeminent medium of communication, nation-building, and Cold War ideology, but East German broadcasting authorities were increasingly concerned about the possibility of losing ground to the West in the battle to develop viable television technology.[81] As they saw it, even though the GDR had been constructing the basic infrastructure for television since 1949, the only result of that effort had been an experimental transmission of the groundbreaking ceremony for the Television Center at Berlin-Adlershof. By contrast, the British zone was a media powerhouse, and more television stations were popping up in each state of the West German Federal Republic.

The East German government was not the only party concerned with this burgeoning competition. In 1950, American authorities argued against investment in television, reporting "practically no public interest" in the medium, which was "an unnecessary luxury," especially in the face of the occupation authorities' significant investment in the infrastructure of middle-wave radio. On the other hand, the British argued that if the Western Allies did not develop television, "the novelty and entertainment value [of television] would encourage many Westerners to buy sets designed to receive the Eastern programmes."[82] The Western Allies would be giving up dangerous ground to Soviet influence. The British founded NWDR and, in anticipation of the introduction of television service by the DFF, began operating a second program from Berlin in 1951. The decision to undertake a Berlin program was consciously ideological:

the program would reach audiences in Berlin that NWDR could not hope to reach from Hamburg and could act as a sort of "display window of the West" in the GDR.[83] It was a decision that television authorities did not take lightly: the Hamburg transmitter was too weak to transmit signals into Berlin, so it involved an expensive replication of services. That is, West German television workers had to go to Berlin and build an entirely new program. This program was at least as limited as the test program broadcast in Hamburg and consisted primarily of the transmission of topical reports recorded on 16mm film. But the newer Berlin transmitter was much stronger than the Hamburg transmitter, which meant that it could broadcast the program both to the local Berlin audience and back through the West German transmitter relay to Hamburg.[84] East German authorities referred to this system as the *Funkbrücke*—a "broadcasting bridge"—and sought to manage its influence on the GDR.

American authorities were focused on the larger goals of the Cold War and were most concerned that the Soviets were getting a head start. They feared that "Soviet" signals were infiltrating the "free world" with transmissions that crossed borders into Norway, Denmark, Finland, Afghanistan, Iran, and the front line of the Cold War, West Germany. The GDR was "busily pumping Communist TV programs over the border," and it was both easy and inexpensive (about ten American dollars) for West Germans to modify their sets to receive them. GDR television drew West Germans (especially in Bavaria) to sporting events in particular, and, disturbingly, the female announcers were "quite attractive," as well.[85] This gave the "Soviets" free rein in both East and West. In the GDR, they wielded this power heavy-handedly, forming "television clubs" that could "help fill their once nearly-empty propaganda centers. After the TV program ends, the Communists start their political discussions." This troubled American authorities, which were not sure how these "Soviet" messages were received. The U.S. High Commissioner (HICOG) reported that "Sovzone television . . . was technically poor and [its] contents bordered on inanity." Some programming "was made up almost exclusively of still pictures," and it consisted of "90% anti-American hate propaganda, . . . featuring pictures of hunger and unemployment in the U.S., policemen mercilessly clubbing strikers, etc. . . ." The report concluded that "anyone with a Western mind would consider this kind of spectacle as stupid and ineffective. However, . . . he wonders whether people behind the Iron Curtain still react with Western minds."[86] American authorities feared Soviet influence transmitted through an increasingly powerful, transnational network of television broadcasters; never mind that the Soviets were not particularly involved in domestic broadcasting in the GDR at this time. American media scholar James Schwoch argues that

American policymakers deliberately mobilized such rhetoric, aware that it did not reflect historical reality, to "capture attention and promote the particular interests of a certain group of American officials, . . . particularly . . . [at] HICOG and RIAS." That is possible. I argue instead that such reports reflect the increasing importance of the war of perception in Cold War Europe. Significantly, GDR authorities engaged in almost identical rhetoric in discussions of the politics of reception in the GDR.

Authorities' concerns about television reception among East Germans centered on two issues: how to give them access, and what they were watching once they had it. It is important that, despite the cost of producing receivers and the problem of affordability, there was little debate among East German authorities about the site of reception: it would be in the home.[87] Public viewing was only considered a means to overcome the difficult problem of providing the public with receivers. For example, postal officials considered the possibilities of *Blockempfang* (apartment house reception): the provision of television to a number of people through the deployment of a central antenna—perhaps on top of an apartment building—that fed individual receivers within the building. This strategy could have the added benefit of preventing the proliferation of ugly "forests of antennae" on East German rooftops. Planners imagined putting this kind of receiver in places such as hospitals as well but soon decided that the cost relative to the production of individual receivers was prohibitive. Certainly, this could have been a means of restricting group reception to East German signals, but that did not seem to concern officials much in this early period of television broadcasting, and, as we will see in a moment, East Germans were resourceful enough to subvert that kind of control.[88] A second, much more widely supported alternative was the placement of individual receivers in public buildings, such as in the workplace break room, the community clubs of the National Front or factories, or in the vacation lodges of the national trade union.[89] Many East Germans saw television for the first time in one of these centers. Still, officials never questioned the principle of private reception or the goal of making available affordable receivers that East Germans could buy for their homes. In any case, East Germans made their own access to television. People asked their neighbors to open their homes so they could also watch television. Tenant committees appealed to television owners in their apartment buildings to allow the group to use their television on a specific day of the month.[90] Some enterprising television owners held regular collective viewing sessions, even charging admission.[91]

East Germans were just as resourceful when it came to what they watched on their television sets. The Leningrad receiver distributed in the GDR had

been reconstructed from Soviet standards to receive three television frequencies (or channels), while manufacturers configured other models to receive just one frequency. But NWDR often came in more strongly than the East Germans' own signals in Berlin and elsewhere, and television distributors reported that customers often requested that their expensive sets be configured to also receive NWDR. People who could not afford to buy new sets that could receive Western channels turned to a burgeoning cottage industry based on the reconstruction of existing sets for this purpose, a service that cost about 300 DDM. Postal authorities identified several shops in the Berlin area, including two located on Stalinallee in the center of Party strength in East Berlin, that specialized in reconfiguring television sets. Of two hundred sets sold in Potsdam-Werder in 1953, postal officials estimated that all of them had been reconfigured to receive NWDR.[92] One man had even cornered the market on this type of reconstruction, charging the exorbitant rate of 540 DDM for the service. "Guild Master B." was not running a secretive, underground operation either. He quarreled openly with Party members over the configuration of GDR receivers, arguing that all sets should receive NWDR, because "one can't get any [East German] broadcast stations in the GDR" anyway.[93] Postal workers characterized the practice as "illegal," but also recognized that there was no legal regulation that prevented the practice or punished people for doing it. Herr B. went so far as to initiate a court case to legitimize the service by establishing legal precedent.[94]

A much more visible symbol of West reception had also begun to appear. In 1953, postal officials began to notice 200 MHz antennas popping up on East German houses. They were easily recognizable by their short length and were perfect for receiving television signals in VHF Band III. Since the GDR could not yet transmit signals in this frequency range, the Postal Ministry could conclude only that these had to be used to receive West German television.[95] Some officials worried that even more East Germans were hiding similar antennas by installing them under the eaves of their houses. But, in the end, authorities perceived this not as a matter for proscription but one of competition. In Schwerin, for example, there were twenty television owners and likely many times that number who were tuning into West television. They concluded that if the Marlow transmitter, slated for construction in 1954, was strong enough, it would divert viewers back toward the GDR's program.[96] With the right transmitters, GDR television signals *would* reach into people's homes, on both sides of the border.

At the outset of 1957, basic problems of transmission and reception persisted, but authorities were taking measures to get programming out to the

greatest number of Germans in East and West. Areas remained that still had no television service, affected most significantly by cross-border interference. East Germans on the periphery of the DFF coverage area still complained of "snowy" pictures due to interference from Polish, Czech, or West German signals.[97] Interference in the western areas of the GDR, largely the result of differing broadcast frequencies, was most troublesome for GDR authorities, who worried that this interference would result in the loss of East German viewers to Western signals and hamper West Germans' reception of GDR programming.[98] In an effort to ameliorate cross-border interference, improve the picture quality in the GDR, and win viewers from the FRG, the Postal Ministry undertook a time-consuming and costly conversion of the broadcast standards of their equipment to the 5.5 MHz Western European standard in 1957. The government even paid for the conversion of existing television sets to the new standard.[99] The GDR was the only Eastern European country to adopt the Western European standard in the postwar period.[100] This broad conversion of broadcasting standards in the GDR suggests, on the one hand, that the state was unenthusiastic about repressing reception of Western signals in the GDR in the late 1950s;[101] on the other hand, it exemplifies the SED's fervent belief that GDR television could and should compete with Western broadcasting for the pan-German audience. State authorities were much more concerned about *Western* reception of *East German* signals.

Such measures proved successful enough that West German commentators began to worry about the encroachment of GDR signals on their territory. By 1957, Western commentators had identified what they perceived as a "television offensive" against the Federal Republic. In January 1958, the newspaper of the West German Social Democratic Party, *Vorwärts*, published a report that claimed that television was now taking its place alongside radio in the "war of the airwaves." In the GDR, the author warned, "television towers are supposed to shoot out of the ground like mushrooms along the borders . . . and in the television studios the first Propaganda-cadres of this 'airwave offensive' are being educated. Instead of 'steamroller tactics,' [they] will henceforth attempt to fascinate the West German television audience with humor, sex, and jazz."[102] This commentator warned that, in the war of the airwaves, the field of battle had changed: no longer was the GDR acting defensively, trying to keep Western signals out of the GDR as it had in the period of the *Funkbrücke*; now it was going on the offensive. The GDR had built new, stronger transmitters and was positioning them to broadcast signals into Hesse, northern Bavaria, and Lower Saxony. Soon, communist signals from the GDR and their allies, the Czechs, would cover the entire area of West Germany. Similarly, a *Spiegel* commenta-

tor argued, "even half of the East-Zone's transmitters would be enough to provide the so-called GDR with a television program. All of the other transmitters in the Zone are positioned so that they can deliver the East-Zone program to the entire zonal border area (*Zonengrenzgebiet*)."[103] For these commentators at least, television in the GDR was now ready to take its place in the ideological battles of the Cold War.

Conclusion

Over the course of the 1950s, East German technicians transformed the possibilities of television technology in the GDR. Their work laid the foundation for television to become not only an important tool of information and ideology, but also a veritable social force in East Germany by the early 1960s. When the GDR was founded in 1949, television consisted of a few leftover bits of Nazi-era technology. National Socialist, American, and Soviet television, understood to be important precursors that blazed a path for early television elsewhere, were, for a number of reasons, not effective models for the East German service. Nazi television was based on technical standards that were hopelessly outdated by 1949. Soviet policies hindered rather than helped the development of early television in the GDR, and their own television was based on different technological specifications. In particular, Soviet policy privileged the fulfillment of postwar reparations over the development of a strong indigenous economy, draining the resources of the nascent television system. Certainly, the policies of all four of the occupation authorities demonstrated a significant lack of coordination in the reconstruction of the postwar media system in East and West. Decisions made before the foundation of separate German states did much to shape the regional peculiarities still evident by 1991. But what this story also shows is how important the technology of television became because of the context of the Cold War. Even before the introduction of programming, television played an important role in the Cold War battle between the German states. East German technicians had to solve the problems of distribution and reception, a process that was fraught with difficulty. They made important decisions that shaped the GDR's television system, privileging, for example, the competition for a pan-German audience over securing a broadcast network that could reach only East Germans. The technology of dissemination secured the future of broadcasting and reinforced the territorial boundary between the two German states.

Chapter 2

Inventing Television Programming in the GDR

In mid-1952, a young television worker named Günter Hansel arrived for his first day of work at the East German television service (DFF). Despite his youth and inexperience, his new boss immediately threw him into producing the news. Hansel, one of the service's first employees, experienced "torturing uncertainty" when meeting television director Wolfgang Kleinert for the first time. Kleinert "threw a stack of pictures [at him and declared,] that's tonight's show." Hansel stared at the pictures and wondered, "what is that supposed to be? . . . What is Television?"[1]

In the early 1950s, television was still new, untested, and even unknown among wide swaths of the population. Nazi-era television broadcasts had reached fairly small numbers of people in cities such as Berlin and, after its conquest, Paris. But Germans were much more familiar with the existing media of film and radio, and those experiences defined their early expectations for television. Film, for example, had already familiarized audiences with moving images synchronized with sound, although projected on large screens in collective viewing environments. On the other hand, radio had accustomed audiences to understanding the home as a locus of reception. Radio (unlike film or television) seemed ubiquitous—receivers were inexpensive and widely available, and programming could be widely broadcast, across the GDR and into the Federal Republic.

Given these kinds of expectations, we might expect early television to have been a disappointment. Certainly, early viewers gathered, often in community viewing rooms, to watch relatively low-resolution images flickering across tiny screens. Lucky (or connected or wealthy) viewers watching from home, if they lived in good proximity to a transmission tower, were willing to forgive frequent problems with signal interference and did not mind the short program day, which in the early 1950s lasted no longer than the average

feature-length film. By the standards of established media, then, early television might have seemed vastly inferior. Writing about the early expansion of television, Raymond Williams described it as a "poor-man's cinema" that could not begin to approximate the visual experience of film.[2] But television's early appeal lay less in the (by this time often larger-than-life) representation of the world as was the case with film, for example, and much more in its ability to transmit "reality." Television observed the world and allowed viewers to do the same, broadcasting images and events, ostensibly unmediated, as they were happening. For this and other reasons, television was able to overtake both cinema and radio within a decade, spreading rapidly and (thus far) irrevocably into the homes of the industrialized world.

In the early 1950s, television workers in the GDR were just beginning to explore the potential of the new medium of television. Television's appeal lay in the specific characteristics of the medium developed in the 1950s, but at this early date, they had yet to define those characteristics and figure out how to harness them with the resources available. In short, they had to "invent" television. Creating a new medium was not simply a question of discovering and developing technology—building television towers, improving signal reception, or revising broadcast standards—but an aesthetic and political question as well. Above all, early television workers at the East German television service (*Deutscher Fernsehfunk*, or DFF) had to forge a television program when no one was quite sure what that might look like.[3] Indeed, what we know as television is, at its most fundamental, nothing more than the transmission of electrical charges from one place to another. Much of early television "programming" involved learning how to make those electrical charges represent the world in two dimensions. In the early 1950s, DFF staff experimented with the technical and aesthetic dimensions of television transmission and representation, gradually developing their own sense of its possibilities. As they grew more sure-footed, new programming allowed them to harness television technology, enabling it to become more than a curiosity for the burgeoning audience, and begin to establish the medium as an instrument of social, political, and economic power in the GDR.

This chapter explores the development of the DFF during the crucial period between 1952 and 1956. During this period, DFF staff faced a number of challenges as they learned what they could do with the medium. Many staffers had left work in other types of media and brought their preconceptions with them. Thus the expectations associated with radio, film, theater, and even Nazi-era television initially shaped television workers' visions of the medium, as well as the administrative structure, conditions of production, and early pro-

gramming of the DFF. In the first two years of the service, broadcasts remained little more than experiments in form and content, as staff learned the possibilities and limitations of television. Yet the ideas and expectations of older media soon gave way as early experiments exploring the particular characteristics of television allowed new approaches to emerge.

This was especially true after the introduction of direct transmission equipment liberated television from the studio. In 1955, DFF staff took stock of their first three years of televisual experimentation and even set about codifying the lessons they had learned. Codification reflected the push toward an industrialized mode of production (which will be discussed in chapter 3), but it also represented a new sense—among DFF staff, at least—that television programming could also have a role to play in both domestic nation-building campaigns and the larger Cold War. By 1955, the DFF leadership paid more attention to the "messages" of television programming, which became the basis of their argument that this new medium could contribute to political agitation for a growing audience. They began to delineate the social purpose of television: it would not be an artistic medium or transmit simple entertainments. Instead, it would work actively to transform the ideas and values of the East German audience by transmitting high culture and hard-hitting, topical political features. But if television authorities had found one purpose for television, the audience had found another. At first simply fascinated by a new technology of live transmission, viewers embraced the new medium and soon began to demand more, specialized programming. By 1956 the contours of East German audience taste had begun to emerge, which had important consequences for the future direction of the program.

Experimenting with Television

By 1952, preparations for the new television service were busily under way in Berlin. That year, GDR authorities opened the first East German television studio in the southeast Berlin neighborhood of Adlershof, as well as the GDR's first transmitter relay, which reached the city center. A bare-bones staff began hiring a small and youthful team to work on developing a social purpose for the new technology. Wolfgang Stemmler arrived at Adlershof for his first day of work as an editor in mid-November 1952 to find that he was one of only thirty employees of the new Television Center, a number that included the kitchen and waitstaff in the Television Center's cafeteria.[4] As late as the winter season of 1954–55, Stemmler alone comprised the department of entertainment pro-

gramming at the DFF.[5] For many members of the small staff, working in television was their first real job. Many arrived to fill positions with vague job descriptions and often had to take on multiple roles.[6] Maria Kühne, one of the DFF's first announcers, also performed in early dramatic pieces and worked as an editor for the service.[7] Otto Holub, who became a fixture of GDR television, was only twenty-four in 1952; he panicked when he discovered that he had been hired not as a director's assistant, as he had been led to believe, but as the service's first director.[8] Most of the staff had never worked in television, although a few had some previous experience with the medium. The head of the Television Center, Hermann Zilles, previously had worked in radio. Director Hans-Erich Korbschmitt had worked both in theater and film. Though television was still relatively unknown, it appealed to a number of staff who came from film. Screenwriter and dramaturge Hans Müncheberg, for example, described the contemporary situation at DEFA as "utterly depressing," while others saw in television the opportunity to enjoy greater artistic freedom while working on projects that would see the light of day.[9] A few had previous experience in television elsewhere. Hans Mahle, former head of the Television Center had worked at the television broadcasting center in Moscow during the Nazi period. Back in Germany after the war, SMAD (Soviet Military Administration in Germany) charged him with the reconstruction of the media in the Soviet zone. He hired Nazi-era technicians, such as Ernst Augustin and Walter Bruch, to help with development of television. Their expertise was integral to early GDR broadcasting: Augustin built the television cameras used in the studio during the first two years, for example. Others had less technical experience with the medium: Walter Baumert, a screenwriter and dramaturge, recalled being fascinated the first time he had seen television, as a child in Nazi-era Berlin.[10]

The SED's definition of television's purpose—to occupy the airwaves as "territory" in the Cold War through the apparatus of transmission (but not production or reception)—shaped the conditions under which DFF staff worked in the early 1950s. They operated with outdated equipment and through chronic shortages of production materials. In January 1953, one month after the "official" beginning of the test program, the DFF owned just one "iconoscope," a television camera made obsolete by the development of the orthicon in the late 1940s.[11] There were paper shortages that made duplication of everything from memos to rehearsal schedules to scripts impossible.[12] The government had not provided the service with television receivers currently in production, which they needed to produce a program, using them as monitors during broadcast, for example, and for training purposes. None of the DFF's employees owned

their own sets. Precisely those people who *should* have been watching for reasons of professional development could only do so on a set in the DFF cafeteria, at a public viewing room just outside of the DFF campus, or at the House of German-Soviet Friendship in the center of East Berlin, and only *if* those rooms were open when the program began after seven o'clock in the evening.[13] Even the group responsible for building "studio technology"—its mandate was to (re-)engineer existing technology—did not receive any sets.[14] In lieu of building their own technology then, the DFF would have to import some of television's most basic technology for the foreseeable future.

That television's initial mandate had little to do with programming was also clear in the experimental nature of early DFF transmissions. Broadcasts lasted not more than two hours a day, and they were transmitted only five days a week during the first two years. Television transmissions did not reach very far, and viewers who lived outside Berlin only gradually began to receive them. Early broadcasts consisted primarily of images of the DFF's station identification or a clock in the first few months. Gradually the service began to include some filmed material, but broadcasts remained short, utilitarian, and repetitive. Early on, the service procured three DEFA films for broadcast, including one entitled *Horses* and another on the subject of tooth care. They were shorts of little more than several minutes of material that were transmitted in perpetual rotation.[15] The monotony led Hermann Axen, head of Agitation, to demand that television workers seek out other material.[16]

One option for television employees was to create programming themselves, but the widely varying backgrounds of the new television staff meant they had very different expectations and ideas about the kinds of things that television could and should do. Ernst Augustin, for example, took his lead from his experience with television during the Nazi period. Nazi producers had used television primarily to transmit variety programs, in which diverse acts—a ballerina, a singer with accompanist, or a juggler, for example—performed for the camera. The Nazi-era television studio consisted of a set of raised platforms, or stages surrounding the television camera, which stood in the middle of the room. In this configuration the camera simply transmitted the action as if merely observing it (rather than constructing it for the viewer). This reflected the contemporary conception of television as "televised theater" transmitted by a few (because they were costly and scarce) studio cameras.[17] As the chief engineer overseeing the construction of the Television Center, Augustin followed those same principles in designing the Adlershof studios, and those conditions in turn shaped early experiments with programming.[18] Television workers later recalled feeling that the entire complex had been misconceived. They found the

Fig. 2. Television Studio, 1952. BArch, Bild 183–17697–0002/. (Photo: Hans Günter.)

studio spaces were too small, and there were no designated (or otherwise available) spaces for rehearsal, makeup and costume changes, or set design and construction.

By 1952, the first of five planned performance spaces was near enough to completion to use as a broadcast studio.[19] It was small, about forty-three square feet. The camera occupied one-quarter of the room, allowing only a few people to fit into the remaining space at one time. The iconoscope was bolted to the floor, could not be swung left or right, and could capture only close and medium shots of its subjects (transmitting pictures of the head and torso, for example).[20] Spotlights generating excessive heat flooded the room with bright light for the sensitive camera.[21] Such studios had been planned and mostly built before the GDR had developed any television programming, and it had been designed in accordance with contemporary—though quickly outdated—expectations of television. This was the space early television productions had to negotiate.

While Augustin created the conditions for early variety shows, former film workers, such as Hans Müncheberg and Wolfgang Luderer, began producing elaborate stage plays more along the lines of the film narratives to which

they were accustomed.[22] Those who came from radio, by contrast, were more comfortable with the aural than the visual dimensions of the medium. They even submitted scripts for broadcast with no indication of any visual component for the program.[23] In other programming, pictures simply illustrated the spoken word. One early example was the "slide series," for which producers made slides from still photographs and transmitted them over the airwaves with accompanying voiceovers. *Stories for Bärbel* consisted of stories read from illustrated children's books with accompanying slides made from the original illustrations.[24] This strategy was also the genesis of *Current Camera* (*Aktuelle Kamera*). A photo-reporter provided enough stills for a daily ten-minute segment, which, in altered form, later became the nightly news program and survived until the end of the Republic.[25]

The "slide series" reflected the experimental nature of early "original programming" as staff reconciled their expectations of television with what they actually had to work with.[26] The makeshift and ultimately unsustainable nature of such experiments is exemplified by sports "coverage" transmitted in 1952. Günter Puppe and a colleague developed "an endless number of photos" to comprise the visual element of a broadcast reporting on a recent boxing match. They supplemented the still images with voiceover commentary. Puppe recalled, "Wolfgang . . . began to describe the match, . . . with bombastic pronouncements, with great speed and fervor. . . . slide after slide of grim, sad-looking, frozen boxers flickered over the screen." Puppe described this as "tragi-comic": "we actually believed that if one put together enough slides, with a moving commentary, one could bring still pictures to life."[27] As this incident suggests, the slide series was ill suited to the medium of television. The concept—animated audio reportage with a visual element tacked on—was defined by the model of radio. It was prohibitively expensive for the television service and did not last long. A report from the mid-1950s had to explain for its reader what the slide series had been.[28]

In the view of the DFF, the "slide series" was as close as the service got in its first few years to achieving simultaneity (*Aktualität*), although, in fact, there was not much that was "simultaneous" or "live" about it.[29] (It probably was the closest the DFF got to representing the outside world during this period.) For most new television workers, nothing in their previous work had prepared them for the live nature of the early medium. Television is always live, of course, in that transmission and reception happen almost simultaneously. That made it at once unforgiving and ephemeral: "second takes" were impossible, but at the same time, once transmitted, the image and sound vanished. Most contemporaries agreed that visual simultaneity was television's most compelling charac-

teristic. But this was also its most disappointing feature during the early broadcast era. For most people, "live" connoted the spectacular capture of life's fleeting moments, perhaps a game-winning goal or a speech at a political demonstration. The DFF could not yet capture that kind of "live" because it could not transmit outside the studio.

Transmitting film was one means through which the DFF could simulate the "live" and was often used while the service experimented with other early television forms.[30] But film stock was expensive, and the feature films that could be shown on television often were as well.[31] Programmers were resourceful and found they could acquire older feature films on the cheap. The DFF's first film series consisted of old silent films that the actor Ludwig Trautmann had found in his cellar.[32] One employee "bought" a Soviet film with two bottles of vodka.[33] Gradually, the DFF expanded the kinds of programming it transmitted over the airwaves to include on-air addresses, excerpted performances from films, operas, and the circus, dramatizations of novellas, and its first quiz show. Increasingly the service experimented with programming that consisted of mixed forms—live performances intermingled with filmed excerpts of their own programming, theatrical, or feature film performances. The show *Theater and Film Mirror*, for example, used filmed excerpts of theatrical performances intercut with live discussion to advertise contemporary productions of Berlin's cultural scene.[34]

As they experimented with new types of programming, DFF staff learned to negotiate television's other particularities as well. Paradoxically, television's visuality proved unexpected, even for television workers who came from film or theater backgrounds. DFF staff had to learn to "transmit for the eyes."[35] Specifically, television's visual field proved much smaller in scale than that of film or theater, and much narrower, though deeper, than theater.[36] Television workers had to take into account the small size of contemporary screens. Although early television cabinets were often fairly large, built to contain the bulky cathode ray tube, the screen on which the television broadcast appeared was very small. Film could rely heavily on both visual scale (as seen in epic films such as *Lawrence of Arabia*, released in 1962) and the representation of in-depth detail, but television's small screen limited the scale and detail comprehensible to the viewer.

DFF staff learned to work with televisual space by experimenting with new forms and subjects. During one incident, the DFF went on location to film performers of the Friedrichstrasse circus. They shot the action in extreme long shots, that is, from a distance that would allow them to capture all the action on the stage in the frame. The small visual field of the television receiver meant

that the resulting images were almost incomprehensible. When transmitted, contemporaries described the figures as so tiny that the program gave viewers "the impression of sitting in the last row."[37] In general, television workers began to discover that less detail allowed the image and message to be better understood and make a greater impression on the audience.[38] But DFF directors also learned that they could manipulate this sense of space. Preparing to broadcast an opera performance in a cramped studio, Otto Holub realized he could create the illusion of space. Staff built a stage in the small studio and dressed the room with a variety of props representing a small concert hall, such as a set of theater seats. Holub positioned the camera as far back in the studio as possible. During the broadcast, the conductor directed the performance while kneeling in front of the "stage"—on camera he appeared to be standing in an orchestra pit. The whole illusion gave the impression of much greater depth than existed in the studio.[39]

The incorporation of film clips allowed the DFF to manipulate both televisual space and time during a live broadcast. Though expensive, film offered television producers several advantages. Filming outside the studio, television workers could begin to represent a world that the small studio spaces would not allow. Incorporating filmed excerpts offered live performers and set dressers a window of opportunity to make costume and set changes in the studio during the broadcast.[40] The live studio performances would have been easily distinguishable from filmed excerpts, due to their spartan sets, flat two-dimensional space, and the length of each shot, prolonged by the inability to cut between perspectives. But contemporaries experimented with introducing a new, more dynamic visual style, through such means as the so-called *Körperblende* (body blend).[41] This allowed the production to transition from one scene to another through a modified fade: an actor approached the camera, darkening the shot; in the next scene the action began with the actor (or a different one) walking away from the camera "fading" the action back in.[42] This technique could both "cut" the scene and change the camera's perspective on the action, by allowing an opportunity for minor changes to the set or costume, thereby creating a greater sense of motion, space, and elapsed time than normally allowed by single-camera, live productions. Through such experiments DFF employees began to define what could be done on television and develop their own televisual style.

The success of televisual style and representation also relied upon those who worked the control desk, in the studio or the transmission wagon. They too had to learn the possibilities and limitations of their equipment. It took practice to achieve seamless, or even steady, soft fade-outs and quick transi-

tions between cuts, for example. Technicians had to be prepared to deal with the idiosyncrasies of their machines. Early television cameras had to "cool down" between rehearsal and show time so they could reliably transmit the evening broadcast.[43] Staff constantly had to monitor the quality of the picture, with attention to the fact that early electronic cameras conveyed colors "unpredictably," resulting in reportedly "ghastly" shades of grey appearing on the television screen.[44] Tele-cines, the machines that turned filmed images into the electrical charges enabling television transmission of feature films and the like, had to "warm up," taking twelve seconds to begin transmitting images. It required a delicate sense of coordination to help synchronize the transmitted images with the commentary of a speaker located in a different room, not to mention to seamlessly blend the transmission from live action to filmed excerpts, or vice versa.

Finally, early televisual experimentation began to develop a language of representation, conventions that became the "rules" of making television. Television transmissions were essentially composed of images devoid of context, and staff had to figure out how to make them comprehensible for their audience. Experimentation produced an intricate web of visual conventions shared by television producers and their audiences that helped viewers understand particular shots or scenes, not to mention whole shows. These conventions were not instinctive but had to be developed. For example, in 1955, camerawoman Hanna Christian discovered the *Bildachse* or "180 degree rule," an important visual convention for the naturalistic representation of sports broadcasts and interviews.[45] The principle of the rule was (and is) to position cameras in such a way that cutting between perspectives did not disrupt audiences' perception of the scene, but instead replicated it. In the case of an interview or a sports event, for example, the perspective of the camera had to replicate closely the point of view of someone in attendance. No one would watch a tennis match from both sides of the court; representing the game that way on screen jarringly violated the reality effect and confused the viewer. Yet this is just what Christian did. She prepared to film her first soccer match by positioning cameras on either side of the midfield line (on the sidelines of each team's "territory," which is "normal" for sports coverage); she also put cameras on either side of the field, crossing the imaginary line of perception.[46] Cutting between shots from one side of the field to the other resulted in one player seemingly running "down" the field, then, in the next shot, running upfield. Thus, players on the field running toward the goal appeared on the receiver instead to be running every which way. Cutting between these points of view produced contradictory images and non-naturalistic representation.[47] If Chris-

tian's initial placements of the television cameras seem an egregious mistake to us today, it only demonstrates how well entrenched conventions of visual representation have become in our own world. It took time for conventions to develop defining the "correct" way to frame sporting events, as well as for viewers to learn to see it "correctly" as well.[48]

Not just for Hanna Christian, but also for most early television workers, the decisive shift of their young careers came when television technology enabled them finally to leave the studio. In 1955, the DFF acquired two transmission trucks, allowing the service to transmit live programming from elsewhere, including the soccer field, the State Opera, the National Gallery, the People's Enterprises (*Volkseigene Betrieb*, VEB), and the People's Chamber of government (*Volkskammer*). The trucks were equipped with orthicon cameras, the industry standard, and could transmit much clearer, sharper images with less light than those in the studio. The mobile cameras proved so superior to the studio cameras that directors of studio productions tried to appropriate them for use inside the Adlershof studios as well. At the same time, newer receivers came on the market, with larger screens and better resolution, making the transmission of scenes from the out-of-doors, the stage of the State Opera, or meeting halls the size of the People's Chamber a more visually appealing experience than it had been on the tiny Leningrad. Taken together, these two developments brought about a sea change in the possibilities of early television programming. Without these changes, popular programming such as the variety show *The Laughing Bear* (*Da lacht der Bär*), which the DFF later televised from the 2,500 seat Sport Hall in the Stalinallee, could not have been so successful.[49]

Codifying Television as an Instrument of Political Power

In 1955, after three years of experimentation with the medium, DFF staff prepared for the introduction of its "official program" in 1956. With the official program, the service began broadcasting three hours a day, a slight increase over the daily two-hour broadcasts of the previous three years, but this was part of a more general trend in the expansion of broadcasting over the course of the 1950s and did not represent a sharp discontinuity with the "test program."[50] Nor did the types of programming the DFF prepared change much. Even the political shift to greater recognition of the program and its place in the broadcast universe of the GDR had nothing to do with the onset of the official program but was instead provoked by the events of the Cold War later in the year. But for DFF staff this represented an opportunity to make their case for the

social and political purpose of television programming. In a series of reports, DFF staff reported on the lessons that television workers had learned in the first years of television broadcasting.

In "Thoughts on the Dramaturgy of Television," Werner Fehlig, the first director of the Department of Television Drama, defined television as a new and distinct communicative technology within the universe of the existing media forms of radio, film, and theater. While each medium had its own specific and valuable properties, television, he wrote, "stands between film and radio as something completely new, the perfection of the invention of broadcasting."[51] Fehlig identified four characteristics of the medium that differentiated television from the other media and, therefore, made it an important means of political agitation. First, television was a *visual medium* that fulfilled its audiences' desire for the extraordinary and unmediated experience of witnessing social, cultural, and political transformations unfold. Television was not theater, which could establish a strong personal relationship with the audience over the course of a specific play. Television workers needed to learn "*Fürs Auge senden*"—to broadcast for the eyes.[52] To that end, the close-up and the spoken word both played important roles in contextualizing the televisual narrative. Second, he noted the popular appeal of visual simultaneity, or *Aktualität*, the "coincidence of event and experience" that the audience expected from television. Third, each piece of television programming was only a small part of a larger, perpetually changing, television "flow" (*Programmgestaltung*). Individual parts of the daily schedule could be enveloped in a variety of programming that helped the audience to interpret contemporary events. Finally, television enjoyed a privileged mode of reception: the audience tuned in to television in their homes, where they were most vulnerable to a persuasive, personal address, which would allow television to connect with their "inner essence" (*inneres Wesen*). Thus television's mode of address should avoid "mass scenes, excited . . . plots, quick scenes and sudden cuts." Instead, the conditions of reception called for a "more contemplative tempo."[53] Fehlig thus began to codify the important lessons of television production. DFF staff had learned that television could draw an audience by offering an intense viewing experience.

This and other reports submitted in 1955 mark a turning point in the television leadership's vision of the television program, which, after years of experimentation, had become more coherent and clear. In addition, since such reports also made their way up through the bureaucracy of media control, to the State Broadcasting Committee and the Agitation Commission of the Central Committee, they also represented an attempt on the part of the television leadership to entrench television in the minds of the authorities as another impor-

tant part of the East German media universe. Fehlig explicitly defined television as an important political tool that could serve the socialist revolution in Germany: it would not simply reflect reality, but rather present the dynamism of revolutionary development in the GDR. Indeed, Fehlig argued that "where the struggle between the New and the Old is seen, where the first indications of the new, better and more beautiful life can be found, which claims victory over the Old, the television cameras of democratic broadcasting also must be there."[54] Television, therefore, could serve as an effective medium of political agitation, contributing to the SED's nation-building campaign under way since at least 1952.

But, as scholars of GDR cultural policy have shown, the contours of the cultural struggle for a new and better world had long been a matter of debate among government officials, artists, audiences, and others, both in the GDR and abroad. In particular, the boundaries between the acceptable "New" and the unacceptable "Old" were not always clear.[55] Since at least 1950, the SED had defined "culture" and cultural activity as integral to achieving the enormous economic undertaking that lay ahead for the state. Cultivation, and even relaxation (*Erholung*), would prepare East Germans for their industrial tasks. The SED founded cultural centers, community clubhouses, and lending libraries, promoted higher education in the arts, and fostered museums, theaters, and publishing houses. At the time, authorities such as SED leader Walter Ulbricht expected that pretty folk songs and pictures of beautiful, happy, selfless (socialist) people would comprise GDR culture.[56] In 1952, cultural policy began to harden when the SED embarked on a concerted campaign to build socialism. In this context, "socialist realism" became "not just one creative variant among others, but rather the only possibility, the only method that [could] lead to the growth of a great German national art."[57] Socialist realism had been the guiding principle of socialist art in the Soviet Union since at least the 1930s, but the basic principles were contested and not easily defined. In the GDR in the 1950s, it was associated rather amorphously with "partisanship," "belonging to the people," and certain ideas about "socialist man," for example. During the period of destalinization (1953–56) some artists tried to (re-)interpret it as an element of the humanist worldview. But in 1956, the SED clarified that socialist realist art was by definition "consciously partisan," and, by 1962, "socialist realism" had become an aesthetic category unto itself: that is, not just the subject matter, the story, or the composition of a work, for example, could qualify it as "good art," but criticism now also took into account its level of partisanship (which mattered as much or more).[58] The SED encouraged artists to build on the acceptable part of the German artistic tradition, which it increasingly

identified as the German classical heritage. That is, it privileged the work (and thus the values and worldviews) represented in the literary tradition of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: the world of Goethe and Schiller (and the "rising bourgeoisie"), and not that of Baudelaire or Beckett (representing the "declining bourgeoisie").[59]

Given the technological mandate for television and the relative lack of attention paid to programming at the time, television was not a factor in this debate in the early 1950s, but as DFF staff began to seek an expanded role in the agitation program of the state, these principles were influential in the types of programs they developed. The most important types of programming that emerged in the first years of service were television drama, "topical" (political) television, and entertainment.[60] Dramatic programming was the most well-developed aspect of the program, often adapted from theater, film, and even radio, as producers began to develop television-specific drama. Topical television was the most explicitly televisual aspect of the program, and, to DFF staff, it seemed to have the most political potential, rooted as it was in the immediate and seemingly unmediated "transmission" of everyday experiences. It could potentially grapple with the big geopolitical issues of the day; paradoxically, it was the type of programming with which the DFF enjoyed the least success, precisely because simultaneity was so difficult to harness. Finally, the television service had its most "uneven" experiences with entertainment television. Socialist authorities defined "entertainment"—in literature, on the radio, or on television—as worthless, vapid kitsch.[61] This conception of entertainment was similar to that of contemporary West German television workers. Television staff at NWDR, for example, reported that the British model was "more appropriate" to the system they were hoping to build than the American model. Where the American system dangerously flooded viewers' lives with daylong programming, the British system offered a shorter program day of not more than a couple of hours in the early 1950s. The popular entertainments, such as quiz shows, games of skill and chance, and other audience contestant competitions found on American television, were not well-suited to the average "lower profile, reserved" German and would not satisfy what they saw as Germans' greater need for knowledge and insight.[62] Yet DFF staff developed entertainment programming, because it solved their most important problem: how to come up with enough cheap programming to fill the television schedule, which by the mid-1950s was expanding to capture the pan-German audience. Another advantage was that it combined elements of the dramatic tradition with the simultaneity of topical television. They soon learned how important "entertainment" television would be: even early on, viewers flocked to entertainment

programs. For DFF staff, entertainment proved to be the means to raise the profile of television service in the GDR.

Television drama was the most abundant type of programming to be found on the DFF schedule in the early years of service and included both guest performances and, increasingly, original DFF productions. In this, it approximated the experience of television service in other industrialized nations.[63] The DFF hosted numerous theatrical ensembles, including the companies of the German Theater (*Deutsches Theater*), the People's Stage (*Volksbühne*), or the Dresden State Theater (*Staatstheater Dresden*), among others, which would perform excerpts from their own repertoires in the studio.[64] Furthermore, the television service produced a new play each week; actors generally performed each play live two or three times for television audiences over the course of a week. Television writers wrote scenes based on material taken from literature, theater, and operas, from contemporaries, such as Brecht, but also classics of the German canon, such as Goethe or Schiller, or the Russian tradition, such as Alexander Popov or Alexander Pushkin.[65]

Dramatic pieces from theater, film, and even radio *seemed* readily adaptable to the technical conditions of early television, but they generally failed when they were conceived simply as theatrical pieces playing before a camera. Television had a hard time doing justice to the artistic conceptions of guest productions, and theater directors rarely took into consideration the fact that television was a medium with different rules. Unfamiliarity with the technical conditions of the studio led to confrontations between theater artists and television producers. During the rehearsal of a guest performance of the Berliner Ensemble in 1953, actress Helene Weigel insisted that, in keeping with the principles of Brechtian realism, the audience be able to see the actors' feet. This condition meant that the production consisted entirely of long shots, which, given the cramped space of the studio, was difficult for television producers, and it was likely unappealing to viewers watching on their sets at home.[66] Original DFF productions, by contrast, were small in scale, short, and took place on sparely dressed sets. Most shows used just two actors, who performed as closely together as possible (while attempting to avoid the creaking floorboards!).[67]

At this early date, marrying DFF staff's enthusiasm for the political task with the inexorable rules of "broadcasting for the eyes" was still difficult. For example, they created a television version of Alexander Pushkin's *Boris Godunov* to transmit at the 1953 Leipzig trade fair, where GDR television was on public exhibit for the first time. DFF director and novice producer Hermann Rodigast wrote a treatment with just five scenes.[68] The story traces the rise and

fall of the eponymous prince and includes a massive battle scene. But Rodigast "could hire only seven extras for this production" with which to stage the battle. The director "constructed the scene so that the actors ran out of the different forest paths toward the camera, then disappeared behind a thick tree, put on another wig, grabbed a different gun, to appear as a mass of fighters." Rodigast described the preparations as "more than comical . . . [that] quickly almost became bad theatre," although the resulting scene appeared "astoundingly good" on the monitor.[69] Since the DFF's only television camera was bolted to the floor of the smallest studio and could not be moved into the larger studio needed for the production, television workers had to film this hourlong show. Rodigast, like the authors of the original play (Pushkin) and the subsequent opera (Mussorgsky), conceived his *Boris* as a big, political, theatrical show thematically centered on an enormous battle. Yet for the production Rodigast could command only a small studio and no more than fourteen actors; meanwhile, viewers had to watch this improbable scene on a tiny screen. Theater and television drama occupied a privileged space in the schedule as components of the high cultural enterprise of cultivation that was so dear to the SED. Television was not quite ready for this spectacle, but the potential political value was clear.

It took some time for theater to be adapted and emerge as television drama, but the live nature of television seemed ready-made for "topical" television. Yet engaging the "live" was harder than it seemed. Early topical television included programming such as *Current Camera*, which explored the presentation of current events. For the "topical-political" editorial department of the Television Center, *Current Camera* proved that television could contribute to political agitation.[70] The show was conceived to be explicitly political, unlike much other DFF programming. It could broadcast SED decisions to viewers, "explain (those) decisions to the people and fill them with enthusiasm to put them into practice" through coverage of such diverse areas as politics, economics, culture, and sports.[71]

Reporting on current events and engaging the audience in contemporary issues were the goals guiding each episode. Each show consisted of two news items at the top of the show that displayed current events, as well as five or six others that concentrated more on deconstructing contemporary problems.[72] The DFF modeled the program closely on the DEFA *Wochenschau*, a newsreel series that film audiences saw before feature film presentations in movie theaters. The television version of the newsreel had one apparent advantage: it could present much more current information, since it was broadcast four times per week (on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, and Sundays). Mobilizing tele-

visual simultaneity relied on a certain flexible spontaneity, as well as the technology to capture images outside the studio. But planning for each installment of the *Current Camera* began *six weeks* in advance of the actual show, when department staff met to formulate a set of general ideological questions that would guide the show. The final conception for the show normally would be set as early as three days in advance.[73] Moreover, the DFF could not transmit pictures from outside the studio until late 1955. The service learned, though, that it did not necessarily have to provide instantaneous images to fulfill the viewer's expectation of immediacy; providing the *perception* of simultaneity could be enough. One filmed segment that reported on Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov's quick stop in Berlin was first broadcast on *Aktuelle Kamera* several hours later. The DFF concluded that "recordings with original sound, which give the viewer the impression of original reports achieve the greatest effect."[74]

Most important was that the DFF not seem indifferent to the audience desire for the "live." A viewer from Kleinprausitz reminded the DFF, "for those of us who work in agriculture, your weather service is more valuable than the radio reports, because the weather situation is elaborately explained in depth on the weather map. Would it not be possible, in the interest of agriculture, to transmit the weather service daily and, best . . . shortly before the beginning of the evening program?" This viewer appreciated that he could *see* explanations of the weather, but wanted to see *that day's* weather. "Topical" could not just be recent, it had to be more current. A viewer from Leipzig elaborated on this problem in a letter of complaint in which he described his own conception of topicality: "I say, current is what has happened in the last 48 hours—that's what we want to see, but there's still so little. On Sundays you always only transmit repeats. Sport reports are current on Sunday evenings—not when first broadcast on Tuesdays. . . ."[75] The televisual characteristics of simultaneity and verisimilitude seemed to be the easiest to exploit—just point the camera and transmit the picture—and the most politically effective, drawing large numbers of viewers to television. But "live" television—the spectacle, that is—was difficult to achieve in the way viewers wanted to see it.

The third area of programming development was "entertainment," which, on the face of it, did not seem able to fulfill the overall goals of political education and socialist nation-building. But entertainment programs emerged and grew quickly in number because they readily adapted to the conditions of early television production. Mostly small productions, they fit easily into the smallest of the DFF studios and were easy to transmit with the iconoscope camera. In addition, such programs offered viewers a sense of the "live" even though the shows never left the studio—in the early years, at least. Entertainment pro-

gramming was simple, it was cheap, and it could help fill up the expanding television schedule. Early DFF shows were simple variety acts produced in collaboration with performance groups from around the GDR, such as the Berlin Thistle (*Berliner Distel*) or Leipzig Pepper Mill (*Leipziger Pfeffermühle*) cabaret ensembles, or adapted from radio (just as they were in other emerging television nations). Variety programs, which did not include much action, quickly bored DFF staff (and, they thought, their viewers as well), and they began to develop original programming, from game shows to musical revues and variety shows.[76] By 1956, game shows were especially popular, and the service consistently received mountains of viewer mail in response to questions or puzzles posed in DFF programs.[77] With that, the DFF learned to value entertainment programming: it could attract a large (and growing) audience, and, increasingly, they could transmit explicitly political messages in an entertaining, satirical, and non-threatening manner.

Television entertainment in the GDR and elsewhere performed an important nation-building function in the early broadcast era. Taking a transnational view of television entertainment, media scholar Richard Paterson argues that entertainment programming offered viewers "pleasures in the face of the problems of life" that could either "reconcil(e) audiences to the status quo . . . or lead people to question and criticize the status quo by reference to the ideal world in the entertainment utopia. . . ." It could "create a shared community in which at its most banal viewers can share catchphrases or points of conviviality and laughter."[78] DFF programming achieved this indirectly, and increasingly through programs with a deliberate political message. In January 1953, the DFF introduced its first game show, quizzing viewers on a variety of topics. The moderators challenged viewers to identify slides of well-known German landmarks, such as the cathedral in Ulm or the Zwinger palace in Dresden, and tested their knowledge of the young GDR, asking them to identify the new East German Wartburg automobile, and awarded prizes to the winners.[79] The musical revue *Out of the Request File* (*Aus unserer Wunschmappe*) solicited viewer requests in the television weekly before each show, then played the songs on the air. Such requests ranged widely, including operetta and popular hits (*Schlager*), though moderators replaced what they defined as "kitschy *Schlager* melodies" with "good beloved" songs. They soon found that the show was highly popular—it was "an important 'point of connection' to the audience"—*and* it allowed the DFF to educate and improve viewer taste.[80]

Delivering a much more deliberate political message increasingly underpinned conceptions of DFF entertainment programs. A new film series incorporated excerpts from old and new feature films to "demonstrate the path from

manuscript to script to finished film." One innovative aspect of the show was that it invited the critique of East German writers *and* a handful of viewers that would be incorporated into each episode. Producers hoped that the show could draw pointed conclusions about "good" and "bad" creative forms through the combination of film excerpts, expert criticism, and lay commentary. A second show was conceived that could appeal directly to East German workers, who could view the program on their factory's television. In it, lay "actors" would entertain a specifically working-class audience "through the use of humor. Two workers [will] dramatize typical goings-on in the factories in front of the television camera." East German performance groups and lay artists could supplement such skits with "popular-scientific" filmed segments depicting production methods, appearances, and other acts cultivating "the cultural heritage (*Kulturerbe*)."[81] Such shows demonstrated the emergence of a specific notion of television entertainment, focused on political agitation for and among viewers, long before the SED demanded that art integrate East Germans and their experience of everyday life, at the "Bitterfeld Conference" in 1959.[82]

The trend toward didactic entertainment was the Television Committee's attempt to win viewers and mandate a steadfast political direction for future programming. The Television Committee conceived shows that experimented with the medium of television as a means to appeal to, and even create, a specifically "socialist" audience. They coached the television audience in the fundamentals of the socialist cultural heritage, first by illustrating "good" and "bad" cultural products, and second, by modeling "typical" behavior in order to cultivate a community of like-minded workers. The shows were not simple tools with which to manipulate viewers but demonstrated the real desire on the part of the television service to reach out to its audience. By 1956 they undertook an even greater effort to discover the audience. Staff left the studio to make the rounds of television viewing rooms across the Republic, in the interests of improving television programming and expanding television's audience.

Discovering the Audience

By October 1955 the DFF began to make concerted efforts to discover its audience. A new Department of Outreach took on the task of establishing a "good connection" between viewers and the DFF. They approached this problem with a three-pronged strategy: publicizing the program, collecting and analyzing viewer mail, and meeting the audience by visiting existing public television facilities and inviting regular viewers to "town hall" meetings to discuss the

program. Through such rudimentary audience research, the DFF hoped to discover how television had been incorporated into the political work of the mass organizations and the daily lives of East Germans. Key to this task was the assumption that local officials had even noticed television, and the belief that, by working with the audience, they could improve the program and the political impact of television on East German cultural and social life. This effort began in November 1955, when an employee of the Department of Outreach undertook a three-week trip to district offices of mass organizations and television rooms in some of the major centers of television reception, including Leipzig, Halle, Erfurt, Lichtenberg, and Berlin.

Most of the television facilities were in the regional clubhouses of the National Front and ranged in size and sophistication from a viewing arrangement in one small room to facilities that occupied freestanding buildings. On the road, DFF staff realized that local officials had responded in a wide variety of ways to the introduction of television. In rare cases, local officials had embraced television, setting aside space for the receiver, outfitting rooms in a comfortable way, advertising the program, and faithfully supervising the use of the television. But other officials were indifferent. They were completely unaware that they could acquire television sets with public funds and, often, could not imagine how television could possibly prove helpful to their agitation campaigns.[83] Even where television rooms did exist, there was widespread apathy, and sometimes antipathy, toward television. Some officials had simply plugged the television into the nearest electrical socket, left it untuned to receive programming, cursed the flawed reception, and allowed it to fall into disuse. DFF staff feared that, at any given time, approximately one-quarter of sets in public viewing facilities were "out of order," sometimes because their keepers were unfamiliar with the receiver, and at other times because of the apparent long wait to have a set repaired. Few facilities advertised the television program, though this hardly mattered given the scarcity of programming in the early years. (Early viewers were fascinated by the technology, so the television schedule was not as important as showing up sometime after 7:00 p.m. to check out what was on.) Some facilities allowed television viewing only a few times a month, fearing interference with other club activities and meetings. A few community leaders had not bothered to pick up the set designated for their area. Yet, the crotchety supervisor of one such clubhouse rejected the suggestion that his set should go to another district where it would get more use, decrying the impact of such a loss on his own district: "You can't do that to the district of W—."

Television may not have become as integral to the agitation efforts of the

National Front as the DFF had hoped, but it was spreading quickly across the GDR to become an important element of social life. More television rooms opened every month, while the number of privately owned sets also rose. People planned social events around entertaining with their television sets: "The show with Charlie Chaplin was great (*knorke*). My parlor was full of people and everyone laughed themselves crazy. . . ."[84] Rising numbers of people wanted their own sets. In Frankfurt/Oder the DFF found the anticipation of television had reached a "sort of television hunger." The waiting list for a new television there was so long that the local chapter of the national youth organization (FDJ) went around the state wholesaler, buying their sets from a private retailer instead. Requests that the DFF schedule programming for shift workers grew in number, confirming rising viewership. The DFF's audience expanded, even across the border: "I can assure you with great pleasure that you have a great many viewers over here," wrote a viewer in Berlin-Reinickendorf. "The program is good and topical and not made just for the top Ten Thousand."[85]

New television owners proved easy to please, while experienced viewers were more discriminating. Researchers described audiences in vacation lodges of the national trade union, mostly made up of first-time viewers, as "hardly critical." They reported that television had aroused such excitement among vacationers that most intended to buy a television when they got home. The staff members who supervised the use of FDGB televisions, on the other hand, were more judicious in their comments, calling for more opera and theater in television.

Television's impact differed in urban and rural areas. In Berlin successful television rooms could draw sixty to eighty people on a good evening. The television room at Naugarderstrasse 12 in Prenzlauerberg reported two thousand visits a month in early 1956 (over sixty viewers a day, on average). It drew so many viewers that on some evenings not everyone could get a seat. In Berlin, television seemed to appeal especially to children and teenagers, who were interested in children's programming, game shows, and sports coverage. Some authorities thought that television's appeal among youths could be a means of preventing the emergence of "latchkey kids." Others believed that television had the power to keep kids out of West Berlin cinemas, although, given the variety of entertainments in Berlin, television could not hold youths' attention for very long. There were skeptics though, who thought television was too much trouble: television rooms drew rowdy teenagers, so-called *Halbstarken*, who damaged sets or modified them to receive Western broadcasts. Teens monopolized the room on evenings when crime thrillers were scheduled. Before the show they were raucous and disruptive, making it impossible for others to

enjoy, or even hear, the program. When their show began, however, they paid rapt attention. If television had begun to draw social outsiders into the purview of the mass organizations, it was also the case that local officials did not always see this as a good thing. Television rooms in Weissensee and Potsdam began restricting the use of the sets to active members of their organization, rather than allow potentially disruptive kids access to "their" television.

Television was particularly popular in small towns and rural areas. A National Front television room in Schkeuditz near Leipzig could report on average three thousand visits a month between January and April 1955, which was even more than in Berlin. In small villages with few, if any, other entertainments, such as Gröbers (near Leipzig), the television room became the center of social life.[86] For many people, television became the medium through which they could experience the cultural life of the metropolis. One viewer from Leipzig noted that broadcasts from the Berlin operas and theaters were "always an experience, since here in the countryside we have few opportunities to see good performances." Others lauded lighter entertainment such as the variety programs, circus entertainment, game shows, music revues, shows broadcast from the factories, and film series. Such shows "bring rural folks relaxation and pleasure" of the kind rarely found where they lived, and *The Laughing Bear* (*Da lacht der Bär*), an entertainment show simulcast on radio and television, was "awaited with bated breath."[87]

By 1956, viewer mail and rudimentary audience research confirmed that television had begun to affect reception of other media especially in rural areas. Research suggested that radio lost listeners to television in the first year of television ownership. Those who had owned both television and a radio for more than one year chose whichever medium was broadcasting their preferred programming, usually entertainment or sports. Entertainment always won out over educational programming (*Bildung*, or self-cultivation). There was relative consensus among viewers that, although they enjoyed watching old films on television (*The Blue Angel*, *Battleship Potemkin*, or *Girls in Uniform*, for example), they really wanted to see current films and did not want to have to wait to see them until months after the theatrical release. But people were willing to replace cinema visits with television, so it should come as no surprise that film theaters had begun to lose customers.[88] The director of the Department of Culture in the district of Suhl (the person responsible for the dissemination of television there) knew of no public television rooms in his district. But as an officer of the local cinema, he reported with some dismay that ticket sales had been declining since the introduction of television to the nearby FDGB vacation lodge. Vacationers, at least, preferred to stay in to watch televi-

sion to going out to the cinema.[89] In Erfurt, viewers meeting with the DFF claimed they no longer went to the theater as often, since the television actors (who were often regular players from Berlin's major companies) outshone their local theater company. While television's ability to draw audiences from other leisure activities would be music to the ears of any television executive today, the DFF reminded their audience that television was simply a new factor in the cultural life of the GDR with no designs on displacing theater or cinema.

The audience had definite opinions about what should be broadcast on television. In general viewers were tremendously self-interested: they wanted to see things that fulfilled their desires and corresponded to their worldview. This meant, for example, that sports fans wanted to see lots and lots of sports coverage; it also meant that some viewers deemed programming such as *What You Won't Find in Mother's Cookbook* (*Was nicht in Mutters Kochbuch steht*) inappropriate for general viewing. Instead, viewers suggested that such programming should be broadcast in a special "women's show,"[90] segregated from the rest of the program schedule. Audience taste tended toward the low- and middlebrow.[91] For every viewer demanding more broadcasts from the State Opera House in Berlin, there were many others who wanted more entertaining variety shows, crime thrillers, and game shows. They would not accept just *any* entertainment: one viewer wrote to complain about the "primitive entertainment . . . (dumb) questions and observations" offered by the *Laughing Bear* and asked, "(I)s it really impossible to raise the level of the program?"[92] This viewer did not reject entertainment but had become more discriminating in his taste. Other viewers just wanted to win prizes. But they did not want *everyone* to win prizes and complained that the DFF awarded prizes too generously.[93]

In their programming taste, then, the East German audience approximated most other audiences in the industrialized West. They were not apolitical, but they were self-interested and sought out types of programming and viewpoints that approximated their own worldview. They flocked to entertainment programming. This picture of the East German audience, laid bare in rudimentary audience research in 1956, persisted right through the life of the GDR. The DFF sought to use this knowledge to balance audience desire with its own agenda of political agitation. The revised program schedule of 1958 thus reflected some but not nearly all of the lessons learned from audience research. The new daytime schedule included repeats of the previous evening's programming for shift workers, for example. As the schedule expanded, the DFF abandoned the transmission-free Monday evening, instead transmitting "women's programming" at that time. The television weekend began on Saturday evening (since most viewers worked six days a week until 1965) and was comprised of

the "evening-filling entertainments" requested by viewers.[94] On Saturday evening the DFF broadcast extravagant variety entertainment shows with live audiences, while more sedate theatrical productions (original programming of the DFF or transmissions from Berlin theaters) appeared on Sunday evening.[95]

Conclusion

Developing television as an important communicative medium required not only the development of the technological foundation of the service but also the creation of a notion of what television could be. In the first several months of service, the DFF program consisted of experiments in form and content, as inexperienced staff learned the possibilities and limitations of television. The difficulties they faced included tight resources, as well as the conceptual challenges posed by a medium with which few East Germans had had any real experience. In 1952 expectations of television were still shaped by preexisting media: theater, film, radio, and even Nazi-era television. By 1956, however, the experiments of the early years had yielded results. Television staff were able to codify the lessons they had learned about the new technology, and did so in part to make a case for the political usefulness of television for their superiors in the State Broadcasting Committee and the SED. And, as DFF workers "invented" television, they became more adept at creating effective programming and reaching out to the small, but growing, audience. For their part, the audience had definite opinions as to what should appear on television, and they were not afraid to share them.

Although television was not yet nearly as powerful as radio or film, DFF workers had established that it was a very different kind of medium. For the DFF leadership, at least, television promised to participate in the revolutionary transformation of East German society. Still, at the outset of 1956, television remained the stepchild to radio broadcasting and the press, especially in the estimation of the SED. It was not until the geopolitical upheaval of 1956 that events transformed the SED's vision of television and the medium's potential contribution to SED politics. By 1960, television had emerged as one of the most important tools of mass political agitation of the SED.

Chapter 3

The Revolution Wasn't Televised: Political Discipline Confronts Live Television in 1956

In November 1956, an East German broadcasting enthusiast wrote to the head of the State Broadcasting Committee, Gerhard Eisler, to express his dismay with the news coverage of the East German press and broadcasting services. Heinz D., the deputy director of a medical training facility (but who described himself as a working-class guy, or *Arbeiterjunge*), criticized the broadcasting apparatus for neglecting current events coverage and for reacting too slowly to international events. He complained that East German broadcasting was not doing enough to "[expose] these enemies of the working class," "the liars and hypocrites" of RIAS (Radio in the American Sector) and the SFB (the television and radio broadcaster "Transmitter Free Berlin"). This was particularly dangerous, he claimed, because many East Germans received their news from both East and West German broadcasters and came to the conclusion that "the truth lay [somewhere] in the middle."[1] H.D. warned, in particular, "We can no longer allow ourselves such gross mistakes as the initial silence in the press and broadcasting about the events in Poland and Hungary. What was the result? *Everything* oriented itself around the Western broadcasters. . . ."[2]

H.D.'s criticisms, which would have been important enough to GDR broadcasters under normal circumstances, took on a whole new dimension of meaning in the context of November 1956. The Hungarian uprising, which had seen increasingly significant demonstrations by students, intellectuals, and other protesters by the end of October, became an international crisis with the invasion of Soviet troops in the first week of November. Autumn of 1956, encompassing the uprising and resulting Soviet intervention, represented one of the most significant moments of the Cold War. It clearly delineated the boundaries within which Eastern European countries could "experiment" with varieties of communism and exemplified the limits of Soviet tolerance of dissent

within the newly inaugurated Warsaw Pact. For NATO countries, the uprising represented a moment of decision about the future of the Cold War. In the end, they chose not to intervene. The crises of November 1956 (in Hungary, but also in Egypt) demonstrated the reluctance of either side to revise the geopolitical balance of the Cold War through force. This made the war of the airwaves that much more important. It was also a defining moment for the SED's approach to East German television. The SED had a general notion of what they expected from television, against which the reality of what television could provide at the time came up short. But the development of a particular technology is not determined by its technological characteristics. It only acquires meaning in the negotiation of particular social, political, institutional, economic, and cultural contexts.[3] That is, the SED had to face the technological and political limitations revealed by the Hungarian revolt and decide just what kind of television it was willing to build.

By 1956, the DFF broadcast a "regular" program that had overcome many of the difficulties of the early years and could begin to take up this fight. But challenges remained to draw attention in late January when the service undertook the complicated task of broadcasting a special program from the winter Olympic games in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy. This undertaking, while exciting and groundbreaking, pointed to many of the difficulties that remained for the service to solve if television was to be an effective tool in the battle for hearts and minds. These problems would resurface again in November, in the midst of the Hungarian uprising. As the Soviets moved into Hungary, the East German Television service remained silent. Paradoxically, it was the DFF's failure to respond to the uprising that propelled the medium into the forefront of the Cold War battle for the German airwaves. DFF (non-)coverage of the events in Hungary brought the liabilities and political possibilities of television directly to the attention of the SED leadership. Whereas the SED's concern with television to this point had focused narrowly on the preservation and expansion of television signals within the GDR, the realization that the television program could and, indeed, must compete with the West led the SED to more aggressively develop the service. Most important, the Central Committee viewed television not as a tool to stifle information but rather as a means to disseminate its own message in competition with the West. Television's purpose was thus defined in a narrowly political way. The Hungarian uprising was a crucial turning point in the emergence of television in the GDR. The SED set out to solve the problems of 1956 with the goal of pulling television into the same kind of ideological war that radio had been fighting in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

The SED and Television before 1956

In the early 1950s, the SED had little interest in television and only peripherally exercised control over the medium. The problem of television broadcasting, much less programming, paled in comparison to the daunting tasks of establishing a new state (and building a new nation) in the ruins of the early postwar period. Scholars have come to understand that the SED could not control every aspect of East German society. In the first decade of the GDR especially, the SED faced too many challenges. The Central Committee sat through long meetings and "grappled with dozens of agenda items," addressing everything from party discipline, to foreign policy, to Party members' health issues and vacation plans.[4] Consequently there were real limits to the Central Committee's practice of, and interest in, control over television broadcasting. Instead, they held the Postal Ministry and ultimately the Council of Ministers responsible for the development of the broadcasting infrastructure, while the State Broadcasting Committee (SRK, founded in 1952) supervised the television service proper. The Central Committee exercised its power over broadcasting only by broadly defining the political agenda and depending upon politically reliable cadres to toe a Party line. The SED defined television (rather vaguely) as "a political institution like the press and radio, [which] serves the consolidation of the workers' and peasants' power and, as a result, the keeping of the peace and the creation of a unified, democratic Fatherland . . ." and left the rest to the supervision of the SRK.[5]

Indeed, by the end of 1952, most SED leaders had never seen a DFF broadcast.[6] In August of that year, just two months after the introduction of programming to the East German airwaves, the Central Committee had mandated the distribution of television receivers among members of the Politburo, the Central Committee, and other representatives of the East German state.[7] By January 1953, it had become apparent that even members of the SRK—the body responsible for the development of the program—were not watching television. In their first meeting of 1953, one member criticized television, only to discover that few of his colleagues had kept up with the emerging program. The committee ordered its members to "get to know" television. Members were to watch the program over the subsequent week and to participate in a special tour of the "Central Laboratory and Television Center."[8]

The foundation for this situation, in which the leading government bodies had only the foggiest idea of what was going on in television, had been laid in the politics of the late 1940s and early 1950s. Between 1949 and 1954, for

example, an increasingly bitter ideological struggle fought against the West led to a dramatically shifting vision of GDR state and society and much attention to achieving ideological clarity among East Germans. In this context, radio broadcasting played an important role in transmitting political discipline: by the early 1950s, the SED was directing nationwide radio campaigns, fine-tuned daily on the basis of SED analysis of the Western line of argument.[9] But television, still nascent, remained outside of this campaign.

By June 1953, events suggested that the cultural campaign to inculcate socialism was failing. The SED's program of radically reshaping the East German government, economy, and society through purges, the administrative centralization of the provinces, and economic reforms had led, by 1952, to a rising number of strikes and "strike threats" in individual plants across the Republic, as well as the number of people leaving the GDR.[10] In the spring of 1953, the Soviet leadership warned the SED to reconsider their radical program, but the SED instead pushed onward, announcing in May that production quotas would rise by 10 percent. The Soviets intervened, setting the SED on a "new course" that promised to raise the East German living standard.[11] The state allowed the re-opening of private businesses that previously had been closed, returned ration cards to East Germans who worked in West Berlin, and offered a limited amnesty to those who had fled the Republic. But they refused to let up on the production quotas, bringing the situation to a boiling point.[12] Rising unrest gave way on 16 June to mass demonstrations in Berlin. The following day thousands of people, including workers, small farmers, policemen, and the rank and file of the SED, participated in strikes in hundreds of towns across the Democratic Republic.[13] Faced with several hundred thousand protesters, the Soviet authorities declared a state of emergency in three-quarters of the GDR's districts, using tanks and troops to restore order.[14] Fifty demonstrators died and, over the next two months, ten thousand were imprisoned in connection with the demonstrations.[15]

The SED's official interpretation of the events of 17 June described the uprising as an attempted coup against the government perpetrated by a small group of organized protesters with the help of Western secret agents. Although most government officials generally accepted the official interpretation of events, the uprising still led to turmoil within the SED. Party members criticized the conditions that had given rise to the uprising as well as the government's use of violence to end the demonstrations.[16] Further, the Soviet leadership made it clear that it held the SED and their policies responsible for the uprising, and the East German leadership found itself under pressure to correct

its own mistakes. Yet, by early autumn, when party discipline had begun to recover and criticism begun to wane, the Party undertook renewed efforts to purge the Party's ranks of ideological undesirables.[17]

The political fallout of the June uprising led to a two-pronged response in broadcasting. First, authorities made concessions in the interests of appealing to and thereby politicizing a larger audience. Up to this point, authorities had defined radio as a tool that could educate (*erziehen*) and mobilize the population to specific ends, popularize the goals of the state, and develop a "national" and "socialist" consciousness. The uprising suggested that the narrowly political approach to this had failed, and they increased the amount of entertainment programming in radio.[18] On the other hand, they sought out the unreliable staff, who had ostensibly undermined broadcasting in a purge that reached into the television service. Both of these responses demonstrate a deeply instrumental view of the media: that broadcasts need only consist of clear messages crafted by politically committed staff to be unproblematically received by the audience.[19] In this view, with the technology of transmission and reliable staff already on hand at the radio service, it was only a matter of getting an audience to listen to the message.

At the Television Center, the search for unreliable staff turned up alleged agents for the Western powers. In November, the SRK claimed to have uncovered an American plot to gain information about the GDR's broadcasting facilities and launched an investigation of the Television Center. According to the head of broadcasting, Director Kurt Heiss, American agents had recruited a receptionist to explain details of the management and structure of the Television Center, to procure technical documents regarding the development of television in the GDR, and to recruit others for the same purpose. For this service, American agents paid the receptionist-informant with sixty bottles of liquor and spirits, which she used to stage drunken "orgies" (*Saufgelagen und Orgien*) with other television workers in her apartment.[20] The investigation resulted in a prison term of almost four years for the "informant" and implicated five other employees of the Television Center, including the director of the Television Center, Hermann Zilles.

Television—barely extant—had escaped the worst of the Stalinization campaigns of the late 1940s, but Heiss and Zilles had been around. In October 1949, shortly after the foundation of the Republic, the Party investigated the broadcast apparatus and removed everyone who had fled to England during the war. They accused the director of the Berlin broadcasting service, Heinz Schmidt, of "experiments in form in [his] radio work that deviated from the Party line and . . . too great a political tolerance for non-communist editors."[21]

The SED removed both Schmidt and his deputy director Bruno Goldhammer, replacing them with Kurt Heiss and Hermann Zilles respectively. The drive to establish greater ideological control of broadcasting did not end there, however. The second-highest-ranking SED member responsible for broadcasting, Director of Broadcasting Hans Mahle, introduced administrative measures in 1950 aimed at raising the "ideological clarity of all employees of broadcasting."[22] Mahle had spent the war in Moscow, where he had worked in Soviet television and, after the war began, radio broadcasting.[23] But, in 1951, Mahle himself fell under the scrutiny of party investigators and was demoted to the leadership of the television service.[24] A year later the SED denounced him again, removing him from that position and naming Zilles the director of television.[25]

Similar to Mahle, the case against Zilles seems to have arisen primarily from the SED's desire to find scapegoats and remove non-conformists within its ranks, this time in the aftermath of the June uprising. Zilles's crimes were not political but ostensibly moral. Zilles, a lifelong communist, had been imprisoned in Buchenwald with other of the SED's top leaders, including the head of Agitation and Propaganda, Hermann Axen.[26] He had been promoted through the ranks of broadcasting, holding positions under Kurt Heiss at Berlin Broadcasting, before taking up leadership at the Television Center. Yet the accusations leveled against him attacked his "liberal views" and lack of moral qualities. Zilles had displayed a "lack of moral steadfastness" and "lack of discipline"; he had engaged in the "excessive consumption of alcohol" and cultivated an "artistic atmosphere." The SRK concluded that his leadership had led to "serious mistakes, defects and weaknesses" within the Television Center.[27] They removed him and installed as head of television the chief engineer of the State Broadcasting Committee, Gerhard Probst.

The SED's quest to remove non-conformists from within its ranks had shaped the direction in which television would develop over the rest of the decade. Specifically, the SED had removed Hans Mahle, one of the few leaders who had had any real experience with television, and, in November 1953, they replaced Hermann Zilles, whose "artistic approach" to television they found unacceptable. With the installation of the engineer Gerhard Probst, the SRK felt they could now control television more firmly, but Probst's vision for television centered on developing the technological foundation of the service, fulfilling the instrumental view that if the technology were there, the message could unproblematically be transmitted. As we will see below, events in November 1956 tested this view. With Probst, television development remained fairly confined to the goal identified in the first chapter of this book: occupying airwaves. This situation persisted until 1954, when the escalation of tensions

between the two German states convinced the SED of the need to regulate the political reliability of the airwaves. The "cadres politics" (*Kaderpolitik*) of the SED had reached television, which previously had had much more freedom from this kind of manipulation than radio.[28] With this, the SRK replaced Probst and set television on a new course.

Disciplining Television: Heinz Adameck and the DFF, 1954–58

In a special meeting on 28 June 1954, the SRK appointed Heinz Adameck as new director of the service, indicating the increasing desire to inculcate ideological homogeneity within the organs of state.[29] Unlike Gerhard Probst, an engineer who had led the service since 1953 and had been most interested in developing the technological basis and infrastructure of the service, Adameck was much more ideologically inclined. He had been responsible for developing SED cadres, first in the East German province of Thuringia and later in the broadcasting apparatus as a member of the State Broadcasting Committee. He came to the service with no previous experience in media production. He was unconcerned with the creative element of television—DFF television would not be "art"—and hardly interested in entertainment programming. Instead, he narrowly adhered to the SED's official formulation of television's purpose identified above.[30] To achieve the SED's political objectives, he took on the task of politicizing and professionalizing the service: achieving political discipline within the workforce of the television center and figuring out how to make the televisual medium serve political ideology. The political effectiveness of television relied on both of these elements.

The first task of the new leadership was the attempt to build a politically reliable and professionalized staff at the Television Center. Between 1954 and 1956, Adameck established firm authority over the television workers. He took employees to task for relatively minor infractions such as tardiness.[31] Television committee meetings took on a more political tone as Adameck elicited explicit political statements from committee members.[32] But most important was his use of "personnel politics," introducing politically reliable staffers to buttress the regular workforce. An "Adameck group"—people the State Broadcasting Committee (SRK) had assigned to the service at the same time as Adameck, including Werner Fehlig, Willi Zahlbaum, Dieter Glatzer, and Ursula Priess, along with some ten other members of the SRK—composed the core of this new workforce.[33] These people took up key positions in the service in newly created positions or by replacing existing employees. In January 1955, for example, Adameck censured the head of the personnel department or per-

forming "flawed work."[34] Within two months, Ursula Priess had taken the discredited manager's place.[35]

While Adameck introduced seasoned and reliable SED members in hopes of strengthening the political reliability of the service, he also sought to raise the political level of other television workers. He enthusiastically implemented "state-political training" that he, as a member of the SRK, had first mandated for radio employees in January 1953 (and not unlike the measures Mahle had introduced into broadcasting in 1949).[36] Every fourteen days, selected television workers received training to learn about the GDR and improve their ability to make clear and convincing arguments to the public on behalf of the state, such as explaining the measures taken by the *Volkskammer* (People's Chamber of government).[37] Topics included the basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism and lessons on the state machinery of the GDR, along with more specific themes such as "The Alliance of the working class with the class of working farmers in the GDR" or "The resurrection of reactionary, aggressive (*volksfeindlich*) militarism—a mortal danger for the people of Europe."[38]

Finding—or training—staff that were both politically reliable and creatively talented posed another problem. There was considerable departmental infighting over qualified creative staff. To address this, the Television Committee tried to streamline television operations by establishing ground rules governing all television workers, including actors, writers, directors, and cameramen. They introduced standardized contractual obligations and established a catalogue of "independent contractors" from which the service could draw. The service had an especially hard time hiring actors. It had to compete with the Berlin theater scene, DEFA productions, and radio plays, all of which could offer actors both a higher profile and higher pay rates. Standardization of pay rates for actors across the arts, introduced first in 1958, both reflected the increasingly important role of television in the cultural life of the GDR and began to ameliorate television's hiring problems, but finding enough professionally qualified and reliable workers continued to be a problem into the 1960s. As was the case in the Postal Ministry, the television service had a difficult time retaining technical workers. In particular, low-paid, overworked cameramen began leaving for the West in the late 1950s, complicating television's technical problems with the government's fears of people fleeing the Republic (*Republikflucht*).[39]

While Adameck strengthened the political and professional reliability of the workforce, he tried to do the same for the television program. He made structural changes to the service, centralizing the artistic, organizational, and especially political responsibility for the program in a new department of pro-

gramming. This department augmented the existing offices of editorial management (*Chefredaktion*) and transmission management (*Sendeleitung*), instituted by the Television Committee under Probst. The new department played a political and professional role, taking responsibility for the daily "program flow"—coordinating everything that passed over the television airwaves in the course of a program day. The department also included an administrator responsible for "analyzing the daily program from the political, organizational and artistic standpoint . . ." and reporting the results to the program management office.[40]

The creation of this new office reflects that the political reliability of the service hinged upon the regular and professionalized operation of television as a medium of programming. Indeed, one of the DFF's persistent problems was producing enough programming to fill the schedule. The DFF created a film library in 1954 in which material created or otherwise owned by the service could be catalogued and therefore more efficiently reused.[41] The service tried to negotiate film-sharing agreements with DEFA, which loaned visual material, equipment, and studios only reluctantly before 1958. It began seeking film exchange agreements with the Soviet Union, other socialist countries, and West Germany.[42] In 1957 Adameck required all television workers who traveled abroad to carry cameras in order to take pictures that could be used as file photos for the service.[43] But the problem of finding or creating enough programming to fill the schedule persisted throughout the life of the television service.

Between 1954 and 1956, Adameck tried to shape the DFF to fulfill an explicitly political task. He established political discipline among the workers and took steps to ensure a politically and professionally reliable program. Yet the transformation remained incomplete. In November 1956 the television service caught the attention of the Central Committee when it failed to live up to the achievements of the West. Thereafter, Adameck had allies in high places that increasingly believed in the power of television to influence political affairs and began to throw their weight behind developing the service.

Programming Live Events: Broadcasting Cortina d'Ampezzo and Hungary

In the year preceding the Hungarian uprising, the television service underwent a number of transformations. In January 1956, for example, the television service replaced the "test program" of the early 1950s with its "regular program,"

the official beginning of television service in the GDR. This official program did not represent a conceptual break with the experimental "test-program."[44] The most decisive change had nothing to do with official pronouncements: it was the acquisition of technology that allowed the DFF to broadcast from outside the studio. In November 1955, the GDR imported a television transmission truck, thus opening up a whole new world—the out-of-doors—and introducing a whole new set of conceptual and practical problems to television coverage in East Germany. Liberated from the studio, East German television could now begin to fulfill the promise of television as a medium that could offer the extraordinary and unmediated experience of witnessing social, cultural, and political transformations unfold. After November 1955, broadcasts from sports fields, entertainment halls, chambers of government, and other locations outside the studio supplemented studio productions.

With new possibilities came new challenges. These came into sharp relief during DFF television coverage of the 1956 winter Olympic Games in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy. These were the first Olympic Games to be televised. They also represented a milestone in the history of the Cold War: East and West Germany still competed as part of a pan-German team, and it was the first winter games in which the Soviet Union took part. Soviet athletes swept the standings, dominating speed-skating events, winning the hockey tournament, and breaking the Scandinavian stranglehold over cross-country skiing. With these performances, Soviet athletes began to emerge as dominant competitors in world sports; their success helped to push the Olympic Games to become another symbolic battleground of the Cold War.[45] This Olympics was also the first live, international event covered by the DFF and exemplified the many remaining obstacles to the service's ability to effectively transmit live events.

The case of Olympic reportage gives us a good idea of what we could expect of the DFF in November 1956, since it took place only nine months before the Hungarian uprising. First, it is important to remember that East Germans had acquired the necessary technology to broadcast outside of the studio just three months before, and they were still experimenting with broadcasting outside the confined (and controllable) conditions of the studio.[46] Also, the DFF had not been preparing for such a task and was caught off-balance when the SRK made the last-minute decision to broadcast coverage of the Games. Television workers scrambled to get ready for the events. They prepared technical equipment, completed background research, and acquired travel permits for DFF staff to enter Italy. One reporter covered the events on location, and he learned of his assignment just days before the Games. Coverage of the Games proper was similarly impromptu. There was little communication between

television producers working different shifts, so the broadcasts followed no particular protocol, and, more important, no one learned from anyone else's mistakes.[47] Finally, the DFF's Olympic coverage was dependent on the live feed provided by Italian television, which broadcast both live telecast and filmed newsreel coverage of the sporting events, essentially free of charge, to any other national service that wished to use it.[48]

Assessing the successes and failures of the coverage after the Games, the DFF drew several important lessons. The DFF considered it a failure that 85 percent of their Olympic commentary was broadcast not from Cortina d'Ampezzo but rather from the studio in Berlin.[49] They feared that their coverage had lacked the capacity for spontaneity that could have capitalized on socialist successes. For example, Soviet success at the Games had provided the perfect opportunity to illustrate the superiority of socialism over capitalism. Yet DFF coverage had not fulfilled the ideological potential of this success, in part because East German commentary had relied to a great extent upon information acquired from West German (radio) broadcasters "whose political message stands in contradiction to our own."[50] The DFF announcer often failed to respond to gaps in coverage that occurred through the failure of pictures or sound, leaving viewers to wonder what had happened. This was significant enough because it disrupted the broadcast; more important, such mistakes potentially repelled German viewers from East German television, thus making it more difficult for the DFF to build an audience. This was especially critical in the case of the Olympic coverage because, in the estimation of DFF television workers, television coverage of sporting events offered one of their best opportunities to build a pan-German audience.[51] Indeed, American authorities noted that many West Germans had watched the Games over the East German channel, particularly in restaurants and beer halls in Bavaria.[52] DFF workers had to be prepared to make spur-of-the-moment decisions in evaluating, interpreting, and broadcasting the images coming at them. These were all skills that could be mobilized in a moment of political crisis, but they were not to be learned before November.

The DFF, the SED, and the Hungarian Uprising, November 1956

Before 1956, the SED was concerned almost exclusively with East German radio broadcasting, but the escalation of Cold War tensions pushed the Party to see television in a new light. After Stalin's death in 1953 some countries in the Soviet sphere of influence began to explore limited liberalization. Then, in February 1956, Khrushchev gave his "Secret Speech" detailing and denounc-

ing Stalin's crimes against socialism, unleashing a wave of demonstrations especially in Poland and Hungary. By November, the situation in Hungary escalated to the point that the Soviets intervened to restore order. The East German authorities, who had weathered their own crisis of legitimacy (though for different reasons), introduced measures intended to pacify East Germans, including a shorter forty-five-hour workweek, a bonus system, and increases to workers' pensions.[53] They supported the Warsaw Pact decision to put down the uprising and mobilized the broadcasting apparatus in support of the intervention as well. Yet, although the uprising was dramatic and visual, the DFF barely registered the events. This cannot be understood as a deliberate, political decision to play down the uprising; in the SED's view, it was a blunder of massive proportions. The SED investigated the roots of this failure into 1957 and took steps to "fix" television, securing the transmission of politically reliable messages by developing transmission technology and disciplining staff.

Between 1953 and 1956 the Soviets undertook a number of measures that allowed limited liberalization in the eastern bloc. Soviet leaders pursued rapprochement with western European powers and the United States, sought to improve relations with Yugoslavia, and allowed the emergence of a few reform communist leaders. The Soviets installed Imre Nagy in place of Hungary's "blood-soaked" leader Rakosi—dubbed "Asshead" by Hungarians.[54] In 1955, Rakosi engineered a plot to sideline Nagy, but, during the uprising in October 1956, Nagy was returned to the prime minister's role by popular demand. By this time, Hungarians were demanding full national sovereignty, including the withdrawal of Soviet troops and neutral status for the country in international politics. Many sought a reformed socialism; some called for Western-style parliamentary democracy. Although a reformer, Nagy was a committed socialist. After his appointment on 24 October, he sought to manage the increasingly radical demands of the population within the geopolitical realities of Soviet foreign policy, working behind the scenes to find a way to end the crisis without Soviet intervention. With Soviet invasion imminent, he made a "last-ditch effort to rescue the Revolution" by announcing that Hungary would withdraw from the Warsaw Pact.[55] On 4 November, Soviet tanks arrived to restore order.

The Hungarian uprising was a moment of crisis for the East German government. Within the ranks of the SED some had hoped for political and social liberalization, even openly calling for it.[56] But the Soviet invasion of Hungary only reinforced the reservations of Stalinist SED leaders such as Ulbricht. On 5 November, the day after the Soviets arrived in Budapest, the East German Central Committee met to discuss how to respond to the uprising. They explained it as an attempted counter-revolutionary coup against the democratic

forces of Hungarian socialism and prepared to go on the offensive to disseminate this interpretation of events among as many East Germans as possible. They directed local party organizations to undertake factory assemblies to "express solidarity for the revolutionary worker and peasant government in Hungary" and to reinforce the message that "the help of the Soviet troops, which occurred at the wish of the government, serves to hinder the white [counterrevolutionary] Terror and guarantee peace and democratic progress."[57]

The 5 November meeting also marked the Central Committee's first explicit discussion of television programming since the DFF had gone on the air in June 1952. Television was a medium of current events: here was an explosive, topical event perfect for broadcast, yet the DFF had barely registered it. More important, DFF coverage had "lagged behind the reportage of the Western broadcasters" in both pictures and commentary. Television coverage had focused not on dynamic events on the streets of Hungary but instead on a meeting of the People's Chamber (which would have been much more static and even boring). Yet even that "had not been broadcast correctly." Coverage had skipped over the most important speeches, detailing counterrevolutionary connections between West German remilitarization and imperialist aggression in Egypt, in favor of an excerpt about German reunification. Later, the DFF had broadcast a roundtable discussion with Karl-Eduard von Schnitzler, East German television's most infamous political commentator, which also had been completely unsatisfactory, despite the fact that "Comrade Schnitzler had been apprised of the significance of this broadcast."[58]

This discussion makes clear that the Central Committee had a specific set of expectations for television and believed it was simply not cooperating with that agenda. They did not yet understand what was required to exploit that topicality in the way that they hoped to see on 4 November. It had not been long since the DFF had acquired the ability to harness effectively the characteristics of topicality and immediacy, and their first forays into televising live events outside the studio had been fraught with difficulties. As the case of the Olympic coverage demonstrated, television producers had to operate within a particular, and limited, set of conditions. Certainly, this was a political problem—they had to figure out how to interpret the events—but first they had to get pictures! At the time the service neither had its own correspondent in the country nor could rely on reports from Hungarian broadcasters. There were no television relay stations to provide live images from Hungary as there had been for the Olympic coverage. Film exchange agreements with socialist countries were just starting to bear fruit, though by this time Hungarian broadcasters had not produced much programming.[59] And the events in Hungary took the DFF

by surprise: they erupted quickly, and Eastern European revolts did not have a place in the official program of the SED. Faced with uncertainty, television producers chose the People's Chamber clip because it *fulfilled* the agitation plan, which mandated that the DFF work toward German reunification.

While the coverage of the revolt exposed the technical and ideological weaknesses of the television service, it also revealed the potential strength of the televisual medium. Television's failure to address the Hungarian uprising "properly" had proven that the medium of television could play an important role—positively or negatively—in the SED's agitation campaigns. This important case does not bear out popular and scholarly conviction that, above all, the SED wanted to maintain tight control of information and, in effect, hide the "truth." In this case, the East German Central Committee clearly had much confidence in the truth power of live television. They were not afraid to broadcast topical pictures with their own argumentation. What they did fear was the possibility that the only televisual images people would see would represent the point of view of the imperialist West. Only by sending images across television screens could they exploit the power and appeal of the televisual image to tell their side of the story.

In the aftermath of the uprising, the Central Committee began to supervise the development of television technology more closely, a task that previously had been the province of the Council of Ministers, while pledging to devote more resources, including valuable Western currency, to its development.[60] They commissioned a report to determine what exactly had hindered the immediacy of television's coverage.[61] Many similar reports had been compiled over the course of the 1950s, detailing with brutal honesty the technical problems facing the television service.[62] Then they pursued a program of intensifying topicality in programming, on the one hand, and expanding television's audience, on the other. By early 1957, the Radio and Television Department of the Postal Ministry had begun to build television cameras and other equipment for television studios and planned to build new radio and television studios in Leipzig.[63] They mandated domestic manufacturers to increase the production of affordable receivers for the public.[64] But they still could not produce direct-transmission technology and had to import two more broadcast trucks to meet this goal.[65] Construction of the relay stations and other technology needed for live broadcasts from other socialist countries remained in the planning phase.[66] Indeed, the problem of resources plagued the GDR, not least because it had to compete with West Germany. In 1957 the SRK warned the Politburo about dwindling allocations in the Second Five-Year Plan (1956–60) and asserted that if the television service continued at the current rate of development, by

1960 it "would experience not only a relative decline compared with West Germany, but it is also not certain that the current capacity of television could be maintained."[67]

Authorities turned from the technological foundation of the service to assess the morale of broadcasting personnel. The Postal Ministry extolled its workers, claiming the incident had shown that broadcasting as an instrument of Agitation and Propaganda was securely in the hands of the working class.[68] Behind the scenes, of course, authorities were well aware that problems such as *Republikflucht* were hampering the development of television technology. Some workers had not received adequate training, due to high rates of "turnover."[69] At the television service, though, there were enough political inconsistencies that Adameck's own leadership came under scrutiny.[70] DFF technicians often privileged their professional tasks over important political questions. Some deliberately avoided political arguments, while others more undertook more "heated discussion," although from the wrong perspective, as in the case of the Television Center's fire brigade.[71] "Negative political opinions" arose from dissatisfaction with working conditions at the Center. Younger staff in particular complained of overwork and schedules that demanded they work an excessive number of overtime hours.[72] Here, too, *Republikflucht* hurt the program. These problems were part of a wider sense of dissatisfaction, particularly among young technical workers across the GDR, which resulted in the large numbers of refugees that left for the West over the course of the 1950s.[73]

More difficult than the politics and the bread-and-butter issues of the DFF's technicians were the challenges coming from the staff involved in programming. They criticized post-intervention television reports, noting, for example, that Yugoslavian President Josip Broz Tito's speech on the uprising had not been broadcast in its entirety, but rather excerpted.[74] For the Television Committee this meant that television staff were displaying a distressingly "insufficient knowledge of [. . .] socialist journalism," and it dispatched department heads to undertake detailed discussions regarding the "principles of socialist journalism, criticism and self-criticism, and the relationship between truth and *Aktualität [topicality, immediacy]*." For the Television Committee and, ultimately, the SED, though, excerpting the speech was an editorial choice taken to interpret and report the event properly—in other words, to try to extract truth from topical pictures. Just like the 4 November broadcast, Tito's speech represented an opportunity to win "hearts and minds," using television to tell their side of the story. In the months after the uprising, the SED's vision of a counterrevolutionary putsch attempt *was* the "truth" of the uprising. In a meeting on 5 December 1956, for example, the Television Committee outlined

the "talking points" (*Wochenargumentation*) to be followed in television coverage. On the matter of Hungary, the Committee directed DFF cameramen to focus on depictions of "the normalization of life," "the relationships of Soviet soldiers with Hungarian citizens," "senseless terrorist destruction," and "the return of refugees." Through these pictures, the DFF could expose the inconsistencies of counterpropaganda from the West.[75]

Thus, in the autumn of 1956, the SED discovered the importance of television just as they embarked on a new ideological offensive to prove the superiority of socialism, competing with the West for the "hearts and minds" of East Germans. Significantly, the SED believed that, given the right argumentation and an effective television service, this was a competition they could win.

Television and Shifting Cultural Policy after the Hungarian Uprising

The events of 1956 changed the SED's approach to both building socialism in the GDR and television's role in that effort. In 1953, violent demonstrations against the Party's hard line had won some limited concessions for the people that even touched radio broadcasting, and, in early 1956, a modest thaw introduced some space for liberalization as well. More important, both conflicts had demonstrated to the SED that their efforts to achieve both greater political participation and socialist conviction were not showing the desired results. At its first meeting since the cessation of protests in Hungary, in late January 1957, the Party leadership signaled a change of course. The SED took a harder line, turning away from the West and declaring that the GDR belonged firmly within the "socialist camp." They rejected further social or political liberalization, and called for greater *Parteilichkeit* (partisanship) among Party members.[76] As the SED folded the television service more closely into the apparatus of agitation, this program, as well as their vision of television as a medium of topicality and political argumentation, were the two principles guiding the television program as it came to take the shape it would have into the 1960s.

The contours of the SED's new agitation campaign took shape over the course of 1957. In the cultural sphere, there was some room for maneuvering. At the Writer's Congress of January 1956, for example, speakers had challenged the boundaries of cultural expression beyond Stalinist socialist realism, setting the stage for literary experimentation.[77] The SED leadership did not reject this completely out of hand, but rather called for artists to "make use of the wealth of revolutionary traditions from the workers movement in develop-

ing an interesting cultural life."[78] In the longer history of cultural policy, this could be seen as a forward step. In the early GDR, just as in the revolutionary Soviet Union, the Party had had to decide on what basis to reconstruct a German socialist culture. Just as Lenin had called upon the classical Russian tradition exemplified by Tolstoy, among others, the SED had chosen to ground the GDR's socialist culture in the so-called *Kulturerbe* of the German past: the classical German heritage, represented by German cultural leading lights such as Goethe and Thomas Mann.[79] In 1951 this had become Party policy, when, in the first foray into the "modernism debate" since the foundation of the Republic, they had called upon artists to preserve the classical heritage, reject "avant-garde tendencies," and create art with "positive heroes" and "national sentiments."[80] In 1957 the SED renewed this mandate, but artists, particularly in theater, began to experiment with the forms and themes of the socialist heritage as well.[81]

At the Fifth Party Congress of 1958, the Party line emerged as a fully developed program for the creation of a socialist national culture and the cultivation of socialist citizens.[82] The "construction of socialism" was the main focus of the conference. The SED viewed this as primarily an economic problem—transform the economic foundation of society, and social transformation will follow—and called for East German production to "overtake" and "outstrip" the West German economy by the early 1960s.[83] But the Party was impatient and also concluded that "the socialist 'education' of the people [was] the key to solving the upcoming economic and political tasks."[84] They called for unification of entertainment and culture, which should be "put into service for the development of socialist consciousness."[85] Television, for the first time, officially took its place alongside film, theater, and radio as a "new, significant political-cultural factor of our lives."[86] (In April 1959, the SED went further, predicting that television's influence would overtake radio and all other media in the foreseeable future.)[87] Significantly, though, the SED still thought about this in terms of the technology and not the medium, identifying the "generously expanded television transmission network" and not reception—much less programming—as the source of its power.[88]

By 1958, political upheaval and shifting political priorities led to a new mandate for the television service. Now, television would "more aggressively and connected to life (*lebensverbundener*) intervene in the revolutionary process of socialist transformation" of East German social life, and second, "push back the reactionary influence of West German broadcasting and win West German audiences" for East German television.[89] In this context the DFF re-evaluated the programming they had been developing since 1954, and the re-

ports resulting from intensive research suggested the DFF's emerging priorities. They "discovered" that so-called culture programming, intended to introduce East Germans to important cultural figures and works of art, poetry, and literature, had achieved little success in effectively catching viewers' attention or being politically valuable.[90] In November 1957 there were attempts to revive the genre, along with admonitions that "in every case the treatment of the subject must be made to come alive, *even visually*."[91] Youth programming had shown "no resounding success as yet."[92] The department of Dramatic Arts, which broadcast directly from Berlin theaters and developed (medium-specific) television plays, had produced some valuable "humanistic and progressive works," but entertainment programming (*Unterhaltung*) was inconsistent. The DFF reported, "Difficulties in the area of entertainment and satire across the Republic are reflected also in the television program. As yet we have not succeeded, either in cooperation with radio or with existing *Kabarett*, to make shows that are a sharp weapon in the battle against the enemies of socialism."[93]

The DFF, then, was particularly concerned about entertainment programming, especially its unpredictability and finding the delicate balance between humor, taste, and political reliability. The dilemma, as expressed by head of the Broadcasting Committee Werner Ley, was that "the entertainment department must really support overtly political shows. Under no circumstances can one tear apart that which the political shows are trying to make clear, through lazy and effectively antagonistic jokes. Satire and irony must strike the opponent, the political enemy in the West, militarism, and help the people of our Republic to differentiate between friend and foe."[94] There *were* programs that were both audience hits and political success stories, and exemplify the kinds of concessions the DFF would soon have to make in other parts of the program in order to produce a popularly appealing, politically effective program. East German audiences loved the musical variety show "*Your request, please*," for example, which aired interviews with East German workers about their lives, families, and jobs, followed by the interviewee's musical request. At the very least, the musical requests appealed to viewers, while the service could fit in some agitation by means of the interviews, which focused on the life of the East German worker.[95] They would have to find similar ways to reach out to the elusive youth audience.

The DFF's experiences producing live programming in 1956 stood them in good stead to exploit new possibilities in the search for new entertaining, youthful, politically pointed programs—and more of them. Sports programming, a major draw for East German youth (and, reportedly, parts of the West German audience), exploded after 1958, rising from just twenty-three hours broadcast in

1955 to 455 in 1960 (or from about three minutes a day to just over an hour a day, on average; see table 1).[96] By 1958 broadcasts from the East German theaters, culture houses, festivals, and other locations outside of the studio complemented studio productions. The planned construction of new broadcasting facilities in Leipzig and, later, Dresden, Rostock, and Halle promised to allow further expansion of television into the provinces of the GDR.[97] This allowed the emergence of "educational" programming (*Bildung*), in programs such as *Thinking Man, Creative Man*, and *Our Village Academy*.[98] The latter, broadcast for an hour early Sunday afternoons, presented information on new developments in agriculture, vegetable production, and agricultural machinery.[99] Such education programs became an important component of the program in the early 1960s, becoming the foundation of a new "television University."[100]

Finally, the experiences of 1956 had demonstrated the political value of televisual immediacy, and the new political direction mandated the incorporation of more, explicitly political, current events reporting, and topical themes.[101] Consequently, the DFF expanded so-called current-political (*aktuell-politisch*) programming in new shows aimed at exploring topical issues such as the anti-imperialist struggle in Africa and the Middle East and coverage of class struggle in the "NATO countries."[102] The "nightly" news program *Current Camera*, on the air in one form or another since 1952, expanded in terms of themes and material, and as a component of the overall television schedule.[103] Initially comprised of still pictures with voiceover commentary, *Current Camera* began to look very much like the *Eyewitness* (*Augenzeuge*) newsreels projected in

TABLE 1. DFF Programming by Type, 1955–60

Type of Show	Hours 1955	Percent of Program 1955	Hours 1960	Percent of Program 1960
Television drama and feature films	362	46.1	690	22.9
Entertainment	129	16.4	491	16.3
Television journalism	113	14.4	390	13.0
Political shows	74	9.4	476	15.8
Children's shows	47	6.0	267	8.9
Sport	23	2.9	455	15.1
Youth programming	11	1.4	63	2.1
Bildung	n/a	n/a	89	3.0
Other	27	3.4	86	2.9
Total	786	100	3007	100

Sources: Hoff in Hickethier, *Geschichte*, 192, 186, and *Statistisches Jahrbuch der DDR*, (Berlin: Deutscher Zentralverlag, 1970). See also Schubert and Stiehler's work on the dramatic shift toward "information" programming in Schubert and Stiehler, "Programmentwicklung," 25–63.

East German theaters after the introduction of regular filmed segments in 1954.[104] This format survived into the early 1960s, when it was gradually supplanted by a format more familiar to the late twentieth-century audience: increasingly, news anchor Klaus Feldmann read the news while seated behind a desk, with still pictures situating the story geographically (images of New York or London, for example) or thematically (images of newspaper headlines).[105] In 1958 it began to include more topical, short subject, coverage more often—five nights a week (excluding Monday and Friday), up from four in 1955—with plans to produce deeper, investigative reportage as well.[106] Moreover, the television service pledged to illustrate more vividly the advance of socialism across the world, and not just in reports of economic progress. Instead, the DFF would depict the lives of real, socialist people. Newly conceived, so-called travel reporting (*Reisereportage*) showed viewers life in other communist countries, with shows such as *On the Streets of Stalingrad* or *From the Riches of the Karakum Desert*. Such programs sought to demonstrate the growth of the global socialist camp "in an enthralling, convincing way." Programmers believed such shows could narratively link the anti-imperialist independence struggles of the Middle Eastern and African states with the success and peaceful nature of European socialism and, at the same time, reveal the "aggressive character" of NATO and the United States.[107]

After 1958, the program underwent a wider shift away from short, experimental formats toward longer, recurring shows that could function as program anchors. New and popular series did not come from the didactic department of culture programming. Instead, they were entertaining series produced by Television Drama, the Department of Entertainment, and even the Department of Children's Television. Series such as the children's program *Our Little Sandman* (*Unsere Sandmännchen*) or the crime thriller *Blue Light* (*Blaulicht*) emerged in 1958 and 1959 and became long-running and well-loved components of the schedule.

Conclusion

Cold War conflict was instrumental in shaping the television service over the course of the 1950s, but it was the crisis of 1956 that made clear television's potential as an important political force in the GDR. Television was understood widely as a medium of topicality and visual simultaneity. The Olympic Games provided evidence of what was possible just months after the DFF acquired the technology to broadcast live outside of the studio. Nine months later, the Hun-

garian uprising was an unexpected opportunity to mobilize topicality in the service of socialism. Yet the DFF remained silent during the November uprising, broadcasting neither pictures from Budapest nor commentary on the events. Their silence drew the ire of the Central Committee for which the incident had proven the potential power of the medium. As a result of the Hungarian uprising, the SED took notice of television, defined a narrower, instrumental vision of its political purpose, and followed its development more closely. The SED cast television as both a defensive and offensive tool in the war against the West. Television programming not only reflected socialist transformation but could also inspire East Germans to participate. Television could distract viewers—the Party could not fulfill its goal of building socialism if audiences were watching West German broadcasting—but the SED hoped it could win viewers on both sides of the border to the cause of building socialist consciousness. Between 1956 and 1958 the SED signaled a new direction for cultural policy and, in response, the DFF introduced new programming in the effort to inculcate socialist values—or at least demonize those of the bourgeois variety. Television was beginning to come into its own—accepted as a legitimate and potentially powerful ideological force by the SED at the same time as East Germans were beginning to accept it into their living rooms.

Chapter 4

Mediating the Berlin Wall: Television in August 1961

In July 1961, the DFF presented the East German television audience with the case of five East Germans arrested for economic espionage against the GDR. The group appeared before the criminal court, accused of gathering information on members of the East German intelligentsia and convincing them by means of blackmail, or even just false promises, to leave the GDR for the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). The program described the ringleader of the scheme, Heinz Adamo, as a man of some privilege, with his own car and a monthly income of about 1,300 DM. Adamo revealed how West German agents had recruited him while he had been on a student exchange trip in West Berlin. He divulged further that the "East Bureaus" of the West German political parties—from the left-wing Social Democrats and the federation of German trade unions, to the more conservative Christian Democrats and the liberal Free Democratic Party—supported the entire operation, the purpose of which was to unleash chaos among both the intelligentsia and the people so as to undermine the East German economy.

Fact, or is this fiction? From a post–Cold War Western perspective, the story is, at best, a convenient plot for a Cold War crime thriller; at worst, perhaps the "propaganda" of an authoritarian regime. In fact, the above episode was part of a special report on the problem of espionage and "people-trafficking" of the nightly news program *Current Camera* broadcast on 27 July 1961, less than three weeks before the construction of the Berlin Wall. Yet it also perpetuated for the audience a narrative familiarized by East German crime thrillers and other aspects of the television schedule since at least 1958.

The *Current Camera* report demonstrates just how porous the boundaries between "political" and "entertainment" programming were. As Raymond Williams has shown, the significance of the television program lies not in the definition of specific genres or formats but rather in the flow of the entire

schedule: programming, which "is an apparently disjointed sequence of items . . . is guided by a remarkably consistent set of cultural relationships, the flow of consumable reports and products."[1] Rather than approaching "news" programming as a discrete entity, we can only understand it within the larger framework of the television schedule. To dismiss the Adamo program described above as far-fetched "propaganda" would be to misunderstand the significance of television broadcasting: we should not be asking whether or how the SED "warped" television to inculcate their ideas in the audience, but rather try to understand the ways in which television as a new and powerful medium was able to visualize the social, political, and economic ideology of the GDR and shape the worldviews of Germans living there. How did television mediate historical events and help to construct the interpretive framework within which East Germans (and others) understood the turbulent political world in which they lived?

This is particularly significant because what we understand as the "Cold War" was not just a series of events set off by territorial conflicts with political and diplomatic roots and consequences. Rather it was increasingly comprised of a set of narratives mediated and disseminated in part by television broadcasting. Within these narratives there is an important relationship between fact and fiction.

This chapter examines ways in which television programming—in particular crime thrillers and news reports—normalized East Germans' everyday experiences during the Second Berlin Crisis (1958–61) and provided an interpretive framework within which they could explain the crisis of August 1961. Between 1958 and 1961, DFF television grew to become a much more significant part of East Germans' daily lives, in part because of the emergence of a regular, differentiated schedule. It was at this time that the DFF introduced some beloved, long-running shows. Current events, and the diplomatic and political skirmishes of the Second Berlin Crisis in particular, became central, not only to programming defined by its focus on topical events, but to other elements of the schedule as well. In particular, the crime thriller series *Blue Light* (*Blaulicht*) was an especially popular component of the DFF schedule that grappled with the fundamental problems central to the Second Berlin Crisis. When, by mid-July 1961, the East German press, and *Current Camera* in particular, stepped up the campaign against "people-smugglers," "border-crossers," and flight from the Republic (*Menschenhändler*, *Grenzgänger*, and *Republikflucht*), they mobilized a language that audiences had already familiarized themselves with through the narratives of television crime thrillers since at least 1959.

The Program in East German Daily Life during the Second Berlin Crisis

During the period of the Second Berlin Crisis, television became an important component of the ideological war waged over the German-German airwaves. This was especially the case after the construction of the Berlin Wall, when television became one of the few ways in which most East Germans could "visit" the other side of the border. By 1958, television workers had overcome many of the structural problems they had faced in earlier years. The acquisition of more cameras and direct transmission equipment, as well as the planned construction of regional studios, ensured a stable supply of programming. Construction of a network of major and minor transmitting towers, especially in the southwest corner of the Republic, was nearing completion.[2] A shift in the frequencies used to transmit East German television signals, undertaken in 1957, not only had expanded the viewing area but also put an end to the shadowy images of West German, Polish, and Czechoslovakian shows superimposed on the East German program.[3] As a result, most East Germans and many West Germans who owned television sets could now receive East German television signals and enjoyed improved reception.

Rising viewership was also encouraged by the increasing availability of programming from broadcasters in both East and West.[4] DFF broadcasts grew from an average of seven to nine hours a day between 1959 and 1961.[5] Primetime programming remained the cornerstone of the schedule but was supplemented by daytime programming, including children's shows during the morning and afternoon hours and, after 8 October 1958, a midday program for shift workers that repeated parts of the previous evening's schedule. As a result, increasing numbers of East Germans were purchasing television sets. Television ownership in the GDR climbed as quickly as in West Germany between 1958 and 1961. By 1960, West Germans had licensed over three million sets, while there were a million sets in East German homes, a country with perhaps a third of the West German population.

By 1958, the television program had also begun to take the shape it would have throughout the 1960s. With a deeper schedule, a wider variety of (more popular) programming, and an increasing availability of receivers, television reached into viewers' everyday lives.[6] The rise of television reception, which contributed to the transformation of the rhythms of daily life across the industrialized Western world, represented no less of a transformation in the lives of the East German audience. By no means did television accomplish this on its own—economic expansion, rising disposable income, automobile sales, and the

transformation of political life were other important factors transforming everyday life across the West. In the United States, television helped to make postwar suburbanization possible, allowing people to move away from the centers of commerce and community and yet still be "connected" to the world.[7] Just as television allowed Americans to inhabit the circumscribed world of the suburbs (home, the commute, and the workplace), it allowed the world of East Germans to become more circumscribed. The construction of the Berlin Wall limited East Germans to the world of the GDR and, for some, points east. Yet television widened this diminishing world, through programming from exotic places around the world and entertainment that "could seemingly bridge [long] distances . . . (with) reports from a number of cities, domestic and international *at a time*, the contacts with Rotterdam, to the Antarctic-station. . . ."[8] The juxaposition of the "remote" and "home" on television screens allowed the expansion of the East German mental world beyond its relative physical confinement.[9]

The scheduling of the DFF program both reflected such social change and played a role in redefining everyday life in the GDR. Programmers carefully scheduled for their growing audience. For example, the East German workday began and ended relatively early; so too did the television program. The television weekend began on Saturday evening, since most viewers worked six days a week until 1965.[10] The DFF broadcast extravagant variety entertainment shows with live audiences after 8:00 p.m. on Saturdays. It programmed more sedate theatrical productions, either DFF productions or broadcasts directly from Berlin theaters, on Sunday evenings.[11] On Thursdays, television addressed the youth audience. During the week, the greatest concentration of explicitly political programming appeared on Wednesday evenings, often followed by (or sandwiched between) game shows or popular music programs. The latter were well-liked television genres in the GDR that could draw viewers to the more conventionally political shows. *The Black Channel* (*Schwarzer Kanal*) also generally appeared on Wednesdays, but in the late evening, after many East Germans had already gone to bed. Its intended audience—Germans living in the West, not in the GDR—determined its place in the schedule.[12] The DFF did not broadcast on Mondays before the late 1950s, using that time instead for practice and training. But, in 1958, a new prime-time schedule of so-called women's programming followed by repeats of old films, such as *The Blue Angel*, *Girls in Uniform*, and *Battleship Potemkin*, began.

Between 1958 and 1960 the DFF began to experiment with the schedule to achieve certain goals. For most of the 1950s, a guiding principle of the program had been to avoid scheduling against the rhythms of political life in the GDR. For example, the television-free Monday evening allowed DFF staff

some time to prepare for the week's program, but it also meant that television would not distract East Germans from going to Party and union meetings and events. The introduction of Monday evening programming specifically for women, then, reflected and ultimately reinforced a gendered view of East German political life. Media historian Peter Hoff argues that primarily men attended Party events;[13] programming for women in this way could only have reinforced that perception. Television historian Claudia Dittmar argues that the introduction of Monday evening programming was in fact an attempt to attract the West German audience.[14] Likewise, media scholar Thomas Wilke argues that DFF "women's programming" was intended for women viewers in the West as well. Certainly, West Germans often tuned in to watch old feature films, which featured a mode of address familiar to Western audiences, and it fit the mandate to try harder to draw Western audiences to the program. But the programming the DFF made for women reproduced a very different view of the world that almost certainly would have been alienating to many in the Western audience. By the early 1960s much of "women's programming" sought to attract women into the workforce and transform gender relations enough to make that happen. At the same time, the DFF generally avoided regularly scheduled programming and was suspicious of the serial form in particular. Such programming was, of course, the cornerstone of the American television schedule, where broadcasters *depended* on regularly recurring programming to draw audiences to the set in order to sell advertising. DFF director Heinz Adameck feared that regularly scheduled programming would discourage people from going to party rallies or from engaging in other "important social tasks."[15] For this reason, they broadcast episodes of serial programming irregularly, on different nights of the week or sometimes a month apart (not weekly), for example.

Only a few programs were broadcast so regularly that they became cornerstones of the schedule—and East Germans' evenings—by appearing almost every evening. One such program was the children's bedtime program *Our Little Sandman*, introduced to the airwaves on 8 October 1958. The Sandman became one of the most popular and well-loved characters on East German television, quickly building a loyal East German audience, and it was one of the few programs that could reliably draw a Western audience as well.[16] The animated Sandman arrived just before 7:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday to offer his goodnight wishes to German children. He whisked children away on exotic adventures, before sending them off to bed with a puff of sand. Along the way he met other fairy tale figures and performed fantastic feats, like traveling to the moon. But he was just as comfortable in—and familiarized chil-

dren with—territory closer to home in the GDR: he drove heavy machinery, spent time at camp, played sports with young East German figures, or introduced young viewers to important national landmarks. In one such episode he flew over the Spreeinsel (central East Berlin), to give kids a bird's-eye view of the newly built showcase of East German society and government.[17]

The other regularly scheduled program, which was also so important in narrating the Berlin Crisis, was the nightly news show *Current Camera*. The DFF introduced a very simple version of the program in 1952 that consisted of still pictures with voice-over commentary, lasted about ten minutes, and was broadcast only irregularly. By 1958, *Current Camera* had expanded to about twenty minutes and appeared six nights a week at eight o'clock. Then, in 1960, the DFF moved *Current Camera* to seven-thirty and introduced a second, late, edition at ten o'clock.[18] The central themes of news coverage in the 1950s were the "German Question" and reportage from the Cold War, but the positions taken on these issues shifted according to the priorities of the state. During the first two years of the *Current Camera*, for example, reports on (and from) the Federal Republic and especially West Berlin comprised a significant share of each episode. By 1955, West Germany had begun to fade into the background, replaced by reports from the GDR and the "People's Democracies" of Eastern Europe, segments on the broader subject of international peace, and topics from other, more popular program areas such as sports.[19] During the period of the Second Berlin Crisis (1958–61), the news heavily favored reports of interaction between the four powers, examples of West German militarism, and the revelation of former Nazis in West German leadership positions, alongside the accomplishments of the socialist countries.[20]

The Second Berlin Crisis

The First Berlin Crisis of 1947–48 had resulted in the establishment of two separate German states in 1949. Yet this alone did not rule out the possibility of German reunification. Indeed, over the course of the 1950s, diplomats, politicians, and Germans on both sides held out hope for the "one Germany" solution. At the same time, however, the ideological and territorial boundaries of East and West Germany were becoming more clearly drawn. The integration of West Germany into the European Coal and Steel Community in 1950 and continuing debates about West German rearmament led to increased tension between the two states. In 1952, for example, the failure of the "Stalin note"—a plan proposed by the Soviet Union under which East and West Germany would be reunified as a neutral state in the middle of Europe—and Western European

plans to integrate the West German state into the European Defense Community further reinforced the division of Germany. The Geneva Conference of 1955 achieved a sense of détente between the Americans and British, on the one hand, and the Soviets, on the other, which was not matched by détente between the German states.[21] After the Geneva Conference, Khrushchev articulated his "Two-State Theory," which asserted that "two states had emerged during the postwar period, each with its own economic and social order" that would be impossible to unify except on the basis of socialism, making the possibility of German reunification even more difficult.[22] Thereafter, the Soviet Union expanded the sovereignty of the GDR, disbanding the Soviet military administration and rescinding orders given by the Allied Control Council during the immediate postwar period. Furthermore, passage of a West German law allowing rearmament in 1955 set the two states more aggressively against one another. Soviet and East German authorities alike feared the possibility of nuclear armament of the West German military.[23] Destalinization and the crackdown in Hungary convinced SED leaders to draw away from the West and bind the state more closely to the Soviet Union.

In 1958, Berlin became a central focus of the Cold War once again. On 27 November 1958, Nikita Khrushchev sent a diplomatic note to the Western occupation powers. Subsequently termed the "Berlin Ultimatum," the note called for the removal of occupation forces from Berlin and the creation of a neutral "free city" in West Berlin. Khrushchev set a deadline of six months, after which, if its demands were not met, the Soviet Union would sign a separate peace with the GDR, recognizing East German sovereignty and allowing state authorities to cut off Allied access to West Berlin. The deadline came and went without a second "Berlin blockade," but the issue of a peace treaty governing the future of Germany led to a prolonged period of diplomatic wrangling that became one of the most important flash points of the Cold War, even surpassing the Cuban Missile Crisis in its short- and long-term impact.[24] Moreover, as time passed the interests of the SED began to diverge from those of the Soviets, and the SED began to pursue its own agenda more aggressively. By 1960 East German leaders had begun to act somewhat autonomously of Soviet policy and imperatives, increasingly pushing the Soviets to agree to some kind of border closure.[25] By the time the crisis had passed, the SED had closed the border between the FRG and the GDR, built the Berlin Wall, and taken control of the Allied transportation corridors between the Federal Republic and West Berlin. Subsequently it was much more difficult for Germans to travel across Berlin, and many on both sides of the Wall had to give up jobs, apartments, and even relationships with people on the other side.

The problem of the border had plagued GDR authorities long before the Berlin Crisis. Walter Ulbricht had warned even before the Fifth Party Congress of 1958, "it is necessary to carry out a great education campaign, that no citizen of the GDR allows himself to be induced to flee to West Germany. We must save all people from being exploited and degraded by West German big capital . . ."[26] The language of this campaign constructed it less as a problem of people *fleeing* the Republic and instead as a more criminal matter of the seduction and entrapment of otherwise loyal citizens of the GDR. There were numerous, wide-ranging reasons that people left the GDR: some sought better job prospects or salaries in the West, while others used emigration as a tool to improve their standard of living—particularly their housing situation—in the East.[27] Some émigrés concocted flight plans that required "leaving behind" one's family, sometimes only outwardly, sometimes temporarily, or, sometimes, for good.[28] There were organizations founded to facilitate the process of emigration, as well as a number of more covert organizations that indeed operated against the GDR.[29]

While behind the scenes the government was well aware of the complications involved in emigration, in public discourse the state reduced the complexity of the situation to the language of "enticement" (*Abwerbung*), "people-smuggling" (*Menschenhandel*), and "head hunters" (*Kopfjäger*) along with dishonorable "flight from the Republic" (*Republikflucht*).[30] Another category of "migrant" was the so-called border-crossers (*Grenzgänger*), who lived on one side of the border, yet traveled frequently to the other side. Border-crossing was legal—most were commuters, who lived in East or West Berlin and traveled to the other side for work—and was encouraged by the currency exchange rate. East Berliners (or Brandenburgers, for that matter) could work in the West, earning some hard currency, and buy goods there, while paying reduced (because they were subsidized by the East German government) rent and utilities in the GDR, for example. A number of border-crossers were youths who traveled West to buy comics and "trash" literature, or to check out the latest American film at the cinema.[31]

By the summer of 1961, Ulbricht's campaign to warn East Germans of the perils of Western exploitation had not yielded the anticipated results. True, *Republikflucht* had dropped after 1956, after reaching its second-highest point since the foundation of the Republic.[32] But it began to rise again in 1960, in response to a variety of problems including economic crisis (particularly when it came to the supply of basic foodstuffs such as milk, butter, and meat), discontent with collectivization, increasing centralization of political power (when Ulbricht abolished the office of the president upon the death of Wilhelm

Pieck), and the ongoing Berlin Crisis.[33] In early July 1961, Soviet ambassador to the GDR Mikhail Pervukhin estimated that perhaps 250,000 people were crossing back and forth across the border each day. This problem made the border seem particularly porous since "the GDR police carry out selective checking of people crossing the sectoral border into West Berlin, but in practice cannot really arrest citizens illegally leaving the GDR."[34] That month the SED implemented stricter policies dealing with border-crossing, such as registering *Grenzgänger*, demanding Western currency for rent payments, and restricting the consumption of desirable goods, such as cars, apartments, and television sets to East Germans who actually lived in the GDR.[35] This caused a spike in the number of people who left the GDR, which jumped sixfold by the end of July.[36] Overall, in the first seven months of 1961 Germans left the GDR at a rate of almost one thousand per day.[37] Against this backdrop the East German press had stepped up the campaign against people-smugglers, border-crossers, and flight from the Republic.

If, during this crisis, *Current Camera* sought to shift East Germans' focus away from German reunification toward the development of the GDR and the socialist world, as argued above, some of the most popular current affairs shows continued to engage the German-German Cold War. The roundtable discussion program *Rendezvous Berlin* invited prominent people from the GDR and the FRG, the United Kingdom, the USSR, and even the United States to debate pan-German issues, and was broadcast simultaneously on GDR radio.[38] DFF head Heinz Adameck described the show as "a contribution to the peaceful reunification of Germany."[39] Audience research and viewer correspondence demonstrated that this programming was initially popular with East German audiences. Viewers liked the roundtable discussion format that allowed them to watch prominent politicians and commentators debating issues important to them.[40] Some episodes even responded to viewer calls on the air—that is to say, a secretarial figure took viewer questions off-screen and then delivered them to the panel during the show. After the first show aired, W.K. from Leipzig wrote: "The show *Rendezvous Berlin* should be continued; it's great!" S.N. from Steinigtwolmsdorf declared: "if the show *Rendezvous* remains as hitherto, then one really takes pleasure in it." Viewers particularly liked discussions on pan-German issues. One viewer wrote: "*Rendezvous Berlin* is always interesting, when discussions slug it out between East and West."[41]

When it was introduced in 1956, *Rendezvous Berlin* spoke to the issues that viewers held dear: in particular the future of Berlin and a (temporarily) divided Germany. As the border hardened, so did the ideological campaign against the West and the ideology of the DFF's topical current affairs program-

ming. Viewer comments suggest the contours of debates that took place on the show. "I never want to miss the show *Rendezvous Berlin*," wrote R.S. from Berlin-Pankow. "I only recommend that [the moderator] let the guests speak more. It is more arresting for the viewer if one can correct an incorrect opinion, than when one always cuts the speaker off . . ."[42] This tendency to control discussion became more pronounced over time. As early as July 1956, W.R. from Neupetershain wrote: "*Rendezvous Berlin* was very good, that is to say when there were still real discussions. But discussions only come about when participants have different opinions. The last two were contrived. . . . It's too bad!"[43]

A product of its time, *Rendezvous Berlin* became increasingly uncompromising, which the viewer from Neupetershain pointed out. As audience numbers declined, the DFF encouraged programmers in 1958 to publicize the topics of discussion in advance in order to attract more viewers. Yet with the construction of the Berlin Wall and the diverging social and political trajectories of the two German states after the Berlin Crisis, *Rendezvous Berlin* lost its raison d'être. In 1964 the DFF announced plans to overhaul the show, but, in the end, programmers abandoned the program, pulling it from the schedule in the mid-1960s.

During this period, a number of shows were conceived primarily for West German consumption. An example of this was the "magazine" show, *Telestudio West*, first introduced to the airwaves on 11 September 1957.[44] The series spoke explicitly to West German viewers, a conception that determined its subject matter, narrative style, and even its late-night time slot—the DFF often broadcast it after most East Germans were already in bed. Each episode consisted primarily of filmed excerpts of news reports from the GDR and other socialist bloc countries or even feature films on pan-German themes.[45] Increasingly, the show also rebroadcast excerpts from the West German evening news, re-narrated from the perspective of the GDR. This strategy was used to a much greater extent in *The Black Channel*, for which political commentator Karl-Eduard von Schnitzler provided scathing commentary on the pictures televised by West German broadcasters.[46] American authorities derided *Black Channel* as a "vicious program," but this "Cold War of the airwaves" was by no means a one-way street:[47] *Black Channel* responded—and replicated the approach of—the West German *Red Spectacles* (*Rote Optik*), in which West broadcasters similarly "exposed" East German "propaganda" through re-broadcast of DFF programming narrated from the West German perspective.

Programs such as *Telestudio West* and *The Black Channel* were persistently and explicitly presentist and placed heavy emphasis on current events, so

the important role of Cold War narratives should come as no surprise. But programs of all genres explicitly dealt with the developments of the Cold War and hoped to reach a pan-German audience while doing so. For example, the DFF conceived *Tele-BZ* in the tradition of a political *Kabarett* (a sort of political variety show), mobilized to engage current political events and West German themes in particular.[48] A very different component also played an important role in the state's representation of the Cold War: television drama, and especially crime series such as *Blaulicht*, explicitly explored pan-German themes. Crime thrillers were immensely popular, and the genre could present social issues and a political agenda in a manner that was less threatening for viewers than more overt, politically loaded shows such as *Current Camera* or *The Black Channel*.

Crime Thrillers: *Blue Light (Blaulicht)*

The television service introduced the series *Blue Light* to the viewing public on 20 August 1959.[49] It appeared irregularly, every month or two, though usually on a Thursday night at 8:00 pm.[50] In all, the DFF broadcast twenty-nine episodes before taking *Blue Light* off the air in 1968.[51] It was intensely popular: each installment reached large audiences, often estimated to be 50 percent of the viewing public. The series' writer Günter Prodöhl previously had worked as a journalist covering court trials and used actual criminal cases as fodder for scripts. In the period before the construction of the Berlin Wall, most plots focused on the liminal space between East and West Berlin. Tiring of this setting, Prodöhl put the show on hiatus in early 1961 and prepared to move the action of the show beyond the borders of Berlin.[52] Despite the geographic shift, from Berlin to other cities of the GDR, the border and criminality arising from the German-German Cold War remained integral to the conception of the series.

For some commentators, *Blue Light* exemplifies the ostensibly derivative nature of East German television, proving that the DFF simply copied West German programming, in this case, the crime thriller *The Steel Net* (*Stahlnetz*).[53] The crime thriller, however, was not an especially innovative form, in the GDR *or* the FRG. In 1958, for example, *The Steel Net* went on the air, reproducing the American television show *Dragnet* for the West German audience. Later that year *Blue Light* emerged on East German screens. Such programs emerged because they were easy to produce, relatively popular, and made good use of the televisual conditions of live action and intimate settings.[54] What is more important is that both GDR television and state authori-

ties continued to privilege mainstream formats over new, experimental forms that sought, by the early 1960s, to undermine the power of established narrative modes.

Blue Light established the vital importance of the German border in the very first show, appropriately entitled "Tunnel on the Border."[55] This episode dramatized the case of a jeweler who smuggled his wares, both stolen and legally obtained, out of the GDR to sell on the West German market. When discovered, the culprit attempted to flee the Republic by way of the defunct but not yet obstructed East-West subway tunnel under Berlin's Potsdamer Platz. The cornerstone of the series was the depiction of economic crime—in this episode, the crux was the jeweler's attempt to smuggle goods out of the Republic for sale elsewhere—and it established the interpretative framework within which crime could be understood to undermine the GDR.[56] Crimes against property were attacks on the Republic itself—as well as citizens loyal to it—who ultimately were the victims in every episode. In the episode "Antiquities" (November 1961), for example, the perpetrators are caught smuggling art out of the Republic in order to run up their value on the West German art market. Officer Timm visits the State Art Brokerage, where an East German art expert explains to Timm the "Western" method of inflating the price of artwork to make huge profits.[57] Crimes against persons, including fraud and murder, also played a role in the series, but these crimes were similarly framed in terms of their ramifications for the Republic.

The conception of the series established a clear framework within which viewers could understand the "true crimes" they were about to see. Of the first episode only remnants still exist, including the television script, which includes live television scenes but not other scenes that were committed to film. The script tells us that the director, Hans-Joachim Hildebrandt, appeared at the beginning of the episode with the DFF adviser from the *Volkspolizei* (People's Police) and the actor Bruno Carstens (who played the officer Wernicke) to introduce viewers to the series. Hildebrandt described the development of *Blue Light* as an "almost utopian undertaking." In the GDR, "murder announcements, unlike the weather report, don't belong to the repertory of the daily press. We know no gangster nuisance, corruption economy, kidnapping, drug trade, nor even an armed bank robbery, which elsewhere virtually belongs in the urban landscape."[58] In *Blue Light*, then, all of these problems originated instead on the other side of the border, and the series demonstrated the valuable work of the People's Police (*Volkspolizei*) in protecting GDR citizens from such pernicious influences. The conception of the show also drew clear con-

trasts between the *representation* of crime and the practices of the criminal police in East and West. Hildebrandt explained the central role of the police adviser, who counseled the DFF on what policing was "really" like: "the People's Police don't get their pistols out of the drawer and cock them demonstratively when they go to arrest a perpetrator. He carries the weapon more likely with him, always ready for action, even if that doesn't suit the director of the crime thriller."[59] Hildebrandt confronted viewers' expectations of policing, which they had learned in a very different social and political context. He argued that *Blue Light*'s representation of policing would be depicted much more realistically than what they were used to (from trivial literature, Western movies, and the like). He could have been speaking directly to the viewer we met on page one of this book. With this, Hildebrandt might have hoped to disarm the threat of the West German crime program *Steel Net*, which viewers could easily distinguish from *Blue Light*, due to its greater adherence to the hypermasculinity of the hardboiled crime thriller tradition.

Before 1961, the open border was a primary plot device for the *Blue Light*. The border was presented as a major source of crime, which most often originated in the Federal Republic and was "exported" to the GDR. The border also offered the opportunity of escape to criminals fleeing from the law on either side of the border. Border-crossers were common figures, portrayed as people who took advantage of either the East German economy or its people as a result of the openness of the GDR. For example, some Berliners lived in the (cheaper) East, but worked in the (better remunerated) West. Some characters traveled East to buy cheaper goods, which they re-sold upon their return to the West. Criminals were sometimes "Returnees" (*Rückkehrer*)—those who had left the GDR for the West, only to return later.[60] More troubling were the so-called People-smugglers who facilitated illegal emigration, or worse, kidnapped honest citizens into West Berlin. In other words, *Blue Light* incorporated precisely those issues that most preoccupied GDR authorities during the Second Berlin Crisis and were often reported in topical-political programming; the fictionalization of such narratives permeated public consciousness and played an integral role in making intelligible the government's decision to build the Berlin Wall—and put an end to such problems—in August 1961.[61]

The series' focus on depictions of cross-border crime was both entertaining and didactic: it allowed for the creation of entertaining thrillers, while also attempting to demonstrate that West Germans, and Western capitalist culture, were ultimately responsible for crime in the GDR. *Blue Light* used dialogue, visual cues, and plot structure to educate its viewers. Dialogue between East

German characters lampooned Westerners who assumed the worst about the East German "police state." Rowdy teenagers, or *Halbstarken*, were clearly coded through their dress, reading habits, and relationship to authority figures. Visual cues identifying rowdy youth were reinforced and emphasized through the action and dialogue. In "Cigarette Butts" ("*Kippentütchen*") from January 1960, a young man described to the police the kid they were looking for, making sure to point out that his jeans were real American jeans, not the East German variety: "Real American jeans! . . . Original Texas. Made in the USA."[62] The motives and moral fiber of adult characters were likewise encoded in the origin of the cigarettes they smoked: criminal characters smoked West or American; the police proudly smoked East cigarettes. The eponymous cigarette butts signified the anti-fascist past of the honorable police captain, who learned this specific way of rolling tobacco during time he spent incarcerated in a concentration camp during the Nazi period.[63] Finally, Prodöhl wrote early episodes in such a way that viewers often knew the identity of the perpetrator from the beginning: in this way messy plot twists would not divert the audience from the show's central message. Audience research carried out in 1960 showed that this narrative strategy failed to appeal to viewers because it detracted from the episode's level of suspense. In an effort to improve the series, the shows began to hide the identity of the perpetrator, as exemplified by the episode "Antiquities" (1961).[64]

Blue Light could legitimize the state for its audience, especially through the development of characters representing the state.[65] Each show focused on the police work of a trio of regular male actors, police captain Wernicke and police lieutenants Thomas and Timm. Forensics officer Inge Martens (a woman!) and public prosecutor Siebert also made appearances throughout the series. It is unsurprising that the shows depicted these characters sympathetically but they did so effectively using common narrative devices. In fact, one of the most favored comic devices of the series was to put the police officials in situations in which their official identities were unknown; the disrespectful or familiar attitudes of other characters quickly transformed when they realized they were speaking to none other than the People's Police.[66] In one such scene, a distracted hotel concierge will not let Timm get a word in edgewise and mistakes him first for a doctor, then a British trade delegate. Timm stuns the concierge with his police badge, who thereafter gives his undivided attention.

In a letter to the leader of the Agitation Commission (and member of the SED Politburo) Albert Norden, DFF director Adameck argued that the political value of the series lay in the popularity of the three actors: "In this way the creators of the *Blaulicht* series have been able to strengthen and reinforce the

trust of the people in the Peoples' Police."[67] Audience research also suggested that viewers really did *like* these characters. A 1960 survey asked respondents whether the show should retain the characters of Wernicke, Thomas, and Timm. One woman claimed that the characters were vital to the series: "(they) simply belong to *Blue Light*." A construction worker from Hoyerswerda reflected that the characters had become "like good, old friends."[68] In order to achieve this kind of familiarity, the show capitalized in part on stock characters. Lt. Thomas was a tall, good-looking fellow who could charm the ladies.[69] Lt. Timm, on the other hand, was a shorter, more comical figure: he often lamented the legwork required for policing but always came up with an odd, ingenious, and often folksy way of solving the case. Wernicke was the tough but fair patriarchal figure, keeping the other two in line.

"Twice Dead" ("Zweimal Gestorben")

Two episodes from the series broadcast before the border closure serve as good examples of the way in which the series represented cross-border issues, crime, and policing, and the more general crisis of the postwar period. The second episode of the series, "Twice Dead," broadcast on 15 October 1959, serves as a good example of the kinds of themes and characters introduced by the series during the period of the Second Berlin Crisis. Familiar characters appear representing the state: Police officers Wernicke, Thomas, and Timm, as well the State Prosecutor Siebert and the forensics officer Inge Martens. A large cast of additional characters, including the brothers Heinz and Peter Kosswig (played by one actor), Peter's girlfriend Edith May, and petty criminals Alfred Natke and Fiebach, also appear; the especially large cast is, in this case, an indication of the convolution of the plot. The episode primarily dramatized murder, insurance fraud, and flight from the Republic, intertwined with subplots about forged documents, smuggling, border-crossing, and American espionage.

The primary plot follows Peter Kosswig and his girlfriend Edith, who conspire to kill Kosswig's invalid brother Heinz, to inherit his property in the GDR and to profit from a West German insurance policy they have taken out in his name. For some time, Peter has been leading a double life, posing as Heinz when living in West Berlin, while his brother is housebound in Rostock. Setting the plan in motion, Peter brings Heinz across the border, sending an urn of fake ashes to Rostock as proof of Heinz's death in order to claim the property; thereafter, Edith poisons Heinz. The conspirators dump the body in the remains of a bombed-out building in West Berlin that is scheduled for demolition the following morning. Edith tips off the West Berlin authorities that someone is

"living" in the building, but they arrive too late to "save" Heinz. Edith collects the insurance money, only to be murdered by the third co-conspirator Alfred Natke, who conveniently has denounced Peter to the East German People's Police as the mastermind behind an operation to smuggle Meissen porcelain out of the GDR, a subplot that explores Natke's associations with his underling "Fiebach" and with an elusive (American) figure by the name of Mister Joe, who seems to be running the show.

The plot of this episode was perhaps too complex to be a compelling piece of televisual storytelling, but it aptly demonstrated the centrality of the open border and the importance and impact of cross-border crime in the early *Blaulicht* series. In the ninth scene, the first in the episode in which the People's Police appear, Prosecutor Siebert holds forth on the problems of the border:

> SIEBERT: You all know that what appears on this map as a harmless, black line, in a large city such as Berlin, passes through streets, sewers . . . even through houses. What did that old crook say recently . . . Comrade Wernicke?
>
> WERNICKE: He said, 'I was born too late. These borders in Berlin are the most lucrative (*segensreich*) creation of the twentieth century.'
>
> SIEBERT: We don't share this opinion. But we constantly have to deal with people who do have such ideas. Now, I mean in particular the career criminal border-crossers, with residence and employment in West Berlin. . . . The more criminological evidence we have against certain smuggling and spy rings, the better our chances become of getting to them. You know what I mean. Smugglers and Spies aren't understood as criminals by our colleagues in West Berlin. In cases of economic crime or espionage, we don't even [notify them over there.] . . . [70]

The implication is that Western authorities do not take such crimes seriously. The audience later learns that Natke earlier had fled the GDR to avoid arrests for crimes committed there, suggesting that criminals could disappear in West Germany. He was a symbol of Western decadence, wearing flashier clothing than the other characters and meeting Peter for strategy sessions at a gambling hall in West Berlin. Indeed, all three involved in the smuggling scheme profited repeatedly from the open border: they were all guilty of fleeing the republic, but they had no difficulty returning to the GDR at will. Peter had even smuggled his (still-living) brother across the border relatively easily and with impunity.[71]

Yet the root of their crimes lay deeper than the culprits' own selfish interests. Fiebach testified, for example, that he (and, by implication, the others)

had gotten caught up in an American crime syndicate while trying to enter the West. According to Fiebach, Natke had told him of a job involving porcelain smuggling. Fiebach decided to stay in the West:

> WERNICKE: As a refugee?
> FIEBACH: I wasn't yet recognized. The Mister . . . Mister, yeah, the Ami said I had to prove that I was for the West.
> WERNICKE: What did he demand of you?
> FIEBACH: Not him. He sent me to others. For them I had to go to Treptow every day and leave a letter. . . .
> WERNICKE: And you also had to buy the porcelain for this man?[72]

The mysterious "Mister" compelled Fiebach and the others into a life of crime in return for recognition as refugees from the East—certainly not the warm welcome East Germans who might have been contemplating fleeing the Republic might have hoped to expect. Repeatedly *Blue Light* put its characters in situations that were familiar to DFF viewers from coverage of current events and, perhaps, their own life experiences. In this case, Fiebach's plight demonstrated the hidden dangers of allowing oneself to be seduced by the other side. We may find these situations and their resolutions implausible, but they certainly carried a different weight for audiences watching the show during the uncertainty of the Berlin Crisis. In this way *Blue Light* was able to shape the ways in which its viewers thought about the world they lived in.

"The Butter Witch" ("Butterhexe")

Broadcast on 28 July 1960, the series' eighth episode, "The Butter Witch," dealt with similar cross-border issues, but drew starker comparisons of crime and policing in East and West Berlin. In the episode, Lisa Wendler—the eponymous culprit—poses as a representative of the state social services department. She appears on victims' doorsteps with promises of butter donations or coupons for coal. After gaining their trust she robs them of their pension disbursements. The audience learns she has stolen from hundreds of pensioners (all women) in the districts of West Berlin, always using the same method, yet the West Berlin police have no idea who the "butter witch" is, nor do they seem to care very much to find her. They ignore tips from witnesses, fight to shift jurisdiction over the case to other districts, and, when one victim dies of a stress-related heart attack after her ordeal, decide that the police force is too busy with other things to pursue a case in which the victim—and primary wit-

ness—is dead. For the pensioner community, Wendler has become a phantom figure, hardly real. The VP decides to keep an eye on the case and begins mobilizing all means possible to warn pensioners of the scam. It is only when the "butter witch" starts to operate in East Berlin that any serious headway is made on the case. After Wendler swindles a woman at an isolated cemetery in East Berlin, Wernicke, Thomas, and Timm dive headlong into the case, following a trail of paper evidence—old case files sent over from West Berlin, a mass transit pass used by Wendler, and the forged coal coupons, which lead to an old ration card from 1955. They quickly establish a profile of the woman, trail her, and catch her red-handed.

This episode, as was the case for most of the early episodes of *Blue Light*, was a strong indictment of the conditions created by the war and the open question of the status of Berlin. Just as in "Twice Dead"—a case of fratricide—the dissolution of family ties came into stark relief in this episode. The "Witch," Lisa Wendler, has little control over or, seemingly, love lost for her wayward teenage son. She bribes him to spend the night away from home, so that she can entertain her hoodlum boyfriend. The West Berlin police, acting on a bad tip they leave uncorroborated, arrest the wrong woman; her husband, a respectable businessman, hastily plans to divorce her before news of her arrest is released to the public, thus sparing himself the public shame. Moreover, communal ties and basic civility have been affected. Wendler preyed on the weakest in society, women over the age of seventy-five, and went so far as to seek victims out even while they were visiting loved ones in a cemetery.

Blue Light's answer to these desperate conditions was to model citizen involvement and cooperation. In the Kosswig case, an ordinary citizen from Rostock approached the police with his own suspicions of shady, if not overtly criminal, behavior. The shop employees were able to identify suspicious activity and intervened to prevent crime from occurring. In "The Butter Witch," the People's Police were able to mobilize a substantial number of ordinary East German citizens to prevent crime. By contrast, West Berliners who went to the police with concerns or information about the "butter witch" were ignored, or worse, did so only to collect rewards for the information. Thus *Blaulicht* encouraged viewers to identify, not necessarily with the representatives of the state such as Wernicke or Timm, but with the cast of supporting characters who represented ordinary East Germans. This strategy of encouraging viewers to empathize with and even relate to those characters and their situations was not only important in terms of building a loyal audience for the series, but it also performed an important ideological function, encouraging viewers to think of themselves as "East German." Viewers could more easily "recognize" and de-

fine the smuggling of goods, "people-smuggling," and border-crossing as legitimate, criminal problems. *Blue Light* dramatized the issues of the Berlin Crisis, made them relevant, and offered East Germans ways of understanding the motivations and the impact of such crime before such damning language became central to the language of *Current Camera* news coverage. The narrative strategies of so-called entertainment television gave ordinary East Germans a visual and narrative context within which to understand the subsequent political pronouncements of the Party and the State.

Broadcasting the News: *Current Camera*

In early July 1961, the DFF leadership informed its members of new guidelines governing summer and fall programming. The driving force behind the new guidelines was the unfolding political situation, including the ongoing discussions about the status of Berlin as well as the upcoming elections to be held in September. The Television Council directed *Current Camera*, "as the most important political show of the DFF," to focus as often as possible in both the prime-time and late editions on topics such as the negative achievements of West Germany, which they identified as massive agricultural debt, high rates of women dying during childbirth, and a rising wave of youth crime. Similarly, the show broadcast the satirical segment "We have Adenauer to thank for that," as well as "the most asinine lie of the week," and stories on human trafficking and border crossers. In particular, the news was instructed to demonstrate the role of West German militarism in stirring up "war hysteria." The Television Committee mandated that contrasting reports should show the efforts of the East German working classes toward the success of the nation and the preservation of peace. *Current Camera* was to propagate the peace plans of the Soviet and East German authorities and prove that "all peace-loving men will win through the implementation of our suggestions."[73]

Between the end of June and the beginning of August the tone of *Current Camera* shifted, reflecting the impact of the 6 July directives. On 28 and 29 June, for example, coverage focused on international peace talks (including separate statements on the issue of West Berlin from British prime minister Macmillan and American president John F. Kennedy), international worker unrest (in France and England), and domestic issues such as the wheat harvest and meetings between Walter Ulbricht and GDR workers. *Current Camera* also reported the ongoing detention of GDR citizens in the Federal Republic and denied "rumors" of a crisis of supply in the GDR, refuting an article in the

sensational West German daily *Bild Zeitung* entitled "The Zone Starves," with pictures of East German markets stocked with cauliflower, tomatoes, and at least thirty kinds of cake.[74] By 2 August the tone had become much more strident: *Current Camera* refocused on West German authorities' revanchism and ties to Nazism contrasted with the strength of the socialist world, while "human-trafficking" and border-crossing crimes took center stage. *Current Camera* reported extensively, for example, on the five-day trial of Heinz Adamo and his accomplices for human trafficking, introduced at the beginning of this chapter, which began on 2 August 1961. The case made wide-ranging accusations. A witness for the prosecution indicted a number of Western agencies in the scheme to smuggle people westward, including the American and British intelligence services, the West Berlin "political police," the East Bureau of the SPD, the Ministry of All-German Affairs, and RIAS (Radio in the American Sector). The news included commentary from a man identified as a West Berlin–based exporter and former investigator of the Marienfelde refugee camp in southwest Berlin, who elaborated on the process of people smuggling. He linked it to the West German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution and the West German Federal Intelligence Service (*Bundesnachrichtendienst*) and confirmed that smugglers targeted the intelligentsia in particular. Reports such as these fulfilled the Television Council's new guidelines to the letter. In the months leading up to the building of the Wall, the television service was already in the process of easing the way to explain to East Germans the concrete and mortar division of the two German states. The kinds of issues raised in both "entertainment" programming and the nightly news provided a number of avenues that could be exploited by the SED as the Berlin Crisis reached a high point on 13 August.

"It was an entirely normal day . . ."

On 13 August 1961, Germans in East and West awoke to the news that the GDR authorities had closed most of the Berlin border to through-traffic. Overnight East German soldiers had erected temporary barriers of barbed wire, which were soon to be replaced with less-permeable concrete pylons and, later, a full-fledged wall. That evening *Current Camera* went on the air as usual at 7:30 for approximately twenty-four minutes. The news began with a recitation of the Council of Ministers decision (as it had been printed in the national political daily newspaper *Neues Deutschland*) that had led to the day's actions. The report did not criticize the border blockade, reporting the events instead as something that had been looming on the horizon since the foundation of the

Republic.[75] At the top of the broadcast, the show transmitted images filmed at the border as well as man-on-the-street interviews eliciting opinions on the day's events from passersby. Thereafter, the announcer reported a variety of other news items focusing on the socialist world, from the meeting between a Romanian delegation and Brezhnev in the Soviet Union, at which statesmen called for the conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany, to the visit of Ghanaian independence leader Kwame Nkrumah in Romania, to folk-dancing at a youth meeting in Arnstadt.[76]

The regularly scheduled *Current Camera* and the following special edition, as well as a third, late edition that evening, emphasized the state of normality at the border. This message was expressed clearly and repeatedly by DFF announcers and through the use of filmed images taken at various border crossings. At the top of the regular edition, for example, the announcer set the framework within which the audience should interpret the images: "at all of the control points identified in the decisions, traffic proceeded today as on all days, as you can see in [these] pictures." The film included images of checkpoints, including the Brandenburg Gate, Sonnenallee, and Friedrichstrasse that suggested relative quiet on the streets of Berlin. Mixed in were other images that complicated the primary message, including pictures depicting traffic on inland waterways, the naval fleet, a zoo, and a sporting event in Oberschöneweide. The primary images situated viewers on the front line of the Cold War at the border in East Berlin. Images of the naval fleet were representations of power that suggested state authority and strength. Yet, other images depicted sites of everyday life that were likely less sensitive for the average viewer, focusing on leisure pursuits and the rhythms of daily life. *Current Camera* coverage reinforced the impression of normality and stability by reminding viewers that other things were going on in the world.

DFF reportage emphasizing normality and stability also implied the legitimacy of the action, a notion expressed explicitly in the late edition. Clips broadcast in the late evening took three approaches to the problem of the border: they examined the responses of authorities from the Federal Republic, the American state department, and ordinary Berliners. *Current Camera* anchor Klaus Feldmann informed viewers of a conference convened "in feverish hurry" between West German Chancellor Adenauer, Secretary of State Hans Globke, and the Minister of All-German Affairs, Ernst Lemmer. According to Feldmann, they had made the decision to foment unrest in West Berlin. Coverage suggested the impression of impotent West German authorities, futilely trying to exert pressure on the GDR. The characterization of West German intent to encourage protests in the streets together with the evidence of existing

relative calm suggested, of course, that any disturbances of which viewers might hear were protests undertaken not by GDR citizens but by agents of the West in the GDR.[77] The representation of West German rage and powerlessness contrasted sharply with *Current Camera* reportage of the reaction of other Western leaders. American Secretary of State Dean Rusk lodged a formal complaint on behalf of the Western powers. Yet neither John F. Kennedy nor Charles de Gaulle had responded to the "crisis" or even broken off their weekend vacation plans. Unlike authorities from the Federal Republic, other Western leaders appeared relaxed and unconcerned. Finally, Feldmann reported East Berliners' responses as uniformly supportive of the regime and *Current Camera* reportage. A top story of the special edition, for example, suggested this meant "no more domestic servants from East Berlin," implying that rich West Berliners were exploiting the labor of East Berliners. Later in the broadcast a "man in the street" interviewee reinforced this message, asserting that the measures of 13 August would mean that the class enemy (West German managers) would no longer benefit from the labor of the GDR.[78]

The only remaining remnants of the *Current Camera* reportage are some film fragments and transcripts of the broadcasts collected by the West German authorities as part of their ongoing project of recording East German broadcasts for their own use.[79] No documents are known to remain that can illuminate the conditions of production for these installments of *Current Camera*. We cannot verify the announcer's claim that filmed excerpts of border crossings were taken earlier that day, or whether they were instead clips from earlier that year, for example.[80] In the same vein, we cannot determine the truth behind the street interviews with passersby. Were they individuals reciting a predetermined text, or genuinely concerned citizens? Footage could suggest an answer, but not conclusively. Indeed, as Patrick Major has pointed out, even the SED leadership was aware that its citizens were meeting the border closure with legitimate questions, outrage, and a few impulsive attempts to flee before it was impossible.[81]

Regardless, the point here is that these were the representational strategies of the television service at a moment of political crisis. Through its reportage the DFF tried to dispel the notion of a crisis, casting the border closure as a defensive measure that would strengthen the GDR state and its citizenry and weaken the power of the Federal Republic and West Berlin. Television's narrative may actually have been quite effective, in part because it tapped into existing resentments, mediated or otherwise. SED reports found that efforts to register border-crossers in the midst of the crisis were met with resistance from some "native" East Germans. Once registered, border-crossers could find a work placement in the GDR. During one incident, workers hectored their new

workmates, calling them "traitors to the workers" and asserting, "you should crawl on your knees and beg us to take you on again."[82] Some East Germans even suggested that border-crossers should be deported or, in what must have been a horrifying prospect for the government, identified by means of a *G* (denoting *Grenzgänger*) attached to their clothing.[83]

Indeed, one of the most striking aspects of these first news reports on 13 August is not just that the subject matter and language are so similar between news coverage and the crime thrillers as seen in episodes of *Blue Light* since 1959, but rather the similarities between the language of television programming and the rhetoric of East Germans as seen in the example above. Other examples abound. E.W. from Haida wrote to the weekly broadcasting magazine *Radio and Television* demanding "the severest punishment" for "Agent Adamo" and the "headhunters" who "have been working as poachers for years on behalf of West German groups as well as American and West German spy agencies . . ." and whose goal was clearly to "damage and destroy our worker and peasant state."[84] Similar language emerged in street interviews conducted with passersby. One woman asserted:

> as a mother one lives lately in constant worry about one's children. When one hears about human-traffickers and kidnappers, even the last example from Lichtenberg that was published in the press yesterday that, thank God, was unsuccessful, one also heard, [about] the children from Cottbus and the little girl from the Neustrelitz district, that the parents live in constant worry about their children and they are still so uncertain. And I find it so terribly mean and disgusting that one tries to kidnap children in order to induce the parents to flee the Republic. Yeah, and that's why I welcome the measures of our government, which will finally bring forth normal circumstances in Berlin. . . . [85]

The rhetoric of criminality and smuggling was reinforced in interview clips with a soldier and Walter Ulbricht himself in the special edition of *Current Camera*:

> ULBRICHT: Can we just let that happen, that people here loot and steal, like the West Berliner smugglers, etc.? The people work, and the others, they occupy themselves with speculation from West Berlin. That must come to an end.
>
> SOLDIER: . . . the entire public . . . is also really ready, to accept such measures like bad traffic [caused by the border closure—HG] . . . but the basic principle is that finally this smuggling will come to an end.

East German reportage of the 13 August "crisis" played down the significance of the building of the Berlin Wall. *Current Camera* tapped into a vocabulary established long before in entertainment programming. The Wall was built not to stem the tide of emigration, but rather to protect East Germans from the manipulations of criminals, human traffickers, and the war-hungry West Germans.

Conclusion

The language of border-crossing, people-smuggling, and other cross-border capers did not appear out of thin air on 13 August; it gradually emerged in news reportage throughout the Berlin Crisis. The stories reported in July and August 1961 were more strident than earlier reports and comprised the framework within which the DFF explained the measures of 13 August. The narrative of these stories bore unmistakable continuities with the narrative strategies of a series of East German television crime thrillers produced after 1958. In particular the focus on the investigation, prosecution and conviction of so-called people-smugglers, on the border-crossing phenomenon, flight from the Republic, and other kinds of cross-border crime, all of which had been the major theme of the earlier crime thrillers, placed the crisis within a context already familiar to East German television audiences, ultimately reinforcing the state's justification of the Berlin Wall. What this and the next chapter make clear is that the real significance of television rested not in repression but rather in its function as creator and disseminator of narratives that familiarized and normalized East German events such as the construction of the Berlin Wall.

Chapter 5

Coercion and Consent in Television Broadcasting: The Consequences of August 1961

As the Second Berlin Crisis reached a climax with the border closure of August 1961, East German authorities were in a position of renewed strength both in relationship to the West and in their relationship to their own citizens. The initial international diplomatic uproar over the Berlin Wall faded, but 13 August marked the beginning of a battle against dissent within the Republic. In particular, the drive to identify and root out border-crossers (*Grenzgänger*) had not only continued but gathered strength since 13 August.[1] This campaign expanded to include other enemies of the state including so-called slackers (*Bummelanten*) and resulted in cases of outright repression of the population. For example, the State Prosecutor could detain those defined as "work-shy" for evaluation and rehabilitation. State authorities had allies in pursuing people identified as slackers or dissenters, while loyal FDJ members purged their troops of those who openly criticized the Wall, for example. Newspapers reported with approval malicious attacks on people for similar transgressions, and at least one person had to be admitted to the hospital. Some East Germans denounced their own coworkers for "insulting Comrade Walter Ulbricht" or calling for free elections.[2] The airwaves were integral to this ideological battle. In the year after the construction of the Berlin Wall, government authorities worked on cutting off communication between East and West and making sure that East Germans could not watch Western television. Television officials reassessed the purpose and party line of broadcasts to ensure a politically more reliable program, and, at its most heavy-handed, the government simply banned programs from the airwaves.

In the political history of the GDR, the border closure and subsequent construction of the Berlin Wall is one of the quintessential examples of state repression of the population. Before it, people still had the relative freedom to

vote with their feet by emigrating to the West; after the Wall, they were simply held captive behind barbed wire and, later, a concrete wall. For some scholars, it was the events of June 1953 and August 1961 that truly forged the East German Republic, suggesting that the GDR existed only because of the force levied on the population living there.[3] But this is only part of the story. The Wall was a coercive instrument, but it was one of many tools used by the state to establish and maintain its power, disciplining the population to conform to socialism as defined by state authorities. In his book on the Berlin Wall Crisis, Patrick Major notes "the wall provided a literal 'discipline blockade,' but other 'discipline mechanisms' were available both before and after 1961, not least of which was the all-seeing secret police or Stasi, but also citizens' own self-censorship."[4] At the same time, the state began to leverage the institutions of social power, key among them the party, labor, and education, to "incentivize" citizens to choose to conform. The institution of television, I argue, was chief among them. Hermann Weber has suggested that the crisis marked a shift in which "by adaptation to the constraints of a modern industrial society, the methods of rule in the GDR altered considerably: they shifted more and more from terror to neutralization and manipulation of the masses."[5] But what the study of television at this moment in time demonstrates is not simply the attempt to "neutralize," "manipulate," or even "incentivize" the population, but rather a much more complicated process of organizing consent.

In this chapter, I explore the strategies of coercion and consent mobilized by the state and the television service after 13 August. After the border closure the government began to reassess the value of the relative freedom of television signals between East and West Germany. Authorities reconsidered their program of explicitly targeting Western audiences with their own signals and, more important, considered ways to cut off the traffic in West-East television signals. But attempts to disrupt reception and even jam Western transmissions altogether—fairly plain examples of outright coercion—either never came to pass or made little impact on public behavior.

Despite this, such measures took on new life in narratives about the crisis of autumn 1961. On the face of it, changes to the political agenda for television broadcasting also exemplify top-down repression. Programmers increasingly intervened in the battle against "ideological border-crossing" and sought to further develop "class consciousness" and national pride. Prominent entertainers also succumbed to incidents of "censorship." Finally, a good example of political repression of the television service seems to be the saga of *Fetzer's Flight*, one of the world's first television operas. Based on an award-winning East German radio play, it was an experimental production that broke narrative

conventions and used modernist visual devices to tell the story of one man's conversion to socialism. The Agitation Commission censured it shortly after its premiere, setting off months of debate about how to represent socialism on television screens in the GDR and amplifying the larger debate raging among artists, state authorities, and audiences about the contours of the GDR's new socialist national culture. The story of *Fetzer* has often been reduced to a case of simple political censorship, but the circumstances surrounding its censure are much more complex. In particular, they were shaped by an emerging consensus among programmers, government authorities, and viewers that defined television as a medium of light entertainment—a clear shift from the government's vision of television in 1956.

Controlling the Airwaves

The Berlin Wall imposed a tangible barrier between the communist East and capitalist West, but one that did little to disrupt the transmission of ideas over the airwaves.[6] By late 1961, though, authorities in the GDR sought to deepen the division by cutting off even this means of communication between East and West Germans. The DFF and Postal Ministry pushed back their plans to introduce a second television channel, previously intended to directly address the West German audience. In addition, the head of the Politburo's Agitation Commission Albert Norden investigated the possibilities for curtailing broadcasting *from* the West. He explored the use of jamming transmitters (*Störsender*), which could interrupt television signals coming in from the West, and the potential for removing parts from existing receivers that allowed the reception of the West program.[7] Technicians reported that, of these two strategies, the jamming transmitters had the greatest likelihood of success. They were relatively cheap and, politically, perhaps the most effective option, since they were least likely to elicit protest from—or even the attention of—the public.[8] But, in the end, plans to use technology to deny the West German program to people in the GDR remained largely unrealized due to authorities' reluctance to provoke widespread unrest over this issue.[9] The only real option for state authorities was to exert moral pressure on television audiences.

The moral campaign against Western broadcasting hinged on attempts to convince people to not change the channel. But appealing to viewers in the clubhouses of the National Front or factory break rooms of the GDR had persistently failed. Then, in the first week of September 1961 authorities and activists set in motion the so-called Ochsenkopf Campaign (*Aktion Ochsenkopf*),

Fig. 3. GDR television's reach into West Germany, 1962. Text on map reads: according to Bonn government information. BArch, Bild 183-A1204–0059–003/. (Photo: o.Ang.)

also known as the Blitz against NATO Transmitters (*Blitz kontra NATO-Sender*). This campaign sought to mobilize a mass movement of East Germans convincing their neighbors to reject West German and American media. Activists made arguments that equated listening to and viewing West media with letting the enemy into one's own home:

> What do you do with a burglar, who sets your home on fire and after that still wants to abuse your brother? . . . You wouldn't ever willingly open the door for these bandits, settle down with them over a glass of wine or cup of tea to a peaceful "briefing", knowing, as you do, their motives. . . . On 13 August we brought reason to the arsonists who wanted to transform our home into pile of ashes. . . . Now that the front door is locked, they try to get in through the back door. Their lying transmitters and channels have increasingly taken over the task of further preparations for war among our people.[10]

The Department of Agitation coordinated publicity for the campaign, contacting every major media outlet, from newspapers to radio and television. District leaders of the national youth organization Free German Youth (*Freie Deutsche Jugend* or FDJ) received a set of "talking points" in preparation for upcoming discussions with local residents, as well as instructions to report back on the details of those discussions, especially regarding who had been in attendance and the kinds of opinions they had voiced.[11] FDJ members made the rounds of their communities, talking to television viewers and distributing pamphlets against West television. In some places, leaders went into the schools and led discussions about West television and radio, agitating against listening to RIAS and eliciting pledges from schoolchildren to renounce West media. In extreme cases, youths scrambled across rooftops removing antennas or adjusting them to hinder reception of Western signals.[12]

Press releases from the Department of Agitation and Propaganda applauded the success of the intervention. They described the work of the youth brigade Steinach, for example, which had renounced Western broadcasting, "Because we know that the class enemy wants to ideologically corrode the heart and brain through radio and television." These youths' antennae were tuned to socialism, claimed the Department of Agitation.[13] Elsewhere in the Republic several hundred actual antennae had been readjusted; incorrigible television viewers had had their antennae forcibly removed. FDJ members in Gera distributed five thousand bumper stickers in support of the campaign with sayings such as "You'll be smarter in a flash, if you try out our airwaves" and

"If you don't want your mind to rust, turn your antennae to the east."[14] In Frankfurt an der Oder, groups of youths sought out people "known" to tune in to West shows and posted handbills on their front doors to draw their neighbors' attention to their betrayal. According to the press release, "these measures were met with great approval among the people."[15]

But these were press releases and, as such, they were crafted to suggest the greatest possible success for the agitation campaign, despite the very real difficulties—and even failures—the campaign had suffered. Reports of measurable successes at the very least were matched by incidents of lukewarm success, but more often overwhelmed by examples of complete failure. Behind the scenes the Agitation Commission lamented that some districts took the task more seriously than others. In some places, people enthusiastically participated in the campaign even if they understood neither the issue nor how to approach the public about it. Leaders complained that many participants never grasped the principal task of the campaign. Activists were supposed to prevent "ideological border-crossing" by making the dangers of the West media clear through persuasive discussion. Instead, they approached it as a simple matter of repositioning antennae.[16]

Many of the youths and their mentors in the FDJ refused outright to take part in the *Aktion*, which also hampered its success. In Neubrandenburg, for example, only 30 percent of the "troops" supported the campaign.[17] Some youths argued that the campaign was an unnecessary attack on people's individual rights to property and privacy. FDJ members of the Freienwalde District asserted, "we are not ready to help out in adjusting the antennae, because we can't change anything about private property." One youth from Halle asked: "How can I get to the antenna of someone who proves to be incorrigible? He could press charges against me. That is trespassing." Another young woman declared simply that "whoever doesn't want to see or hear the West, won't turn it on."[18] Members of the FDJ and the larger public also defended their "right" to watch television, with arguments like "That is limiting my personal rights," or "You don't have the right [to do this]." Others took positions that directly challenged the state: "Then make a law about it," challenged one, while others charged, "These are Nazi-methods."[19] Still others appealed to reason, downplaying the threat identified by the state, asserting, "The broadcasts are not so dangerous. We just want to listen to music,"[20] or "one should be able to watch and listen to sports, music and entertainment," and "one has to inform oneself from all sides."[21] Some criticized the East German "alternative" ("GDR Television must be improved"), implying that the problem would not exist if the DFF program were better. Thus, the campaign violated some citizens' sense of eth-

ics and, unsurprisingly, put them on the defensive about their own viewing habits. Responses to the campaign also revealed gaps in the state's attempts to transform East Germans' worldviews. The program to create a national, socialist culture had been under way since at least 1958, but such comments reflect the tenacious persistence of the language and values of liberalism.

The Ochsenkopf campaign, however, achieved profound, symbolic power that far outpaced its actual impact during those first weeks of September. At the time, radio, television, and most newspapers, with the exception of the youth newspaper *Junge Welt*, did little to publicize the campaign.[22] Even the Department of Agitation admitted that the campaign had raised awareness and stimulated discussion against the reception of West media, but it had not unleashed the anticipated mass uprising against the threat of RIAS. Thus the campaign could only be seen as truly successful if it were understood as simply the beginning of a long-term operation.[23] Yet, the long-term outcome was not the one Agitation authorities had envisioned. Instead, their own press releases "produced" popular German and scholarly memory of the incident,[24] ultimately "confirming" the view that the SED could not rule without terror: in one recent evaluation, for example, the Ochsenkopf campaign "showed that [the SED] was prepared to use overt intimidation, violence, and humiliation against members of the population involved in activities (such as tuning in to Western media) that it had arbitrarily condemned as being hostile to the state."[25] The campaign was ill conceived, haphazardly implemented, ineffective, and short-lived, yet people "remember" this having happened to them, their families, and friends, in far greater numbers than the incident involved.[26] This has become part of a larger scholarly narrative of the lengths to which the SED was willing to go to repress the liberal legal and political rights of individuals, as well as the organs of communication. But there were other strategies, pursued more tenaciously, that held more consequential implications for organizing consent in the GDR.

The ideological battle set off by the 13 August crisis had implications not just for the television infrastructure but also for programming. Just like the Hungarian uprising of 1956, this crisis caught the DFF off-guard, and it was under pressure to continue to provide programming in an uncertain political climate. This time, though, the Department of Entertainment reacted quickly, organizing and transmitting a special broadcast of more than two hours that day that incorporated "news, commentary, entertainment, and film." Later in the week, it staged an elaborate entertainment program, *The Clock Strikes Thirteen* (*Nun schlägt's dreizehn*), broadcast from multiple locations that celebrated the border protection measures. At the Berlin People's Theatre (*Ber-*

Fig. 4. A performer addresses the camera on location at the Berliner Volksbühne for the broadcast *The Clock Strikes Thirteen***, 20 August 1961. Note the theatrical nature of the interior locations of the production. BArch, Bild 183–85618–0001/. (Photo: Eva Brüggemann.)**

liner Volksbühne), Heinz Quermann, the popular moderator of the variety show *The Laughing Bear*, interviewed construction workers who had helped erect the temporary barriers dividing East from West. Meanwhile, another well-known DFF personality, Erika Radtke, chatted with soldiers at the Brandenburg Gate, while perched on a National People's Army tank.[27] The Department of Television Drama could not adjust so quickly, hampered as it was by the longer production schedule of dramatic works. On the evening of the thirteenth, the DFF broadcast the department's scheduled programming from the comic opera in Moscow; later in the week, they replaced scheduled dramatic programming with a well-known (and known to be politically reliable) television play, *Flight from Hell* (*Flucht aus der Hölle*), first broadcast to critical praise in 1960.[28]

What followed was a period of transition during which programmers, artists, Party officials, and even audiences reevaluated what was possible on television. It took weeks after the border closure for the various departments of the

television service to produce revised schedules based on the new political situation. The new task of the DFF was to "deepen [the understanding of] the true power relationships, of the tangible defeat of German militarists,"[29] and to emphasize the superiority of the GDR over the West.[30] These goals shared clear continuities with the guiding principles of shows broadcast before the construction of the Berlin Wall, including renewed efforts to publicize the GDR's peace plan and expose the Nazi pasts of powerful figures from the Federal Republic. But true to the aggressive campaign against dissent already under way, it was the tenor of the programming that changed. New, stronger language delineated the principles of a new program. Youth programmers noted that the action had demonstrated the state's strength to wayward youths. Now, the task was to address their questions, which ranged from being cut off from the movies and pulp fiction available in West Berlin, to questions about the military draft and whether or not they would be required to shoot their own relatives in the course of military service. In the process, they would fight "ideological border-crossing" and develop class-consciousness.[31]

These two, interrelated principles—preventing ideological border-crossing and inculcating class-consciousness—became the cornerstone of the program. Programming completed the transition from the representation of pan-German themes (geared toward preparing Germans for reunification on the basis of socialism in the early to mid-1950s) to the creation of a new, specifically East German consciousness. The department of entertainment programming pledged to produce programming that among other things "developed a new *Heimatgefühl* (national pride, patriotism)."[32] This was a particular, militarized, patriotism: the department of television drama vowed to expose the "false ethos of general love of the Fatherland, togetherness, brotherhood, and pacifism."[33] Television in the GDR began to turn inward. The politics of demarcation took over the airwaves, even before the explicit statement of that goal in the National Document of 1962 and, ultimately, in the new constitution of 1968.[34]

Social conditions during the crisis complicated—or sometimes cleared the way for—the task of switching ideological gears. Even as late as 1961, some DFF workers lived on the other side of the border in West Berlin and were now cut off from Adlershof.[35] One prominent example was Gerhard Wollner, who portrayed one of the key personalities on the beloved entertainment program *The Laughing Bear*. Audiences first heard this long-standing program on the radio in 1954, and, after 1955, it was simulcast on East German television. It was a variety show conceived in the context of the June uprising of 1953 that sought through entertainment to bring more listeners to the project

of—at the time—German reunification on the basis of (socialist) democracy.[36] It was one of the first shows the DFF had transmitted from outside of the studio. It featured artists from across Europe and employed three moderators, the so-called three *Mikrophonisten*. Each moderator represented a Cold War constituent of Germany: Heinz Quermann represented East Germany, while Gustav Müller and Gerhard Wollner represented West Germany and Berlin respectively.[37] Wollner, who lived in West Berlin, did not continue with the show after 13 August; he was replaced by Herbert Köfer, who became a well-loved television personality.

The show lost one of its most celebrated and well-liked characters in a very public way and, although other artists helped fill in the gaps, the show soon ran into a different set of difficulties. By February 1962, efforts were under way to discipline the remaining moderators's humor. In one such incident, Quermann had written a gag capitalizing on a joke that was reverberating across the Republic. Television favorite Eberhard Cohrs had become so popular that he appeared on a number of different shows, including a musical variety show called *Amiga-Cocktail*. In one episode of that show, Cohrs poked fun at the state system of food distribution. Coffee had become scarce in the GDR, and the state agency for trade had attempted to deflect criticism for the shortage of coffee beans by blaming Atlantic storms for cutting the GDR off from its Brazilian suppliers. Cohrs lampooned the shortage, announcing: "Now we'll hear a coffee-bean song: '*A ship will come*.'" It was reportedly a deliciously naughty moment for the studio audience.[38] Quermann prepared to refer to the incident in a subsequent episode of the *Laughing Bear*, in a joke that played on the word *Streuung* ("spreading" or "distribution," but which could also mean "deviation").[39] The straight man in the bit engages in innocent wintertime small talk, asking about the *Streuung* (here referring to salting of the roads). Through wordplay his partner turns it into a discussion of Cohrs's "deviation." The joke even goes further than Cohrs's original infraction by suggesting that his "punishment" for this infraction was to work for the very agency responsible for the distribution problems.

The moderators hoped to capitalize on the buzz surrounding the incident, but the increasing visibility of television and its personalities brought programming more closely under the scrutiny of authorities and, as artists came into conflict with state goals, what was possible on television began to change. This particular joke caught official attention and was cut. Heinz Quermann, a hot property for the DFF who participated in a number of different programs, did not take kindly to the new strictures and began to threaten to quit the show. Herta Classen, director of the Berliner Rundfunk, took the matter up with

Quermann. For Quermann it was a matter of expectations, which were different on television than they were in other cultural venues across the Republic. He argued,

> You imagine it's so easy, for me to demand clarity and cultural-political progressiveness from the artists. . . . But these people travel the whole year long through the Republic and there is no state authority taking exception to the kinds of jokes they push out there. Now [the artists] say: one has to have taken part in the "Bear", and then you know, what you can't do.[40]

Quermann argued that the state set an impossible task for visiting artists—to divine the boundary between the acceptable and unacceptable on television—when few of them had yet been on television.[41] The standards of good taste and acceptable humor clearly varied depending on where and when these performers appeared elsewhere in the Republic. In their study of cabaret and satire, for example, Sylvia Klötzer and Siegfried Lokatis demonstrate that the size of the audience mattered: the smaller the venue in the GDR, the greater the freedom for political humor.[42] Yet by this time, the "venue" of television was expanding exponentially. As television's audience grew, so did its potential for challenging the government.

The problem for Quermann was not just the size of the venue, but also that the rules for acceptable humor were unstable and particularly unpredictable in the wake of the Second Berlin Crisis. In a letter written to the Department of Agitation later that month, he suggested regular meetings between state authorities and artists to clarify the boundaries, by discussing current topics such as:

> What must Humorists know in future when it comes to jokes about women, mothers-in-law etc. in line with the communiqué "The Woman, Peace and Socialism" [which had been released by the Central Committee in January 1962]. . . . Indications must be given to what extent humor (*heitere Muse*) can intervene helpfully in certain things (special problems of agriculture, trade or industry). Frank details must also be given as to what topics at the time are best not dealt with publicly (for example problems of supply).[43]

The bit about the "mothers-in-law" likely came from an encounter Quermann had with Gerhard Eisler, head of the Broadcasting Committee. Eisler had warned him to quit with the jokes about "our brave women" and "mothers-in-

law," then summoned Quermann to his office to receive a copy of August Bebel's *Woman and Socialism* for his edification.[44] Thus, the tone of the letter suggests Quermann's frustration with the absurdity of the situation, which could lead to very serious results for artists, especially freelancers without institutional support, who could not possibly be expected to keep up with the Party line.[45] But Quermann did not directly challenge the right of state authorities to find certain jokes in poor taste; instead, he couched his criticism in terms of the difficulties facing artists and state authorities in putting together a mutually acceptable, politically reliable program. The mechanism for this was not top-down, state censorship, but through cooperative efforts between the artist and the state. Quermann finally warned that the point of these discussions was not to homogenize art, but to inform artists about real social problems to avoid mishaps in the future.[46] The Department of Agitation agreed with Quermann's suggestions and set the first meeting of the Central Committee and twenty-five freelance artists for the afternoon of 5 April 1962.[47] State authorities did not simply exercise veto power over programming in development or on the airwaves. Instead, there was still room to work through thorny issues of acceptable taste collaboratively.

State authorities' apparent tolerance was due, in part, to the tension between the desire to win audiences through increasingly popular television personalities, yet limit their power to undermine the state with their performances. The head of the Politburo's Commission on Agitation and Propaganda, Albert Norden, wrote to Gerhard Eisler, Chairman of the State Broadcasting Committee, to express precisely this frustration:

> Dear Comrade Eisler!
>
> We can't afford another appearance by Eberhard Cohrs in *The Laughing Bear*, as it happened last Wednesday. You know that I have discouraged the attempts to eliminate him. His current manner can only be understood as revenge for the attacks to which he was exposed. But it can't go on like this. If he wants to feature only unpolitical humor (like the successful business with his driving)—He's welcome! But when he shoots off political jokes and directs them *exclusively* against the GDR, then it's obnoxious. On the other hand, we should do everything to keep this so extraordinarily loved comic. My suggestion: it would be great, if you would take a half an hour of your time to help him go beyond the tip of his nose to recognize the way things are in the whole of Germany and the world . . . [48]

Norden clearly recognized the value in cultivating popular performers like Cohrs. The confrontations revealed in these documents suggest several important points about the status of television entertainment in the GDR. State authorities and television personalities alike were clearly aware of the importance of popular entertainers: on the one hand, Quermann was reportedly willing to use his reputation to push through his artistic vision. On the other hand, authorities as senior as Albert Norden recognized the desirability of keeping popular personalities like Quermann and Cohrs on the radio and television and were sensitive to the scandal that could erupt from what would be a very public dismissal. These incidents also demonstrate the complicated nature of censoring a live medium. A producer caught one "error" before it went on the air, but several others had to be "corrected" after the fact. It should be noted that this kind of "censorship" was not specifically socialist in nature but rather exemplified the problems live television posed to broadcasters in the GDR and elsewhere.[49]

The debates over television infrastructure and artistic license outlined here speak to the nature of SED control over television at what was a very specific period of crisis and transition. The consequences of 13 August included the discussion of direct efforts to limit the infiltration of Western ideology into the GDR. The SED considered authoritarian interventions to more tightly control East German society, including jamming Western broadcasts and forcing East Germans to accept a more circumscribed world of communication. Yet these measures remained mostly unrealized. Much more important and of greater long-term consequence for East Germans was a new focus on using—and shaping—television narratives to shore up political commitment to socialism. Programmers sought to work with a sharpened ideological message that focused on strengthening East Germans' class-consciousness and discouraging ideological border crossing. But artists like Quermann had to experiment with what that looked like on screen. The following year, the broadcast of *Fetzer's Flight* shifted the rules of the game once again, as audiences also began to define the shape of East German television narratives.

Fetzer's Flight

In December 1962, the DFF celebrated its tenth anniversary with a schedule of special programming.[50] Included on the agenda were two short television plays resulting from the collaboration of author Günter Kunert and director Günter

Stahnke. The first to premiere, on 13 December, was the television opera *Fetzer's Flight*. The central figure of the show is an East German teenager who flees the GDR, murdering an innocent man in the process. Haunted by his crime and hunted by West German authorities, he takes no pleasure in the "freedoms" of the West and returns to the GDR. This was a television version based on an award-winning East German radio opera first broadcast in 1959. This version featured leading actors from the Berliner Ensemble and the "very best" musicians.[51] Media critic Gisela Herrmann, spouse of Agitation Commissioner Joachim Herrmann, greeted the premiere with anticipation.[52] So did Horst Knietzsch, correspondent for the national daily *Neues Deutschland*, who wrote, "(w)hat this collective is presently developing will certainly result in fodder for the discussion of the theme film-opera. But not only that; questions about the presentation of conflict in television films, image composition and montage will be raised. . . ."[53] Despite widespread pre-broadcast acclaim, a groundswell of protest broke out soon after the broadcast leading to widespread public discussion among viewers, artists, members of the Agitation Commission, and eventually the SED leadership. In reaction to the furor, the DFF shelved plans to air Kunert and Günter Stahnke's second television play *Monologue for a Taxi Driver* (*Monolog für einen Taxifahrer*),[54] and Kunert and Stahnke reportedly "distanced themselves from the film."[55]

The *Fetzer* program demonstrates that what we have defined as political censorship is often actually the result of very different pressures. We see the ban on *Fetzer* as top-down censorship, but in fact something quite different was happening: the show broke down narrative conventions and used modernist visual devices, but it was really the inability of the show to tell a clear story that appealed to the viewer. Viewers began to claim the right to be entertained. Through such confrontations with the different, and not always competing, concerns of the state and the public, television began to emerge as *the* medium of socialist realism.

The saga of *Fetzer* began in 1959, when Günter Kunert and Kurt Schwaen began working on an opera together in honor of the tenth anniversary of the GDR.[56] Kunert was a young poet, on his way to becoming an important contemporary German author. Kurt Schwaen, twenty years his senior, was an established composer of chamber music and orchestral works. Radio DDR broadcast the opera in the evening program on 30 July 1959.[57] Contemporary reviews described it as a "work of contemporary art that went beyond just a radio show" and demonstrated that opera composed specifically for the radio was something new and different than the stage operas that had long been transmitted by radio.[58] The radio version replaced "the visual elements of tra-

ditional opera . . . with acoustic ones," "communicate(d) more with the radio audience," and much more effectively interpreted feelings through just sound and word.[59] Reviewers deemed it "the first socialist radio in Germany" and even "the first opera of socialist realism."[60] *Fetzer* went on to win recognition at an international competition of the International Radio and Television Organization of Eastern European states (OIRT), adjudicated by a jury headed by the renowned Soviet composer Dmitri Shostakovich.[61] Cultural institutions in the GDR and abroad, including the State Opera and the DFF, approached Kunert and Schwaen to discuss producing the work.

Despite such positive attention, reviewers did have reservations about the radio opera. In general these had less to do with the music and language, and more to do with telling the story of *Fetzer*.[62] Before the broadcast in July 1959, discussion of the opera at a press conference with members of the Association of German Artists (*Verband deutscher Künstler*, or VdK) was generally positive, though punctuated with some "carping" about Kunert's libretto, described as text that "Brecht would have recognized," in particular for its distancing effects.[63] Later reviews of the work, sometimes written by the very same members of the VdK, amplified these concerns. It was "topical" and "of high artistic quality," reviewers noted, but the opera was too "symbolic" and abstract, due, in part, to the use of a Greek chorus and a third-person narrator, typical Brechtian devices. Reviews also worried that the line between dream and reality was not always clear, muddying the message. Finally, Kunert had not "trusted the simple psychology of the story," making it "overcomplicated," and trying too hard to present *Fetzer* as a "typical story."[64] So *Fetzer* was widely acclaimed as inventive, but it pushed the boundaries of storytelling in radio a little too much.

Production of the radio version had been a fairly quick, painless affair, but that was not the case for the stage or the small screen. In March 1960, Schwaen still anticipated an April premiere for *Fetzer* in the State Opera, only to get bogged down over the course of the summer in a number of meetings with its head dramaturge, Werner Otto, on questions about the libretto. Otto complained that Fetzer was "too epic, too diegetic, [and] not dramatic" enough, so Kunert set about revising the opera to expand Fetzer's backstory and include more characters associated with a "work brigade," for example. The television production of *Fetzer* was a similarly fraught, though much more drawn out, two-year saga, during which Kunert, Schwaen, and the director Günter Stahnke—none of whom had worked in television before—chafed at the "shameful handling" of the negotiations on the part of the DFF.[65]

Difficulties in negotiations with the DFF centered on two issues particular

to the television service and to the artists' inexperience with the new medium: the working conditions of the television service and debates over content and representation. Kunert and Schwaen had worked together before and continued to do so after the Fetzer scandal, but they were just getting their feet wet in television. Stahnke had some experience with film, first as a film critic and, more recently, working as a director's assistant for DEFA; he worked on *Fetzer* as a first-time director. As a result the three artists were perhaps unprepared for the conditions of working for television, especially, their status as independent contractors, DFF budget issues, and the very different production schedule. The artists had not expected to work for so long without a contract: Schwaen first signed a contract in January 1962, for example. They had also expected higher compensation.[66] By February 1961, Stahnke and Kunert had received DDM 6,000 for a draft script; they proposed to complete the work for another DDM 4,000 apiece, which was about twice the price the television service was willing to pay for authorship.

The monies spent to produce the work dwarfed their honorariums—the DFF proposed a budget of DDM 100,000 just to film a test scene that would determine the fate of the television version of *Fetzer*, a stunning number for the artists, who had expected they could finish the whole film for that sum.[67] Finally, the whole production took far longer than the artists had expected. The DFF notified the artists that it would delay the start of production until they had submitted a complete script with music.[68] In February 1961, Schwaen was shocked to discover that the DFF's production schedule would stretch into 1962, a full three years after the broadcast of the radio opera. Schwaen objected in his diary, "who would be interested in a project such as that?"[69]

The second important issue of the negotiations had to do with telling Fetzer's story. By this time, television staff had defined a number of rules they felt made effective television, rules that governed editing, narrative, and character development, for example. It was difficult for Kunert to adapt *Fetzer* to these rules, conceived as it was for radio. Indeed, by the end of the "scandal," the most prominent conceptual difference that emerged seems to have been the problem of how to tell Fetzer's story in a way that would appeal to an audience that was *watching* the story unfold. The radio production contextualized, described, and acoustically suggested Fetzer's path but left the audience somewhat to its own imagination to envision the story. Television's ability to *show* the audience Fetzer's story called for a different treatment much more focused on character development. This was particularly important to DFF staff for two reasons: first, they argued that the central problem of the opera—*Republikflucht* in the late 1950s—"happily has been overcome" and was no

longer topical per se.[70] Second, Fetzer was a murderer, and viewers needed a reason to root for him.

The wrangling began in July 1960, when the Department of Music and Dance requested extensive revisions to the script. DFF staff suggested expanding Fetzer's backstory with detail that would be familiar to the television audience. Perhaps Fetzer had decided to leave the GDR because he had done something wrong within his work brigade, but it had never come to a resolution through collective debate, for example. They also thought the audience would not believe that West Germans would approve of the murder of a train conductor, suggesting that Kunert kill off a member of the People's Police (*Volkspolizei*) instead.[71] These concerns were all about developing the central character in a way that television viewers would be able to suspend enough disbelief to both enjoy and be edified by *Fetzer*. Despite this debate, the authors won out: the libretto of the television version changed little from the radio version, suggesting that, at some point, the authors went back to the original and left some of the more expansive elements of the story behind. This would prove a hollow victory.[72]

In the months before the broadcast, the DFF was able to generate considerable buzz in the press. The DFF distributed admiring press releases in *Fernsehdienst*, invited journalists to visit the set, and reached out to viewers through the television magazine *Rundfunk und Fernsehen*. Sybill Mehnert, the reviewer at Stahnke's former employer *Junge Welt*, wrote that the film was "awaited with great excitement. . . . It is the first attempt of the DFF to grapple with the conflicts of our time with the means of modern opera." She asked, "Will it succeed?"[73] Most reviews offered a short synopsis of the opera (taken directly from *Fernsehdienst*), and a few began the interpretive process for the viewer. Heinz Linde of the *Wochenpost* described *Fetzer* as a story about a young man who needs to decide for himself where he belongs. *Fetzer*'s storied background—the fact that it had won recognition as a radio play, that the creative team of Kunert, Schwaen, and the cameraman Werner Bergmann were nationally decorated artists, and the high profile of the actors involved in the production, including Fred Düren, Gerry Wolff, Horst Kube, Erik S. Klein, Rudolf Ulrich, and Christel Gloger—inspired the press.[74] Many reviewers anticipated the performance of Ekkehard Schall, a noted actor from the Berliner Ensemble and Bertolt Brecht's son-in-law.[75]

Part of the buzz surrounding the broadcast resulted from anticipation that *Fetzer* would break with the conventions of both opera and television. In April 1962, when *Fetzer* was still in production, critic Horst Knietzsch considered the possibilities: "knowledge of diffuse passages of the film doesn't let any-

thing conclusive be said. But one thing that's already noticeable is the desire of the contributors to overcome the conventions of film composition and to enrich the means of expression of film art."[76] Manfred Heidel of the *Neue Berliner Illustrierte* described the opera as "one of the boldest, most interesting and courageous experiments in the artistic area," that was reimagining how to bring together image and sound on the small screen. Early reviewers suggested that perhaps a "new genre (was) being discovered for the small screen."[77] In the *Wochenpost*, Heinz Linde anticipated, "maybe—and we wish this for the entire collective from our hearts—[this is] a new way to emulate how one can make modern opera artistically convincing for film and television—or will it be an entirely new genre of dramatic musical?"[78] Opera posed difficulties for screen productions because, unlike film and television (generally), it was non-naturalistic. Singing appeared to viewers as "grotesque mimicry," destabilizing the reality effect that was so important to (especially) television programming. An earlier production of *Fidelio* had worked to minimize this effect simply by not showing the singers singing, a strategy the *Fetzer* production used as well. The choice to depict the actors responding silently rather than with their faces screwed up as they burst into song might have been one of the elements most noted in pre-broadcast reviews, but at the moment of reception it was one of the most startling (and, indeed, alienating) elements of the production for viewers nonetheless.[79] It was one of a number of aesthetic choices that became contentious issues over the next month.

On 13 December 1962, viewers finally could judge for themselves.[80] Before the broadcast, the buzz suggested that this was one television production that would meet widespread approval and admiration. Certainly, *Fetzer* had many of the elements of a good story: a protagonist faced a moral quandary and came to the "right" decision; the action was suspenseful and essentially composed of an extended chase scene; it allowed for a little bit of vicarious danger—embodied in the depiction of the decadent West—and, it even included a topless dancer (Astrid Much)—very risqué in comparison with contemporary programming in the FRG and the United States. Instead, *Fetzer* set off a wave of criticism that reverberated for several months, both fueling wider debates about the representation of socialism and pulling the television service into those debates.

Criticism began soon after the opera aired, coming from several quarters and growing quickly. The *BZ Am Abend* the following day described an audience of "curious onlookers" who were treated to a "terrifically successful" piece, especially due to the efforts of Schwaen, Stahnke, Bergmann, and the

actor Ekkehard Schall, while lamenting it had "stirred the reason, but not the emotion."[81] But some viewers were much less generous. One viewer wrote to the *Berliner Zeitung*, "to come right to the point, we, me and four other people who watched it were very bored by it. Colleagues with whom I talked about it today said it's not understandable why people would give this to us . . . we are of the opinion that this piece did nothing for the esteem of the DFF."[82] Later that week, Kurt Schwaen was scheduled to speak at the State Opera. He was unhappy to report, "everything went great [until] finally we were supposed to talk about *Fetzer* as agreed. The opinion was negative; nobody liked it." Werner Otto, who had earlier negotiated with Kunert and Schwaen to bring *Fetzer* to the stage of the State Opera, "liked it least." Schwaen defended the work "but it was hopeless to achieve something here." He left exasperated and disappointed "although there was lots of applause."[83]

Negative criticism rarely touched the music, but Schwaen closely followed the debacle.[84] By the end of December, he believed that the rising din of criticism in the press had reached the level of a "smear campaign."[85] "Vicious criticisms of the opera . . . irrelevant, insulting, sycophantic. . . . Nauseating," particularly in the *Berliner Zeitung* and *BZ Am Abend*, incensed him.[86] He wrote an open letter to the *BZ Am Abend*, expressing his great surprise at the paper's coverage of *Fetzer*, given that its reviews of the radio opera from July 1959 had deemed it "contemporary material in a partisan artistic form of top quality."[87] For Schwaen, the press had begun to shovel "buckets of dirt and viciousness made worse through stupidity and arrogance," which was compounded by colleagues from the VdK who had begun to use the "old vocabulary" of socialist realist criticism: "decadence," "cool, without emotion."[88] He was similarly exasperated that Radio in the American Sector (RIAS) was reporting the *Fetzer* debacle as an example of SED repression of artistic expression.

The day following the *Fetzer* broadcast, the Agitation Commission made it clear to Adameck that this was not the sort of programming that belonged on East German television. Adameck appeared on television two days later to openly apologize.[89] It was a failed experiment, he conceded, since the audience was having difficulty with the aesthetic components of the opera: "understandably, nothing unintelligible is desired, in the music, or in the whole method of composition." Music, for example, "must stay in the ear . . ." it should be "folksy (*volkstümlich*) and melodic."[90] But the rising hue and cry in the press and among viewers convinced the Commission that more had to be done to head off further public debate. They asked Walter Baumert, an up-and-coming DFF director, to publicly disavow the opera. The result was a screed pillorying

Fetzer in the national daily *Neues Deutschland*. "The results were staggering," Baumert wrote. "The masses of the television public reacted with uncharacteristic great disgust" at the

> fatalist and abstruse work of an unbelievable, limited chump and hardened criminal . . . For 54 minutes one asks oneself despairingly how the author expects one million workers before the television screen, who devoted their honest strength to the building of socialism, with any seriousness to identify the schizophrenic figure of a murderer with their own comrades, colleagues and friends.[91]

Fetzer was hardly the positive hero the authorities hoped to see in socialist productions. Baumert's critique followed same general narrative as the wider criticism in the press. What made this critique different was the fact that a television "authority" wrote it, invoking incredibly vehement language that both damned and dismissed the show, and the fact that it appeared in the "Party paper" *Neues Deutschland*. The piece sought to demonstrate to the television audience that the DFF and the Party were aware of, and agreed with, such criticisms. Baumert further promised that the DFF would "continue to follow the path we've taken with such works as *Revolt of the Conscience, Naked among Wolves* . . . and *The Blue Light*," which had been much more popular with audiences. Three days later the DFF "apologized" in a completely different way: an episode of the variety show *The Laughing Bear* lampooned *Fetzer* when the moderators presented an old, broken-down bicycle to the audience, asking what could be done with this useless relic. Their answer was to pour vanilla sauce over it, put it on display, and call it "Fetzer's Flight."[92] It was a small moment, but it played out in a huge forum—a show that broadcast on television and radio through the Republic—sending a clear message to the audience about the future of television entertainment.

Pre-broadcast press reviews heralded *Fetzer*'s premiere as a great new experiment in television opera and a true-to-life account of the tribulations of living on the front lines of the Cold War, but the broadcast challenged audiences with its stark music and images and complex structure.[93] The opera began with a decisive warning shot of bold trumpets and staccato piano and a fade in to the bright lights of West Berlin at night. Flashing neon lights advertise shoes, women's hose, furniture, currency exchange, and the department store C&A. Fetzer appears, glancing anxiously over his shoulder. The neon seems to follow, dwarf, and overwhelm him. A man in a car watches; his car

telephone betrays him as an agent of the West German government. The music is too frantic to be jaunty and seems to chase after Fetzer. Fetzer evades the West German agents, hiding behind a neighborhood café. Safe, he continues on, comes upon a fishing boat, asks for shelter. His fear of the police gets the better of him, and he tells his story to the fishermen.

At this point, the program tells Fetzer's story in a series of flashbacks. Hanging out by the train tracks, Fetzer hopped a train going West on a whim. He faced his first moment of decision when confronted by the train driver: he would not "let (Fetzer) slip through" (the border) and, after a short struggle, the driver fell to his death on the tracks. Having crossed the border, Fetzer found himself wandering among the neon lights of West Berlin. He lived in close quarters in a refugee camp, where his nightly dreams were so vivid that they raised suspicion among his bunkmates. The police investigated and, learning of his crime, they offer him two choices. He could "confess" that he had killed for his freedom, be held up as a hero and propaganda symbol for the freedom of the West, and live the life he had come to West Germany to live, or he could refuse and face a pauper's death. In this second decisive moment, Fetzer goes along with the authorities, and they outfit him with the riches of the West: a leather jacket, evenings at the cocktail bar. Having convinced himself of the rectitude of his ways, he is taken by surprise when Gesa, the wife of the train driver, arrives at the camp to confront him with his crime. Faced with his guilt, Fetzer leaves camp in the middle of the night, with the West German authorities in hot pursuit. He finds the fishermen and takes refuge on their boat. Having told his story, Fetzer finally decides to return to the GDR and rows for home with one of his confessors.

In telling this story, the production team made many convention-breaking aesthetic decisions that were unfamiliar on television, and perhaps even for the average filmgoer. The narrative is complicated: *Fetzer's Flight* tells two stories—that of Fetzer's flight from the GDR and that of his flight from the West German authorities. These two stories are woven together so that the narrative unfolds out of chronological sequence. The opera uses a framing device: it begins and ends with Fetzer's flight from the West German authorities, and includes flashbacks to this narrative throughout. But only the first of these flashbacks is indicated through the use of a fade. Otherwise, the present and past narratives are fairly seamlessly intertwined. There is also a short scene depicting the explosive aftermath of an atomic bomb blast that appears toward the end of the film without warning or, seemingly, reason (but which was meant to suggest the imminence of nuclear catastrophe). This narrative flow

Fig. 5. Broadcasting the tenth anniversary program of the DFF, December 1962: Fetzer "dreams" of the West. *Fetzers Flucht* **(dir. Gunter Stahnke, 1962), frame capture.**

was very different from contemporary televisual storytelling, which relied heavily on an orderly sequence of shots to make the dramatic action understandable to viewers.

The discontinuous narrative was one of many modernist and "distancing" effects the production used in the camerawork, editing style, and mise-en-scène.[94] For example, Stahnke used point-of-view shots that forced the audience, used to voyeuristically observing television action from behind the fourth wall, to take Fetzer's place during his most traumatic experiences. We see this during his struggle with the train conductor (played by Fred Düren), when Düren "fights" with the camera, for example, and when Fetzer fearfully boards the fishing boat, in a high-angle shot as the camera unsteadily descends the boats' steps toward the fisherman seated at his dinner table. Viewers, used to watching an orderly sequence of medium and close-up shots of people and their faces, were instead confronted with a seemingly random flow of shots, often in extreme close-up, of feet, hands, clothing, and even inanimate objects

Fig. 6. Broadcasting the tenth anniversary program of the DFF, December 1962: Fetzer four-shot. *Fetzers Flucht* **(dir. Gunter Stahnke, 1962), frame capture.**

around which the action took place, most notably lamps, light bulbs, and lanterns. Stahnke used high- and low-angle shots, intensifying the mood of fear or menace in particular scenes (as above). Some scenes were shot askew; in some shots, parts or the entirety of the actors' heads lay outside the film frame. Superimposed images suggest Fetzer's innermost thoughts: when Fetzer imagines the West, for example, the screen is filled by an extreme close-up of his right eye, over which images are superimposed of him and his expensive car, or surrounded by beautiful women, representing the riches of the West. The editing style was differently paced than most contemporary television, with both long and increasingly rapid short cuts, smash cuts, and a disorienting circling swish pan.[95]

There were many other startling shots that similarly broke the "rules" of televisual representation as they had been developed over the past decade, creating visually stunning—or deeply confusing—tableaux. Stahnke used rear projection to alienate Fetzer from the onscreen action. In the very first scene,

Stahnke projected a film consisting of short, two- or three-second shots from a variety of perspectives of the lights of West Berlin by night. At first it seems to be a conventional establishing shot, but then Schall steps onscreen in front of it, appearing literally overlaid onto the changing street scene and destabilizing the established perspective. Schall's figure is entirely out of scale and synchronization with images appearing behind him.[96] Later, Stahnke used mirrors to capture and complicate the action of the story. When Fetzer tries on his new leather jacket, for example, what might have been a one-shot of Schall is actually a four-shot: a double paneled mirror revolves out of a wall cabinet, and, in the left-hand side of the frame, we see Schall with his back turned; in the middle third of the frame we see Schall and Rudolf Ulrich (the Western agent) reflected in the mirror face forward; in the right-hand third of the frame Schall appears alone, face forward, reflected in the second mirror. Not just Fetzer's conscience, but also the representation of his person is split by his dilemma.

The production amplified Fetzer's psychological state—his uncertainty, fear, and isolation—through the mise-en-scène as well. Sets were very spare, establishing a stark, inhospitable mood. Exterior locations, such as the cobbled road down which Fetzer flees the West German authorities, the river location where the crew shot the boat scenes, and the courtyard of the refugee camp, were stark, barren, late winter landscapes, often filmed in wide-angle shots in which the horizon could not be seen, a very claustrophobic style. Other "exterior" locations, such as the train wagon where Fetzer struggled with the train driver or the neighborhood café, were conspicuously interior sets. The "train wagon" was a large, wagon-sized wooden box filled with "coal bricks" swaying in the rhythm of a moving train. The café was little more than a simple structure on a soundstage, a fact easily betrayed by the plywood floor (visibly nailed down) and urban skyline silhouette constructed in the background. (We know it is a café in part because Fetzer takes a moment to gaze ambivalently through the window at the petit-bourgeois gnawing his wurst and drinking his pils—a character sketch that could have been straight out of George Grosz's 1919 work *Germany, a Winter's Tale*.) Interior sets, such as the refugee camp quarters or cabin of the fishing boat, were similarly spare, but much closer, cramped spaces, expressing Fetzer's sense of confinement. Modest curtains and a simple table gave the barest indication of the purpose of Gesa's quarters, while the "shop" where Fetzer acquired his leather jacket consisted of no more than walls, mirrors, and a chair. These choices were not taken simply to make the most of few resources but rather were aesthetic decisions that focused the audience's attention away from the plot of the work and toward the implications of the characters' thoughts and actions. Of course, they were also per-

fectly suited to the conditions of early television, when simple set details transmitted much more effectively than cluttered, large-scale sets.

Such aesthetic choices may have been thoughtful attempts to compel viewers to empathize with Fetzer and experience the cold and desolate alienation from the homeland, but this narrative style was new and unfamiliar, making it difficult for audiences to know how to respond. Post-broadcast reviews charged that the production had paid too little attention to establishing and developing individual characters, their origins, intentions, and motivations. This "weakness" resulted from a number of factors ranging from the acting style to the confrontation of the conventions of opera with those of television. The acting was incredibly restrained, even cold. Christel Gloger (Gesa) shows no emotion when she realizes Fetzer murdered her husband, nor when she confronts him in the camp. Horst Kube (the fisherman) is stony-faced and appears threatening or sympathetic only due to context. As noted above, song replaced "dialogue," though the audience almost never sees the actors singing.[97] Indeed, we often do not see their mouths or even their faces, but rather eyes and noses, or hands on cigarettes, bricks, and other inanimate objects. Given these conditions, Fred Düren and Ekkehard Schall (the conductor and Fetzer, respectively) achieved great rapport in their short scene together, a testament to their abilities to communicate emotion without much "acting" at all.[98] There is only one moment in the opera when the audience can see an actor singing—the West German agent is speaking to Fetzer—but rather than allowing the audience to identify more fully with that character, it further disrupts the "reality effect," especially since the actor, Rudolf Ulrich, breaks the fourth wall and sings directly into the camera. The effect is incredibly jarring: it does not appear "real," an effect heightened by the fact that the sung words were not synchronized with the image of the actor singing.

The innovative narrative style and camera work, the austere, minimalist mise-en-scène, and the seemingly dumb and uncommunicative nature of the characters were all elements of the opera discussed with enthusiasm in pre-broadcast cast reviews, but once realized on-screen were deemed too inaccessible, too pitched to the audience's "reason" and not their "emotion." Critics and viewers wondered how Fetzer came to his decisions. This suggested, in part, that the narrative flow confused them: after all, Fetzer already made all his choices before the narrative even begins, and the opera is a tale of what happened afterward—of his flight from the West German authorities and the retelling of his story to the sympathetic fishermen. That structure was not necessarily clear after one viewing, however. The opera, then, contravened a number of contemporary conventions. It did not offer a conventional story, and it told

that story without the emotion or pathos viewers had come to expect of melodramatic screen narratives. The production relied not on naturalistic reenactment (action and dialogue), but on images and the chorus, a modernist mise-en-scène, and experimental editing to express the thoughts, emotions, and deeper meaning of the drama. Contemporary television relied on the "reality effect" to make the story intelligible and draw the audience in, but *Fetzer* was built around subverting reality effects.

Scholarly critique of the events that led to the censure of *Fetzer* and the banning of *Monologue for a Taxi Driver* has argued that the affair was, above all, about political ideology. Günter Agde and, more recently, Henning Wrage have described the wave of letters to the press and the DFF as a campaign "obviously organized . . . by the higher echelons" of the SED because the Party faithful did not like the *politics* of *Fetzer*.[99] For Agde, the plot of *Fetzer* dealt with material that was "politically suspect"; even the representation of crossing a border, which was impossible for many East Germans at the time, was impossible for the SED to accept. For Peter Hoff, it was inconceivable that a program about *Republikflucht*—taboo, after the Wall—could be broadcast "just sixteen months after the construction of the Berlin Wall."[100] He argues that there was enough ambiguity in the play that government officials could not be sure that audiences would not identify with the Fetzer who chose to leave and not the Fetzer who renounced that choice. There is a related school of thought that the decision to censor the opera and their second play, *Monologue for a Taxi Driver*, came from Walter Ulbricht himself, the very next day.[101] By this account, *Fetzer*'s fate had everything to do with timing: the plot was inopportune, and the broadcast occurred at a moment when artistic experiments drew unwanted attention. In fact, it took some time for the DFF to make this decision: they continued to advertise *Monologue*—not just in the television magazine sent out to viewers, but also through press releases that continued through the middle of December.

But the politics of *Fetzer* could be said to be true: it dramatized and celebrated values promoted by the SED at least since the "Ten Commandments" of 1958, for example.[102] Both the textual and visual message of the opera reinforced those values. The film set the tone from the very opening shots, in which Fetzer runs, apparently frightened, from the bright lights of the capitalist West. An almost identical scene later on (in flashback), in which Fetzer drinks in this spectacle this time with curiosity, only amplifies the viewers' sense of Fetzer's fear: once fascinated, Fetzer now "knows better" and has to find a way to return home. In the end, according to the narrator and the chorus, Fetzer "recognizes himself as his own enemy" and decides to turn himself in for his crime, in the

process "liberating himself" by returning to the GDR. *Fetzer* even passed one early political test with flying colors: the head of the DFF, Heinz Adameck, a member of the Central Committee, reportedly "loved" it.[103] Henning Wrage agrees. For Wrage, though, that is all the more evidence that "the GDR nomenclature often persecuted precisely those who believed in the socialism of the land in the most engaged way."[104]

In his encounter with television, Kunert's situation exemplifies the growing power of television to define the way socialism could be envisioned in the GDR. Similar criticisms were flying in literary quarters, for example, and literary censors even denied publication of some of Kunert's poems in the early 1960s. (They were later published in revised form.)[105] But literary scholar Holger Brohm argues that Kunert's troubles with the state would have dissipated, were it not for the television version of *Fetzer*. The *Fetzer* affair, of course, was a blow to Kunert;[106] even so, it was not the end of his literary life in the GDR. He went on to publish extensively in the GDR and the West, and he continued to contribute passionately to artistic debates in other GDR cultural forums, notably the explosive "poetry debate" of 1966 that splashed across the pages of *Forum*.[107] For literary scholar Ingrid Pietrzynski, Kunert was a "master" of the medium of radio. She writes, joyfully, "with increasing confidence, he conquered artistic forms of representation and experimented with the use of different artistic media," and laments that the debacle over the television version of *Fetzer* reshaped Kunert's art. He left the legacy of Brecht—didactic theater and "*erzieherpose*" (educator position)—behind, and his work was no longer "future-oriented" and "utopian."[108]

As Wrage and Pietrzynski have argued, Kunert indeed seems to have been deeply engaged in questions of cultural identity and socialism in the GDR. And I would argue that *Fetzer* was a stunning piece of work, narratively, structurally, and visually.[109] But within the emerging television culture of the GDR, being committed was not enough: it was instead about what came across the television screen. For the state, it was about managing the ways in which socialism was understood and envisioned by the audience. In other arts in the 1960s, it was possible to allow debates to circle around the same issues of representation, alienation, and narrative for years, with little movement on the part of the artists.[110] But television could not operate that way. It was constrained by the demands of the production schedule, available resources, and the inexorable, relentless demands of the transmission schedule—television had to be on the air. Artists also had to concede that television productions emerged out of collective authorship (in which authors, but also producers, technicians, programmers, and others shaped the production), to a degree not

seen in most other arts. And, finally, television reached too large an audience to "flop" *or* to engage in effective debate. Kunert has suggested that he was attacked by "people who didn't have the faintest idea of art and literature," and that a much more productive critique could have come from a discussion in which viewers, critics, director, composer, and author could all take part.[111] That is likely the case. But what that demonstrates is that, by this time, television had come to be defined differently than as a medium of high "art" and debate. Television disciplined artists like Kunert—and Stahnke, who spent the rest of his career working in light drama (*heitere Dramatik*), later earning the "Chaplin prize" for entertainment television.[112] *Fetzer*, and experiments like it, *could have* revolutionized cultural debate and identity in the GDR, not to mention the way we think about television in the West. But it did not. Instead, it mediated the "loss of the *Lehrauftrag* (educative mission)" in the drive for a socialist, national culture.[113]

Fetzer's crime was that it contravened the aesthetic "rules" of contemporary television. Agde admits that the overwhelming majority of the contemporary television audience preferred more traditional narrative styles and programming. Viewers responded to the "reality effect" and narrative conventions of melodrama that were central to contemporary television, so it was important that the story be told in a certain way, with a clear narrative, context, and character development. With its achronological timeline, the narrative was confusing and perhaps even, as one viewer suggested, "boring."[114] It is meaningful that seasoned media critics remained measured, even laudatory, even after the public outcry had gained momentum.[115] One reviewer claimed: "The television film opera *Fetzer* was not ordinary. The screen has been drooling for such intensive and dramatic creative power of the camera. Ekkehard Schall's expressive face, caught by the masterful camera was fascinating." But less knowledgeable critics described *Fetzer* as underwritten, overstylized, conventional, confusing, banal, and "pantomime with music."[116] While the radio opera had begun with a long chorus setting the context of the story—the Cold War division of Germany—the television opera instead presented a work that was more a suspenseful story of a fugitive from West German authorities, told in a way audiences had difficulty following.[117] In (melo-)dramatic television programming, character development allowed audiences to care about (not to mention follow) the story, but viewers and reviewers found this lacking. Kunert's and Stahnke's negotiations with the DFF had been so difficult in part because DFF staff anticipated that these were the areas that audiences would criticize, and they were right. At the time, *Fetzer* did not make good television: audiences did not necessarily understand or like it, which they expressed vociferously in letters to newspaper editors, letters to television service, and, in some cases, even

in discussion with the artists themselves. M.L. of Lichtenberg wrote to the *Berliner Zeitung*, "I kept asking myself how it could've come to this performance? How could such important actors be available? What exactly did the author and director think as they were preparing this performance. . . ."[118] A viewer from Hohenleipisch wrote to the television magazine that the opera succeeded through its direction, artwork, and acting achievements, especially those of Ekkehard Schall, but "the narrative, the music, the singing—no I didn't like that. I expected something completely different . . . [from] the term opera."[119] That this viewer could not accept this as an opera exemplifies why the tropes and conventions of narrative forms matter. A viewer from Dresden spoke directly to the formalism debate, describing *Fetzer* as "crass monkey business":

> Forty years ago in Dresden there was a student organization that called itself the Dadaists . . . The public was ready for an end to this Dadaist phantom already after ten minutes. Compare this to the television opera Fetzer . . . We workers have the right and the duty to raise the sharpest protest against it after a day of hard work we wish to see an edifying evening of entertainment, but not the products of the handful of surrealists, that waste our intellectual and material people's goods and give offense in such a punishing way. In addition, those at the DFF should think to themselves . . . our shows are also seen abroad and in West Germany.[120]

The latter viewer was particularly incensed by the "dadaist" and "surrealist" nature of the piece, rejected the non-socialist realist socialist past, and claimed his right as a worker to be "entertained." It is possible that, as Wrage and Agde suggest, letters such as this came not from viewers but were instead "planted" by government authorities. But that would not change the way the letters defined the "problem," nor that they both drew from and fueled wider discourse about what "socialist" television should accomplish. This was not the first time the DFF had heard the call for entertainment after a hard day's or week's work; the DFF viewership had demanded that sort of entertainment since at least the mid-1950s, and this demand had come to shape both the DFF staff's and, as we will see in the next chapter, the SED's definition of effective television.

Conclusion

The Second Berlin Crisis opened a period of cultural ferment during which artists, government officials, cultural organs, and audiences probed the limits

of the SED's new socialist, national culture, gradually delineating its contours. Early discussions of outright repressive tactics, including jamming Western signals or otherwise preventing "ideological border-crossing," were deemed ineffective and left unimplemented. The GDR would have to rely on the appeal of its own program. To that end, authorities paid new attention to the messages and overall appeal of the DFF program. The DFF, which had, since the 1950s, worked hard just to put a full schedule of programming on the air, had finally reached a point at which they could experiment with television aesthetics and form. Experiments like *Fetzer* exploded the conventions of classical narrative storytelling and demonstrated new ways that the visual could be exploited on television. Unhampered by the conventions of traditional formats like the quiz show or the crime thriller, such programming could be revolutionary, reshaping the way (East) Germans saw the world and, in this way, could contribute to the state's mandate to engage audiences in the construction of a new socialist culture in the GDR. But the DFF had managed to achieve this in a context of increasing ideological conformity, and the furor over *Fetzer* exemplifies the state in which this program of revolutionary change found itself after the Berlin Wall. Now that the border was closed, the state turned inward and encouraged East Germans to do the same. The balance between ideological *commitment*, so important to the campaign to build socialism in the late 1950s, and ideological *conformity* had shifted in favor of the latter. *Fetzer* did not fail at being ideologically reliable, but it did fail to be ideologically effective—to be comprehensible to and popular with the audience. Vigorous, public criticism led to calls for more "relaxing" and "entertaining" fare. This is an important distinction to make, because scholars and the lay public alike assume that censorship scandals such as *Fetzer* and *Monologue* happened because the state simply banned outright works it found unacceptable. Here, by contrast, is an example of an unsuccessful program that never aired again because it was palpably unpopular, not because it was politically suspect.

Chapter 6

Reaching Consensus on Television

In August 1961, just days before the construction of the Berlin Wall and while the DFF was still working out the final storyline for *Fetzer*, the department of television drama of the DFF filmed the final scene of a new mini-series, *Revolt of the Conscience* (*Gewissen in Aufruhr*). Hans Oliva wrote the script based on Rudolf Petershagen's widely read memoir of the same name published first in 1956.[1] In five parts, the story followed the life of Nazi officer Ebershagen. The series began with the battle of Stalingrad, which Ebershagen barely survived, and continued with his decision to surrender the city of Greifswald to the Red Army without a fight in the spring of 1945. His eventual return from postwar captivity to become a champion of German unity was followed by his subsequent arrest and "show trial" at the hands of American intelligence officers, and, finally, his ideological conversion and decision to settle in the GDR.[2]

The series aired in September 1961, one month after the construction of the Berlin Wall. It featured a large cast, including Bruno Carstens and Alexander Papendieck, familiar to television audiences from their roles in the crime thriller *The Blue Light*, which may help to account for its wide popularity among East German audiences. It was also released widely in the eastern bloc and found receptive audiences in Cuba, Sweden, and Austria.[3] In 1962, it appeared on Soviet television screens. Soviet television scholar Alexander Prokhorov argues that *Revolt* revolutionized Soviet television producers' approach to serial production and its role in structuring leisure time. He writes that, for Russian TV critic Sergei Muratov, "*Gewissen in Aufruhr* created a shock: 'We simply did not know that a film can last five evenings in a row' . . . [A]n entire week's schedule could be organized not only around work, but also around television programming—the screening of a mini-series."[4] Unlike *Fetzer*, then, *Revolt* found acclaim among audiences and state authorities in the Department of Agitation and Propaganda, the Politburo, and beyond. It became the standard by which the value of other DFF programs was measured. In the GDR and elsewhere, *Revolt* facilitated the emergence of television as a medium not just of information but of leisure and entertainment as well.

That *Revolt of the Conscience* would enjoy such success was not self-evident in the summer of 1961. It had taken the author and dramaturge Wenzel Renner some time to find a home for the project. Producers at the East German film studio DEFA were torn about the political implications of the plot—it is a story in which the hero was a (former) Nazi officer—and a similar narrative had led to fierce discussions several years earlier with the release of DEFA's *The Devil's General*. That story had also presented a situation in which viewers could identify with military insubordination in an era in which GDR authorities were trying to build the National People's Army.[5] In the end, the Politburo struck the *Revolt* script from DEFA's plan.[6] But the material interested television producers, who felt that it could appeal to the pan-German audience and who had the relative freedom to adopt such a screenplay. When the series aired in September 1961, the broadcast became an event unmatched by any previous television program. Despite DEFA's early fears, *Revolt of the Conscience* even appeared in cinemas: the DFF released a two-part version in movie theaters, to reach viewers who did not yet have access to a television set.[7]

The making and ultimate success of *Revolt of the Conscience* represented a watershed in the shifting political status of the television service in the GDR. The steady development of the medium in the 1950s had led the SED to recognize that television was a "new and meaningful political-cultural factor" in the GDR, but had done little to prove its ideological power in a palpable way.[8] *Revolt of the Conscience*'s striking success made the advantages of television apparent in dramatic fashion: it could reach more people, more quickly than any other medium in the Republic. The faulty reportage of the Hungarian uprising had demonstrated to government authorities the potential power of disseminating their own message through television to meet the Western challenge in 1956. The success of *Revolt of the Conscience*, by contrast, compelled SED authorities to discover the potential for reaching the domestic viewing audience, increasingly drawn to television in droves. It also contributed to an emerging consensus about how best to depict socialism on screen. Both *Fetzer* and *Revolt* told stories of socialist conversion, but in very different ways. *Fetzer* gave rise to debates about television aesthetics, narrative form, and the "new hero" of socialism, a term coined to refer in a disparaging way to characters such as the *republikflüchtige* Harry Fetzer. By contrast, *Revolt of the Conscience* found acclaim for "bringing the past to life" in a "realistic" and "convincing" work that made viewers feel that Erwin Geschonneck (playing Ebershagen) "had actually lived through" the events depicted.[9]

That viewers and others identified precisely this distinction between the

two programs both fueled and reflected a larger debate going on in Party conferences and in the Agitation Commission, which continued to roil the DFF in the early 1960s. Artistic works like *Fetzer*, but also plays, poetry, and even industrial design, troubled the SED for their depiction of socialism and, especially, "the new socialist man." At the Sixth Party Congress, Walter Ulbricht, Kurt Hager, and others disparaged the state of the East German arts: in their haste to liberalize (due to ongoing destalinization), artists were ignoring all that socialism had accomplished. GDR artists were not alone in this. In May 1963, Czech artists convened the "Kafka Conference," with participants from across the eastern bloc and the West. The conveners sought to rehabilitate the author and, more widely, the legacy of modernism as avenues for a new socialist culture. Indeed, it set off a new wave of liberalization in certain parts of the eastern bloc, especially Czechoslovakia—but not in the GDR.

Between August 1961 and December 1965, the battle against the progressive socialist artistic past was won on East German television screens. The public response to *Fetzer* and government pronouncements on the "right" direction for cultural activity shaped internal debate about the direction of future television productions. Where the "rules" for television had been fairly fluid and unstable in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the larger debate delineating the acceptable contours of socialist national culture now produced narrative stability on East German television. This narrative stability coalesced around new types of programming that left the televisual aesthetics of the 1950s behind, fully embracing the "live" potential of television, while telling stories of East German socialism in a way that appealed to both audiences and political authorities. New programs told a certain kind of story about the lived experience of socialism. There were conversion stories, such as *Revolt* and, later, *Dr. Schlüter*. But increasingly the DFF focused on the problems and triumphs of viewers' everyday lives, in the topical "investigative" program *Prisma* and light entertainment programming such as *With Open Hearts*, for example. Following up the success of *Revolt of the Conscience*, the release of the historical mini-series *Dr. Schlüter* in 1965 made television a role model for other GDR media. During the Eleventh Plenum of 1965, where Honecker and Ulbricht excoriated GDR cultural institutions, television escaped relatively unscathed, and *Schlüter* received rare praise. Television had become the preeminent medium of socialist realism in the GDR. By the end of the decade though, the exigencies of the television industry had begun to take their toll. Increasingly, the DFF relied on programming produced elsewhere with unexpected consequences for the socialist national project.

Disciplining "Socialist" Culture

Although *Fetzer* triggered one of the most important controversies ever to beset the television service, it was but one work caught up in a much larger controversy already unfolding over socialist values and how best to represent them in socialist art. The Fifth German Art Exhibition opened in September 1962, for example, exhibiting new, modern, socialist design. Walter Ulbricht complained about the "grey-ness" on display.[10] In October, the Academy of the Arts hosted a *Lyrikabend*—an evening reading of new poetry. The evening reinvigorated poetry. Over the next few months a number of other similar events took place, drawing large, enthusiastic audiences to hear experimental works and, beginning in 1963, also drawing scrutiny from the government.[11] Lyric poetry became an important medium for the articulation of controversial attitudes, and poetry evenings became an important space for open discussion and debate among artists.[12]

October also saw the premiere of a new play that became the focal point of the rising wave of criticism that caught *Fetzer* in its undertow. Renowned playwright and dramaturge of the German Theater (*Deutsches Theater*) in Berlin, Peter Hacks, opened the latest version of his work *Problems and Power* (*Die Sorgen und die Macht*). The play depicted industrial workers who confront the problem of quantity over quality in the products they make in their factories.[13] The contradictions of socialist development are at the heart of the play but are resolved by means of a "happy ending," in which the protagonist "becomes a positive collective hero."[14] Nonetheless, the play unleashed a powerful debate among SED leaders, who described it as "cold," "without life experience, identification or illusion,"[15] and claimed that it "alienated the audience from political sympathy and commitment."[16] Commenting on the debate, literary critic Peter Demetz noted that, "at present, the odds weigh heavily against the heritage of Brecht. The regime condemns Hacks and ardently favors . . . Kleinadam (*sic*) and his new play *Millionenschmidt* in which the pressing problems of productivity in the construction industry are handled in the expected way. There is a highly positive bricklayer who converts his ideal colleagues to better work; and the state conventions remain absolutely loyal to the theater of Dumas the younger." He predicted, "(Friedrich) Wolf and Brecht are dead, a new generation of playwrights has emerged but it is still yesterday's battle they fight."[17]

This larger public debate shaped the television controversy. Kunert had become a fairly easy target by this time, having fallen under scrutiny for "reactionary" works, including an appearance at the 11 December *Lyrikabend* of the

Academy of Arts just days before *Fetzer* aired, and was castigated in the press and behind the scenes. The Agitation Commission arranged for a private viewing of Kunert and Stahnke's other work, *Monologue for a Taxi Driver*, as soon as the film was "in the can." Afterward, the play was quietly withdrawn from the television schedule, and the Agitation Commission called a meeting of DFF staff to discuss both works.[18] At least a hundred DFF staff attended the meeting, which was an attempt to discipline television workers by "revealing" the reactionary nature of the two shows.[19] Producer Gerhard Scheumann tore apart the plays, accusing the authors of imbibing Heidegger's "Atom Bomb philosophy."[20] Kunert and Stahnke reportedly "distanced themselves from the film."[21] Having dealt with the authors, the Commission moved on to everyone else who had a hand in the film, holding meetings with the DFF's Party organization (*Betriebsparteiorganisation* or BPO), the department of Dramatic Arts, and the Party Committee for Radio and Television, until it was satisfied that the matter had been brought to a close.[22]

In turn, *Monologue* and similar works fueled discussion about the future of socialist culture in the GDR as the SED sought to discipline other East German artists in early 1963. In mid-January, the SED met in Berlin at the Sixth Party Congress to discuss the new economic plan. It was the first such meeting since 1958, at which the Party had announced the economic and cultural "struggle for socialism." That congress mandated a tighter relationship between the artists and the people, a call that was renewed at the Bitterfeld Conference of 1959. Artists were to delve more into the lived experience of socialism in the GDR, and the people were meant to "storm the heights of culture . . . recognize their leading role," and get more involved in artistic creation.[23] Now, in January 1963, they could survey the results of that campaign. There were some notable successes: modern technology meant that art, broadly conceived, could be disseminated much more widely, particularly through the medium of television. Artists of all stripes were probing "new themes and problems," and proving themselves "true helpers of the party and our state."[24] But socialist realism was under attack by artists like Peter Hacks, Stephen Hermlin (progenitor of the *Lyrikabend*), Peter Huchel (editor of *Meaning and Form*), and Günter Kunert.[25]

At the Sixth Party Congress, Walter Ulbricht set out the terms the Party would mobilize throughout the spring of 1963. He warned broadly of the influence of Western decadence in the GDR and "revisionist thinking" among certain intellectuals, and against "ideological coexistence."[26] Artists were depicting a "gray and drab" vision of socialism, dwelling on the struggle and contradictions of socialist development, rather than celebrating all that East

German socialism had achieved or representing socialist life in all its diversity and beauty. "Formalist" experiments demonstrated artists' conviction that "their individualistic perception is more important than the conception of the community." By definition, certain narrative forms and modernist devices could not appropriately celebrate socialism and were unacceptable. The interior monologue Kunert used in *Monologue*, for example, could never represent the beauty of socialist life, because it made "capturing the lifelike connections of living people" impossible.[27]Art should instead "educate the reason, as well as the strength of feeling (*Gefühlskraft*) of our working people," and "(the) present should become more beautiful than ever before through the collaboration of artists and the working people." Artists *could* create successful works of art that grappled with the conditions of contemporary life demonstrating their socialist loyalty: not in heavy, modernist experiments, but through light entertainment. Artists should satisfy the simple desire of the people to be entertained and do so using the material that was right in front them, including stories and songs germane to the socialist world of East Germany.[28] The most prominent example of this, for Ulbricht, was none other than *Revolt of the Conscience*: a "fantastic example of the fact that an artistic work can determine the thoughts and feelings of the people." It was a "masterwork" that "gave . . . people . . . around the world the answer to the question of the development of a new journey."[29] *Revolt* was a program that suggested a new narrative of East German socialism.

The attack on modernism continued in the party newspaper *Einheit*, reaching a fevered pitch in March 1963 and dividing the artistic community.[30] The Stasi reported that artists were taken aback by the vehemence of the debate, and many considered themselves personally attacked. Artists were taking sides, and rumors were flying. Some distanced themselves from Kunert and Hacks, while others sought to turn one or both of them against the Party. Staff from the satirical magazine *Eulenspiegel* invited Kunert to strike back at Heinz Quermann, who had ridiculed his poetry at the Sixth Party Congress (and also been involved in the "Laughing Bear" sketch lampooning *Fetzer* described in chapter 5).[31] Kunert demurred, although the magazine published at least one deprecating cartoon, ridiculing a thinly veiled Quermann for knowing nothing about art. Someone tipped off Kunert that one of his detractors had been an SA man at the same time Kunert had been "sitting in a concentration camp (*KZ*)."[32] But Kunert, once defiant, kept his cool. He described the criticism of his work as "thoughtful" and "sensible." He was, however, "particularly depressed about Baumert," who had congratulated Kunert on "his great opera" one day, knowing that his own derogatory review, "Kunert's Flight into Schematism,"

would appear in *Neues Deutschland* the following morning.[33] Overall, the mood was bleak.

A conference held in the last week of March sought to confront this malaise by clarifying the direction of cultural policy. Discussions ranged widely, from the cases of Kunert and Hacks, to the emergence of generational conflicts in the artistic community, to the role and leadership of the Ministry of Culture. Gunter Stahnke undertook an exercise in "self-criticism"; Kunert, loath to attend, already had taken sick leave in the countryside.[34] Walter Ulbricht denounced "backsliders," "modernism," "bourgeois decadence," and "ideological coexistence."[35] Newly minted Central Committee member Kurt Hager outlined a vision of a partisan culture in which artists did not embellish, whitewash, or distort socialism, but rather "communicate(d) the optimism of our socialist worldview that comes from the true love of life" and venerated "socialist" values, including respect and propriety, consideration, prudence, forbearance, and esteem for the community. He declared that artists falling afoul of policy (such as Kunert) should not be drummed out of their vocations; the Stasi, however, doubted the artists believed Hager's call for second chances.[36] The conference mollified some artists and brought Kunert rhetorically back into the fold. But most important for authorities, it set out to put an end to the public debates that had been going on for months: the Television Committee reported, for example, that "the main task now is to advise about creative problems and help the artists to be effective on radio and television as defined by socialist realism."[37]

The notion that these debates had successfully headed off the challenge to socialist realism was sanguine, indeed, and betrays the SED's miscalculation of the contemporary cultural-political context. For the SED, "modernist" influences came from the West; increasingly, though, they were coming from the East as well. Similar debates were raging in the Soviet Union and the eastern bloc, but sometimes with very different outcomes. The international Kafka Conference of May 1963 was one such example. Participants from Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Austria, France, and the GDR met to discuss the possible rehabilitation of Kafka and aspects of modernist literature, such as the problems of realism and alienation, in socialist art. The East German delegation, fresh from the disputes described above, was the lone holdout speaking against it.[38] The conference opened a space of transnational discussion that complicated the ability of national socialist parties like the SED to control the terms of the debate.[39] It also set off a sort of "counterculture" in parts of the eastern bloc.[40] The ramifications for East German television were profound. During the Second Berlin Crisis, the SED had sought to prevent border

crossing—both physical and ideological—by cutting the GDR off from the West. One of the conditions that made this possible was opening the country to the East, binding the GDR more closely to the socialist bloc, and shifting East Germans' attention away from the pan-German future that had been the focus of the (early) 1950s. In 1958, the SED had even mandated that television raise awareness about the "fraternal socialist countries," a requirement the DFF duly met with programming that reported on the advance of socialism outside of the GDR. By the early 1960s, though, they had also come to rely on programming *from* those countries. And the eastern bloc was turning out material that was not so reliable.

The Agitation Commission began to realize this contradiction when, in March, Commissioners returned to the DFF. They were surprised to find little had changed since the *Fetzer* affair, and, worse, the DFF staff was "displaying a lack of political instincts." The DFF had broadcast two dubious films, two days running. One, a French crime thriller called *On a Dangerous Mission*, was highly objectionable. It "contributed to" rising youth criminality in the FRG, and it was morally suspect: "the hero, an unsurpassed 'superman,' is a drunk and disreputable womanizer, who picks up everyone from the general's daughter to the whore and emerges from every malicious adventure as a resplendent victor." The problem with the French film seems clear, but the second film, *Stolen Bombs*, was a Romanian film that had already enjoyed a first run in East German cinemas. The DFF did not anticipate a problem. But the Commissioners found it to be "inferior in the confusing form of *Fetzer's Flight*" and reminded DFF staff that they were responsible for vetting the programming they sent over the airwaves.[41]

The Commission recognized that dramatic programming in particular was subject to a long production cycle that was measured in months rather than days, resulting in some of these missteps, but it did not appreciate the wider context in which the DFF made programming decisions. In 1963 television producers still faced the same overwhelming conundrum they had in the 1950s, that is, how to fill the television schedule while also fulfilling its political mandate. That mandate, to provide a differentiated, topical program that not only reflected socialist life in a way that East Germans could identify with but also appealed to the West German audience, was increasingly difficult to accomplish. It was also contradicted by the Agitation Commission's own demands, still made in 1965, that the DFF broadcast *more* crime thrillers (and romantic movies), even from the West, to distract East German viewers from West German crime thrillers broadcast in the same time slot in the television schedule.[42] Since the *Fetzer* scandal, or more broadly, the cultural scandals of 1961 through

1963, the relative freedom of the DFF to find material wherever it could was gone. Feature film exhibition in the GDR previously had been more closely supervised than television, which meant that such films were already vetted and ready for television transmission; now the tables had turned. The DFF imported films from socialist countries because they fulfilled the mandate to expand coverage of and film exchange with neighboring socialist countries. But by the mid-1960s, even this was a political minefield for the DFF. The film department had come to see its purpose as finding cheap, varied programming with which to "fill gaps" in the schedule. Producers, accustomed to ordering films because they happened to be available, now had to pay closer attention to the politics of the works. In the DFF's view, this was complicated by the fact that socialist film companies had begun to produce works specifically for the Western television market, which they could sell for hard currency. This made it harder not just to find politically acceptable programs from the eastern bloc countries but also to buy the exhibition rights. Socialist countries often sold programs to capitalist countries with non-compete clauses, making those films unavailable for purchase and exhibition in places like the GDR. The DFF noted that West German broadcasters ARD and ZDF were buying up whole annual film catalogues, which kept them from the DFF regardless of whether the West German channels broadcast the films or not.[43] But they took the task to heart and attempted to remove any film from the schedule that deviated at all from the party line, even if that meant broadcasting "boring and artistically insufficient films. . . ."[44]

The Agitation Commission fell back on the habits of the 1950s and, taking an instrumental view of the problem, investigated the DFF leadership. Commissioners found the director of the DFF Heinz Adameck to be "self-important." They complained he made decisions himself outside of the framework of collective leadership, and often "forgot" to invite Georg Puppe, leader of the Party organization in the DFF, to important meetings of the leadership. The weekly talking points disseminated by the State Broadcasting Committee often did not make it past the television leadership into the individual departments of the DFF.[45] But at least Adameck was politically competent.[46] Puppe, likewise, was competent and commanded the respect of the membership, but he was not a true representative of the Party's interests, instead toeing Adameck's line on most issues.[47] They found that partisanship (*Parteilichkeit*) and "being of the people" (*Volkstümlichkeit*) were in short supply at the DFF, especially in the departments of International Relations (responsible for concluding agreements for film exchange as above), Television Drama, Entertainment, and even Sports. The report criticized the "inadequate political-ideological" educa-

tion of DFF sports reporters, the evidence for which was the "one-sided admiration" and "obvious favoritism" of the (capitalist) Canadian hockey team in their World Cup match against (socialist) Czechoslovakia.[48]

It took at least another year to sort out the DFF's ideological affairs. Indeed, six months later, Commissioners returned to discover that nothing in particular had changed. Commissioners put this down to the fact that DFF staff felt no pressure to make substantive changes before the new Fall-Winter program, due to the belief—among television producers, no less—that "no one watches [television] in the summer." Documentation from viewers increasingly discontented by that summer's viewing schedule proved otherwise.[49] The Agitation Commission shook up the party leadership within the DFF to exercise greater control over ideological discussions, introducing new staff positions intended to contribute to future programming conceptions at the television service. Thereafter the DFF met the mandate to bring television closer to the viewers by reaching out to citizens' groups and creating a whole new, more "scientific" (or at least more methodical) Department of Audience Research that, beginning in 1964, began to publish an internal journal of its findings.[50] As the scandal came to a close, the SED brought television broadcasting more closely under the control of the Party leadership by appointing DFF director Heinz Adameck to the Central Committee, a position he held until 1989.

Projecting Socialist Culture

In a number of meetings over the course of 1963, then, the Agitation Commission had lobbied television producers to create television programming that displayed greater political partisanship and to do so in a manner that would appeal to audiences, while taking measures to make sure they followed through. The DFF developed two new programs that successfully fulfilled this mandate. A new "journalistic" treatment of socialism in East German society, *Prisma*, emerged from the Department of Economics. A very different show was *With Open Hearts* (*Mit dem Herzen dabei*), produced by the Department of Entertainment programming. Despite the differences between these programs, their significance was essentially the same: both encouraged audiences to understand themselves as part of a larger socialist collective, and each contributed toward shaping the ways of thinking and behavior of viewers in the GDR.

The DFF introduced the "investigative" magazine show *Prisma* in March 1963. One of the most popular and long-running shows on East German television, *Prisma* ended only after the DFF was dismantled in 1991.[51] Gerhard

Scheumann, founder and first moderator of the show (1963–65), unabashedly modeled *Prisma* on the first West German political magazine *Panorama*, reportedly going so far as to analyze the timing of the show with a stopwatch.[52] The format of *Prisma* resembled the West German program, but the content differed dramatically. Unlike *Panorama*, which dealt with "big political events" and often confronted prominent public figures on air, *Prisma* sought to delve into "the real problems . . . with which socialist society is grappling"—the problems of everyday life.[53] The *Prisma* editorial department cast the program as an intermediary "between the pinnacle and the rank-and-file" of GDR society that could also work to close the gap between the two groups.[54] DFF viewers actively participated in this project, mailing in their complaints, questions, or comments on wide-ranging subjects, including work conditions, the environment, the availability of consumer goods, and life in the socialist home.[55] Viewer correspondence often asked *Prisma* to help expose the contradictions behind the triumphal rhetoric of socialist successes broadcast by shows such as *Current Camera*.

From its inception, the Agitation Commission recognized the potential of the show to be both politically effective and widely popular. They praised the Department of Economics' shows for "winning the hearts and minds of the audience . . . being for them aide and advisor, with particularly effective (*massenwirksam*) shows in the prime time program of the DFF." Such shows "do not deal just with economic questions, but rather make the viewer aware what the all-embracing (*umfassend*) construction of socialism means."[56] Like DFF staff, the state also envisioned that the show would mediate between the Party and the DFF audience, helping them to understand the ideas and policies of the state and generally facilitating the development of socialism in East Germany.

The show lived up to the Agitation Commission's expectations of it, and it came to enjoy a special place in GDR society. One of the most cited examples of *Prisma*'s ability to appeal to viewers and even effect change was the show's intervention on behalf of a young woman who was denied entry into the teaching profession. As a young child, bullies had tossed her into deep water although she could not swim. The traumatic experience had left her terrified of water. At school she refused to swim in gym class and received a failing grade as a result. Despite high marks in all her other classes, this failing grade disqualified her from attending teachers' college and achieving her dream. *Prisma*'s report on her case unleashed vigorous debate across the Republic. Viewers were divided as to whether the girl had been treated fairly or not; this debate was especially striking among teachers, many of whom felt that *Prisma* had undermined their authority to give grades. In the end, the young woman went

on to study education and become a teacher, a result that viewers directly attributed to the show.[57] It was this kind of story that led viewers such as Walter R. from Dresden to claim, "your shows have often led to restoring people's rights or dealing with known shortcomings. That's the reason why I trustfully turned to you with my concern."[58]

The furor surrounding this episode of *Prisma* exposed the contours of (at least) three visions and three centers of power, even if they were disproportionately influential, operating on the television program. The DFF was an institution set between the state and the people, and it mediated a vision of socialist Germany that coexisted uneasily with the vision of state authorities and expectations of East German citizens. The state set out a mandate for programming with popular appeal that could also "uncover contradictions" and "demonstrate solutions" in a way that focused on the positive development of socialism.

It was not the only program to do this in the early 1960s. Programming such as *Your Second Shift* (*Ihre zweite Schicht*), which can almost be described as a sort of "infomercial" for women, dealt with the problems women faced in everyday life now that they had to work and keep house. One episode asked women to identify their least favorite chore. The resounding consensus (at least, as it was shown on-screen) was the "Great Wash" (*Grosse Wäsche*, or the day that women laundered the family linens and clothing). Many East German women still did this by hand, which required heating and hauling water, scrubbing linens, wringing them by hand, hanging them to dry, and so on; it was a task that took most of the day. The program introduced the state's solution: the state laundry. The program utilized a number of strategies—"man-in-the-street" interviews with women, short interviews with "state authorities" from the Party member responsible for the local laundry to the laundry supervisor, tours of the facilities, and even featured viewer letters that both lauded and complained about aspects of the laundries—to introduce, advertise, and even improve the service.[59]

But both *Prisma* and *Your Second Shift* demonstrate that the characterization of television as mediator between *two* poles does not recognize the many fissures in the categories of "state" and "people." Former Agitation Commissioner Eberhard Fensch described in his memoirs the complexity of arbitrating conflict over television programming. *Prisma*, in particular, struck many nerves, and he fielded complaints from state authorities, artists, DFF staff, viewers, and all sorts of other interested parties—including foreign dignitaries—protesting either the program or the way they were depicted in it, just like the teachers above. An episode about the housing shortage brought complaints from the local authorities of the state construction agency, while (different) city

authorities complained about an investigation into lax oversight of environmental damage there, for example.[60] The Agitation Commission thus did not just operate in the interests of the state but also mediated conflicts among and between the DFF and a number of other groups. Historian Andrew Port argues that there were "serious frictions and fundamental divisions" among and within social groups in the GDR. Port contends that it was precisely these divisions that accounted for the longevity and relative stability of the regime.[61] These (sometimes) played out on East German television screens, perhaps buttressing the power of the state by performing (and reinforcing) existing social divisions that Port identifies.

Television producers sought to engage their viewers in topical issues, and *Prisma* is but one example of how they struck a chord with the audience. The audience enjoyed it and came to trust in it, and it contributed to a culture in which people could openly discuss issues of "socialist development."[62] The state (loosely) set the agenda, and television projected some element of the state's vision. But the variety of "viewing positions" made it difficult to tailor a particular message to be received in a particular way. Such debate shaped the ways in which the state and the television service could envision socialism. After the teacher-training episode, Scheumann met with the head of the DFF and Agitation Commission authorities and agreed to smooth things over; in the next episode he reassured GDR educators that they had the DFF's support. Scheumann remembers this as one of many "retractions" he made on the show, but in the larger view, it was simply part of the conversation.[63] Indeed, such "retractions" even allowed viewers to believe that the show was "on their side," interceding between them and "the state."

Prisma was critical of the SED, at least in a limited way, and officials gave the show some leeway over the course of the 1960s due to its popularity among viewers and the political advantage to be gained from supporting "critical journalism" on television.[64] When he left the show in 1965, Scheumann left behind the so-called *Prisma Testament*, a document that he hoped would one day unleash open discussion of the difficulties of investigative journalism at the DFF, an institution that "(was) an instrument for the leadership (*Führung*) of society on the one hand (and) an institution of public opinion (*öffentliche Meinung*) on the other."[65] In the Testament, he described the significance of *Prisma*, in part, as showing audiences the larger context that helped explain policies that otherwise viewers would never have understood. He noted that this had been difficult when he had been faced with bureaucrats who advised him that some topics were better left alone. Defending the right of the author to "his own opinion," Scheumann asserted (just as Quermann had done a year before) that

it was often unclear "what leeway (*Spielraum*) institutions of public opinion had in relationship to officials of the socialist state apparatus."[66]

Prisma did not fundamentally challenge the legitimacy of the state or prominent state authorities, although it often presented a different picture of social problems than the authorities might have wanted. Ina Merkel argues that the function of *Prisma* as a "critical" program not only eased the relationship between the audience and the state, but fulfilled a second role, as "a sort of buffer between viewers and a television service that hardly lived up to its role as a public (*öffentlich*) institution."[67] For Merkel, although *Prisma* reporting challenged specific aspects of the GDR society, it ultimately preserved the system by sustaining consensus among viewers based on the hope that, through the application of reason, the system might change.[68] But should we expect otherwise? In 1963, even television in other countries could hardly be described as centers of hard-hitting journalism that regularly confronted the political powers-that-be. Television in the FRG had only recently weathered the attack on broadcasting independence that was Konrad Adenauer's attempt to set up his own (state-directed) television service.[69] The British Broadcasting Corporation, a much older "public institution" until then fairly narrowly conceived as a medium of education and edification, was, in the 1950s and early 1960s, not interested in "get[ting] deeply entangled in politics as a presenter of the news or as an organizer of a forum of argument."[70] Broadcasting historian Anthony Smith argues that it was only in the first half of the 1960s that "the BBC pioneered daring forms of television satire, instituted professionalized political interviewing, and adopted traditional journalistic standards in its current affairs programs."[71]

The wider significance of *Prisma* lay not in its potential to interrogate, unsettle, or otherwise undermine the state but rather in its ability to project a coherent vision of socialist society in the GDR. Government authorities, television producers, and a variety of viewing publics shaped this vision. The deeper significance of television in general, and *Prisma* in particular, was that it reenvisioned the socialist community of the GDR. The show was but one example of programming that both reflected the new social and economic conditions of the GDR and projected a set of values defined as "socialist."

Prisma's ability to encourage viewers to understand themselves as part of the East German community was surpassed by a new entertainment program, *With Open Hearts*. For some time, the DFF and Agitation Commission had called for new ideas in the realm of entertainment, shows that could break the mold of the studio-produced game show. *With Open Hearts* fit the bill: it was a recurring variety show unlike anything previously seen on East German televi-

sion. The show was a sensation created to celebrate socialism and model socialists. *With Open Hearts* sought to honor ordinary East Germans for embodying "socialist" values such as hard work, devotion to *Heimat*, or teaching their children the value of *Familientreue*. This vision of socialism, which emphasized decent living, consideration for others, moderation, and a "work ethic," would not have been out of place in other German times and spaces. It was anchored to socialism only through geopolitical context and a cultural compromise that privileged nationalism and political partisanship over ideological conviction.

With this mandate, the show capitalized on a longer-standing narrative of socialist heroism: the "myth" of Adolf Hennecke, propagated since 1948. Modeled on the Soviet Stakhanovite movement, the "Hennecke movement" emerged in the context of a government drive to increase production and kickstart the East German economy. The idea was to initiate a competition, then celebrate a worker who had broken productivity norms in hopes of triggering a broad-based movement of workers seeking to emulate him. The chosen worker, Adolf Hennecke, had a good reputation among his fellow miners and a good work ethic—he surpassed his quota on the job fairly regularly. On 13 October 1948, he reached the end of his shift having completed 387 percent of the day's quota. He was lauded by state authorities and rewarded with a new car. The press told his story widely, and the narrative was preserved in East German schoolbooks. Tracing the trajectory of the Hennecke myth, historian Silke Satjukow has shown that the immediate outcome of Hennecke's accomplishment was to alienate his coworkers (and other East Germans), who derided him as a "scab" (*Lohndrücker*) and refused to look him in the eye or associate with him. But, within a week of his accomplishment, reports of other similarly extraordinary feats had begun to emerge. Over time, workers indeed began to aspire to such top performances. Satjukow argues that workers learned the lesson that they were not "just" employees but active collaborators in socialist industries, and that their accomplishments could lead to professional and social prosperity. Such individual feats of productivity were not enough for the government, though, which really wanted to raise the collective achievement of workers. The SED ended this "competition" after just one month and implemented instead a competition between newly formed "worker brigades." Satjukow argues that "socialist heroes" like Hennecke were not "chosen" people nor did they have extraordinary gifts (which, she argues, made them different from the heroes of traditional societies). Instead, they were examples of "the common person, who did what was right for socialist society over and over, every day."[72] *With Open Hearts* drew from this narrative and, just as the Hennecke

myth had done, mediated a social contract in which the values and goals of the state became the hopes and ambitions of the audience.

With Open Hearts' honorees were representatives of the mass of working people in the GDR, often nominated by their coworkers and neighbors.[73] In 1966, moderator Hans-Georg Ponesky described the show as "honoring especially deserving workers before the entire socialist community of the GDR." He said,

> Our thanks (go out to) . . . Party activists and independent citizens. Everyday heroes, who oftentimes anonymously and unselfishly established, developed and maintained our current condition, the advantages of socialism. In our show people who shrug off the doubtful, careful 'But why me' take center stage, with the realization 'I just did my duty, like any other . . .'.[74]

The show encouraged people to take pride in the routines of work and everyday life. Ordinary citizens also took part in each episode of the show, sometimes numbering in the thousands.[75]

Broadcast in front of a live audience in halls such as the large "Friedrichstadt Show Palace" (the *Friedrichstadtpalast* in Berlin), but also from a countless number of locations around the Republic and even abroad, no two episodes were alike. The DFF broadcast the first episode of the series in part from a new housing development (*Neubauwohnung*) where the producers of the show had modified the plumbing. Hidden cameras observed the residents when they returned home to discover beer flowing straight from their taps. Another time, a trader (*Kaufmann*) arrived home from a business trip to discover his house had been renovated. On another episode, a traffic officer in Magdeburg faced gridlock comprised of more than one thousand cars. The cars turned out to be the gag: her commanding officer arrived to promote her on the spot.[76] One show began before a live audience when the moderator blindfolded the episode's lucky subjects. They climbed into a new Trabant, which, unbeknownst to them, was itself loaded onto a helicopter. They were flown to the highway and sent on their way for a vacation abroad.[77]

With Open Hearts was a spectacle that "advertised" socialism. Indeed, in the larger program, the show performed a similar function to the overt advertising program *A Thousand Tele-tips* (*Tausend Teletipps*). *Tele-tips* consisted of commercial spots featuring both live and animated characters, interspersed with "advice" films, that promoted East German consumer goods including cosmetics, clothing, foodstuffs, leisure goods, or household appliances. The

SED leadership had embraced television advertising in 1960 as another aspect of its competition with the capitalist West: it could distract East German citizens from the excess of consumer commodities promised by West German advertising and provide a counter-model both of "better products" and socialism itself.[78] Similarly, *With Open Hearts* presented narratives of socialist success: that of the individual (who won a promotion, for example), but also those of the state. Each episode exhibited the fruits of the GDR's own "economic miracle"—the Trabants, newly built or renovated apartments, exotic vacations in the socialist East, and even private helicopter flight, all made possible by socialism.

It was part of an effort on television to make use of the "live" in large spectacles of entertainment. One episode in particular demonstrated the spectacular (and highly entertaining) nature of segments of the program. Moderator Hans-Georg Ponesky introduced the honoree, Herr Stahlberg, "an excellent train driver," to the studio audience. By means of a "hidden camera" and microphone the audience watched as Ponesky awoke the sleeping shift worker in his bed and invited him to join the broadcast at the Friedrichstadtpalast. The gag was that he did not even have to get out of bed: a team dismantled his bed, took it out the street, and rebuilt it on a motorized platform complete with steering apparatus. Cameras accompanied him as he "drove" to the Friedrichstadtpalast. The "bed" made its way down Karl-Marx Allee, children skipping alongside, while DFF sports reporter Wolfgang Strobel "called the race" with stirring commentary from the sidelines: "I must say that is a sight . . . It's phenomenal! Bent deeply over the steering wheel this bed-phantom is chasing us down with great speed! It's reached at least 12 kilometers an hour! . . . This bed-machine is so fast this will be a new track record. Drivers from Ferrari and Lotus can't hold a candle to this. . . ."[79] This scene was intercut with shots of Ponesky on stage and viewers in the studio audience, beside themselves with laughter, hooting and guffawing at the sight. This kind of programming built on technical expertise first practiced in programming such as *The Clock Strikes Thirteen*, broadcast in the week after the border closure in August 1961, transmitting feeds from interior and exterior locations. A similar show—*Play Along!*—demonstrates just how spectacular such programming could be. Each episode, conceived to celebrate the GDR's anniversary and broadcast on 7 October in the mid to late 1960s, comprised an entire day, multiple locations, and a variety of scenarios, including "exciting live reports from the D43 (highway) between Wittenberg and Jüterborg," for example. They reached the largest viewing audiences yet for the Department of Entertainment at the DFF.[80] The 1966 episode involved 578 television workers—fully one-quarter of DFF

staff—and over two million citizens from around the Republic. And the DFF broadcast such huge spectacles at a time when, media historian Gerd Hallenberger argues, entertainment shows in the FRG only tentatively engaged with the West German world.[81]

The show celebrated ordinary people and everyday life in extraordinary ways. It was a utopian vision of the GDR that represented a community of mutual cooperation and celebration, of partisanship (*Parteilichkeit*) and socialist duty. Audiences and state authorities alike loved it. Media historian Lutz Haucke described the show as "melodramatic emotional kitsch" and argues that it turned the "productivity principle" of socialism on its head: rather than rewarding East Germans' creativity, it rewarded their sense of duty.[82] For Hallenberger, the show did not capture the GDR "as it was," but rather projected the official version of what the GDR was supposed to be as defined by the state. It "emotionalized" the GDR and sent the message that East Germans "who had done their duty and wanted to be rewarded for that, had to first subordinate themselves, indeed at the direction of the master of the game." I agree that television, discouraged from exploring the contradictions of socialist development, embraced entertaining genres and transmitted a vision of East German society and values that had left the idealism of the 1950s behind. But what resulted cannot be reduced to an emotionally manipulative program of pacification through melodrama. Instead programs such as *Prisma* and *With Open Hearts* projected a socialist "dreamworld" that was defined not by the state's vision of socialism but by a cultural compromise between previously competing visions of socialism that originated from a number of different (if disproportionate) centers of power. *With Open Hearts* and *Prisma* celebrated and naturalized the world of GDR socialism in the 1960s.

Delineating Socialist Culture

Debates about the aesthetic boundaries of socialist national culture unleashed in 1962 and 1963 resulted in a widespread consensus, among the members of the SED, the DFF, and the audience, rejecting unconventional works in favor of genres and narratives that were more stable and (politically) predictable. Television entertainment programs like *Prisma* and *With Open Hearts* marked the emergence of programming that turned away from engagement with the big, geopolitical issues of the day, as *Rendezvous Berlin* or *Blue Light* had done, in favor of the celebration of everyday life. They drew attention and motivation away from the mandate of the Fifth Party Congress to transform values

toward a program of reinforcing acceptable behaviors. Historical epics, such as *Revolt of the Conscience*, told stories of socialist conversion in "realistic" and familiar ways. By 1965, television had overcome the criticisms that surrounded the production of *Fetzer*, achieved greater popularity, and become one of the most important vehicles for the dissemination of "socialist" values.

That television had become a reliable weapon of political agitation was made clear during the Eleventh Plenum of December 1965. The Central Committee convened the meeting to usher in the "second phase" of the New Economic System, but, once again, the discussions that have garnered the most attention, from contemporaries and historians alike, were the speeches disparaging the state of GDR culture. The impetus for this had been the emergence of "youth criminality" by 1965. Where in the early 1960s the SED had allowed some space for the rise of a youth culture, they increasingly disliked the ways in which these youths spent their time—they were displaying an alarming lack of discipline, whether that meant they did not apply themselves to their studies or they staged drinking parties during the harvest draft, for example.

Erich Honecker, who would succeed Walter Ulbricht just six years later, defined these problems as resulting from the "negative influence of West television and radio," which had encouraged young East Germans to behave "in the style of the reactionary corps of the West German student body."[83] But the domestic media, Honecker claimed, deserved their fair share of the blame: film, television, theatrical productions, magazines, and even literary works contributed to such behavior, with their representations of "anti-humanism," "brutalities," and sexuality as the prime motivating factor in human relationships. The GDR, he railed, was a "clean country . . . [with] immovable standards of ethics and morality, for decency and good customs." He derided artists and others, even those who were generally loyal to the state, including Wolf Biermann, Robert Havemann, and Stefan Heym, for championing ideas that were hostile to GDR socialism.[84] Honecker claimed that "in the name of an abstract 'truth' these artists focus on the representation of supposed deficiencies and mistakes in the GDR . . ."[85] At the conference, authorities condemned and proscribed an entire year of DEFA productions, including *The Rabbit Is Me* (*Das Kaninchen bin ich*) and *Just Don't Think I'll Cry* (*Denk bloss nicht ich heule*). Like *Fetzer* and *Monologue for a Taxi Driver*, the fault of these films lay in their representation of social alienation. Their proscription led onlookers to define this as the beginning of a cultural "freeze" in the GDR, even though authorities like Honecker had spent several years honing and refining the language with which they launched their attack in December 1965.

In this context the SED lauded the television film *Dr. Schlüter* (1965). The

five-part mini-series depicted the life and political transformation of a chemist: from his collaboration with the Nazis to his eventual immigration to the GDR and acceptance of socialism.[86] The film denounced imperialism—"the greed of which led to the loss of humanist values"—and political detachment, by depicting a man who is buffeted by historical forces and ultimately recognizes the value of political partisanship.[87] Unlike the forbidden DEFA films, *Dr. Schlüter* had overcome social alienation, depicting instead "the harmony of the individual and society."[88] Yet the Eleventh Plenum held consequences for even *Dr. Schlüter*: the production team revised the last episode, still in production, to intensify Schlüter's identification with not just socialism but also the state.[89]

The tale of socialist conversion found in *Revolt of the Conscience* and *Dr. Schlüter* was a common narrative strategy in GDR literature in the late 1950s. Literary scholar Marc Silberman notes that during this period, a substantial body of anti-fascist literature appeared in the GDR, written by "young Nazis who 'saw the light,' young people who were not old enough during the Third Reich to resist actively, and soldiers who had never questioned the system they served." But, Silberman argues, the cultural movement introduced by the Bitterfeld conference shifted focus away from the war toward the achievements of the socialist present in East German literature. He concludes that "the didactic function of providing . . . identificatory conversion stories had largely served its purpose."[90] That may well have been the case in the literary market, but the 1960s was the heyday of the conversion narrative on television, culminating in the stunning *Paths Across the Country* in 1968.

For media scholar Peter Hoff, the achievement of *Dr. Schlüter* celebrated by the SED was that it depicted a utopian harmony between the individual and the state, which ultimately undermined television drama's engagement with the lived conditions of socialism. The film presented "knowingly, a false . . . picture of reality that, in their increasing estrangement from social reality, the state leadership of the GDR took to be true."[91] In his study of East German film, Joshua Feinstein has identified a similar discursive shift, exemplified by the transition from "films of contemporary life" (*Gegenswartsfilme*) to "films of everyday life" (*Alltagsfilme*). Films of contemporary life evoked a society in transition from the present to the (in this case, utopian) future, while films of everyday life represented a world outside of time. For Feinstein, the increasing emphasis on everyday life after the Eleventh Plenum indicated that an increasingly conservative notion of the GDR was rendered on East German movie screens that "depended less on the future promise of universal emancipation and more on the cultivation of a collective identity. . . ."[92]

But such interpretations rest on two assumptions: that the media re-

sponded primarily to the dictates of the state, and that the media do and should reflect social reality. Television, by contrast, responded to a number of pressures that made direct control impossible. As a broadcast medium it was both powerful and ephemeral: it could reach many more people more immediately than other media, but, until the advent of recording technology, the viewer was not likely to preserve it. Television could broadcast every minute of the day, but every broadcast minute represented the investment of a small fortune in human and material resources. Hundreds of people, experiencing the GDR from a variety of subjective positions, worked to develop an effective television program, overseen by a bureaucracy in which, at least until 1965, the leaders were either artistically talented or politically shrewd, but rarely both. Television could not force the viewer to tune in; it had to appeal to audience appetites. Works such as *Schlüter* were popular among authorities and audiences alike for these reasons. Second, the media rarely reflect "reality." Even images that purport to be unmediated never are, but contain, at best, "bits of the real."[93] The examples of *Prisma* and *With Open Hearts* exemplify that representational culture does not necessarily function in the way that it is intended.

Television entertainment programs such as *With Open Hearts*, *Dr. Schlüter*, and even *Prisma* revealed the persistence, and even the triumph, of older patterns of media use that went back into the Weimar period. Historians such as Corey Ross, Peter Jelavich, Adelheid von Saldern, and Monika Pater have demonstrated that Weimar Germans were highly attuned to the media.[94] For Ross, Germans lived in a media system that was "powerfully molded by older structures of class and milieu," in which entertainment reigned supreme. Radio audiences, for example, "stubbornly insist(ed) on light music and entertainment," while cinema audiences similarly demanded entertaining features. Historians Monika Pater and Adelheid von Saldern have identified similar patterns in early GDR radio.[95] DFF audience research also demonstrated that the "need" for entertainment persisted into the postwar period. But in another way, television did seem to effect a shift in values among GDR audiences. The Weimar working class had sought out sensational, adventure films or "gripping flashy kitsch," while middle-class audiences preferred dramas, particularly costume dramas, high-society flicks, literary adaptations, and Prussian-themed military films. Everyone liked films on local—even hyper-local—topics: Ufa reportedly even considered "equipping its cinema directors with small cameras for making local films about 'topical matters of special interest'" to draw viewers into the cinema.[96] In comparison, GDR television drew the line at sensationalism—although there is a case to be made that the aggressive, anti-Western programs directed against the "powers-that-be from Bonn" or even

episodes of *The Black Channel* (which, although they were conceived primarily for Western viewers, did find an audience in the GDR) were sensationalist features. But the predominantly "working class" audience of the GDR gravitated to the dramas and literary adaptations (such as *Revolt*, *Dr. Schlüter*, and a number of other examples) of Weimar's middle-class audience. One of the goals of the Bitterfeld Path had been to overcome the distinction between bourgeois and working-class literature;[97] it seems that television achieved that goal, if not quite how anyone might have expected.

Politically reliable and popular, the historical mini-series became one of the most popular and respected genres on East German television. This new genre helped define a new narrative about the creation of socialist man that was much more politically acceptable than Fetzer's story and rang true to viewers, many of whom were more likely to identify with Schlüter than Fetzer. The popularity of such narratives made them ideal programming for the DFF: such entertainments represented a huge return on a modest investment, since they could draw viewers to the program, fill programming hours by means of repeated broadcasts, and be exported abroad, sometimes for hard currency.

Conclusion

Between August 1961 and December 1965, television played an ever-increasing role in the creation of the new socialist citizen. During that time it was shaped by a three-year debate over the acceptable boundaries of representation. As early as 1962 the SED defined the exploration of alienation from modern socialist society as "foreign" and "bourgeois" and suppressed non-naturalistic representation. At the same time, audiences revolted against the unconventional direction of *Fetzer's Flight*, calling for more accessible works of light entertainment. This led the television service to abandon aesthetic experiments as well as programming that probed the acceptable limits of socialist lives, instead projecting a cultural compromise that was much more about building socialist nationalism than creating convinced socialists.

For media scholar Lutz Haucke, these developments, and the Eleventh Plenum of 1965, represented the death of the progressive communist artistic tradition: "the tradition of revolutionary proletarian art of the twenties, with its conception of the organization of life and art by the masses was finally discarded in favor of the representational culture of a totalitarian state socialism." Instead, "in the state socialism of the GDR leadership the favoritism of . . . kitsch and sentimental edification, paired with the expansive growth of petty

bourgeois ideology had prevailed."[98] For Haucke, the Plenum represented the triumph of a *Party*-directed vision of socialism that jettisoned the revolutionary, grass roots transformation of popular culture in favor of warmed-over bourgeois values. In this view, popular "taste" had little to do with the kind of socialism that emerged after 1965.

Certainly, the story of East German television is about the failure of revolutionary proletarian art, in part. But this was no simple matter of the ideology or taste of a few Party leaders who enjoyed a totalitarian grip on the medium and its messages. Instead, television was a complex industry shaped by various constituencies, under pressure to provide a full program schedule to a mass audience of diverse subjects, that increasingly relied on an unpredictable international market in programming to do so. As a result, it was not well suited to be a medium of revolutionary transformation. In the GDR, as in other cultural contexts, television envisioned a very particular, specifically middle class vision of society. The DFF mediated the resurgence and resilience of (bourgeois) values such as *Heimat*, nationalism, hard work, and loyalty to the regime and family, as well as the return of cultural forms and genres such as melodrama. In this the audience was complicit in its own "repression." *Fetzer*, a familiar story told in a radically new way, was a failure. But it was not so because the state banned it; it was due to the fact that people would rather have seen something else, and the television service obliged. State authorities wanted a politically reliable message, while audiences demanded to be entertained. As demonstrated above, "authorities" and "audiences" inhabited multiple and sometimes conflicting positions. In the end though, each got what they wanted.

Conclusion

By 1989, there was a fairly widespread Western consensus that East Germans spent their evenings watching Western television. Even the (former East) German cultural historian Helmut Hanke characterized West German television as "the only open window on the world, a window that, even during the Cold War, was opened each evening in the living rooms of GDR citizens, letting in the messages of another, richer, freer world. . . ."[1] Many people in the West could not imagine otherwise. Television, far more than other media in the GDR, seemed so thoroughly controlled by the state, producing ghastly propaganda shows such as the nightly "news" *Current Camera* (*Aktuelle Kamera*) or the ideological manifest *The Black Channel* (*Schwarzer Kanal*) moderated by the infamous Karl-Eduard von Schnitzler. Even if this choice were to bring unwelcome attention from the state security forces, who would not turn to the messages of a "freer," more fun, and more colorful world?

The assumption that East German viewers watched disproportionately more Western television than their own programming is a construct of the Cold War. It fits a narrative that defines—and dismisses—East German television as an institution of political repression: the most significant, and yet insignificant, organ of a propaganda machine. In this narrative, television in the GDR was merely the conduit of SED propaganda and, as such, was unable to compete with the West, capture the imagination of East Germans, or deal with the real problems of the state before the end of the regime in 1989. Real challenges to the state were made not through television, but instead through literature, and to a lesser extent, film and radio. This narrative also helped to explain the end of communism in East Germany. In this view, the East German audience persistently looked westward, held West German ideals, and sought "real" information about the world. Over time, that allowed the Western media to undermine the Socialist Unity (SED) government of the GDR by revealing the lie that was the Party line and unleashing the seductiveness of life in the West.

Media scholar Michael Meyen argues that such a view is the normaliza-

tion in popular memory of the rather anomalous context of 1989.[2] Over the course of that year, the East German television service (*Fernsehen der DDR*) lost viewers as its programming became increasingly removed from the social and political realities familiar to many East Germans. Television generally remained silent about the major upheavals under way—including the formation of grass roots opposition groups, rising rates of people leaving the GDR, and the opening of the border to Hungary—and, on 9 November, East Germans had to tune into Western programming to hear SED spokesman Günter Schabowski announce the opening of the border crossing to West Berlin. In the summer and fall of 1989, West German television's heavy coverage of events in the GDR had become a crucial source of information for East Germans and even helped crystallize opposition groups there. But although this kind of coverage was not the norm of postwar West German television, it came to be understood that way in popular memory. Western news coverage of the 1970s and 1980s instead often gave East viewers the impression that "for them, we're not even here."[3] Even viewers who *disliked* GDR television described it as a better reflection of their lives than West television. If West television generally served an important function as a source of counter-information, people also generally understood it as no less ideological than East television.[4] For most East Germans, the "truth" lay somewhere in between.

Historians of the GDR have reached a sort of consensus that the 1960s proved to be the most successful period of social, political, economic, and cultural transformation in East Germany.[5] Such transformation allowed the emergence of a specifically socialist, national identity, despite claims to the contrary by Peter Caldwell, Dietrich Orlow, and others. In what he describes as the "first book to show how national identity was invented in the GDR," historian Jan Palmowski contends that, by 1989, the only significant identities were local. The SED worked for forty years to construct an edifice of "national" identity but achieved, at best, rhetorical observance of the "public transcript," that is, lip service paid to the Party's version of what the GDR should be. When the revolution came, that edifice quickly fell away, leaving behind a passion for *Heimat* that those living in the GDR shared with their counterparts in the West. Whereas Palmowski maintains that the SED sought to impose a national identity that the people resisted to varying degrees, work by Daphne Berdahl and, more recently, Edith Sheffer suggests very different conditions for identity formation.[6] At Neustadt and Sonneberg in the German borderland, postwar East and West German identities began to emerge just as soon as the occupation did and were fueled by the traditions, legacies, and resentments of the region's common past. In this interpretation, identities grew in response to SED pro-

nouncements and East Germans' exercise of *Eigensinn*; state-sponsored festivals, events, and celebrations; the lived experiences of daily life; geopolitical considerations; and personal passions and resentments.

A new, socialist community emerged that differed from the larger pan-German community of the immediate postwar years and the West German community forged in the "economic miracle"; it also differed from the collective entity envisioned by the East German state.[7] Television helped mediate this transformation. It did so by envisioning for East Germans just how their society was (and could be) different from the West. The principle of "cultural proximity," elaborated by media scholar Joseph Straubhaar, explains how this project could be self-reinforcing. Straubhaar posits that audiences are drawn first to the programming that most approximates their lives and worldviews, which, in turn, can undermine the effectiveness of cross-border "media imperialism."[8] In the German case, for example, some West Germans did watch DFF programming, especially feature films, but quiz shows about Trabis and big socialist spectacles did not appeal to them. In 1958, a West German viewer wrote to let the DFF know that "[t]elevision has proliferated greatly in Lower Saxony, especially since one can get the television shows of the GDR." This viewer's social circle loved films, especially "feature films and cultural films from the Soviet Union," but quiz shows were "very unpopular," exasperating, and "rejected as idiotic kitsch."[9] These comments demonstrate the operation of "cultural proximity": programming with a neutral or familiar mode of access, such as films, were acceptable to this viewer and his friends, while entertainment programming that drew upon—and celebrated—a whole different social experience of everyday life alienated them. A similar process of demarcation occurred in the GDR.[10]

Since its inception, the DFF could never fill the television schedule with original programming, relying instead on everything from guest productions, transmissions from local cultural organizations and factory events, to films and other programming produced at home and abroad. In the early 1960s, they could begin to rely on programming, primarily political and sporting events (and including a live broadcast of Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin's return to earth after his first manned flight to space, transmitted via Intervision, a consortium of Eastern European television broadcasters that spanned 9,000 miles).[11] The DFF was not the only broadcaster facing this situation, exemplified by the growing transnational market in television programming. By 1965, for example, the fine line between profit and loss in the American television industry was already defined by its overseas sales of television productions.[12] Not just American television studios but Eastern European ones were produc-

ing content for this market, content that was culturally fuzzy enough for transnational consumption, and, as we have seen, often not politically acceptable enough for broadcast on East German television.[13] As the transnational market developed (or succumbed to) an industrial mode of production, programming that was innovative, experimental, and culturally specific gave way to economies of scale.[14] In the 1970s, for example, Agitation Commissioner Eberhard Fensch tried to appeal to the television service on behalf of one of the GDR's leading theatrical lights, to produce and broadcast a live theater production. By that time, Adameck believed the transmission of theater to be "too expensive," requiring too many resources for too little return: audiences did not like it, and it monopolized broadcast technologies best deployed elsewhere.[15] The tyranny of the television schedule led to increasing seriality, reflecting but also structuring the routinization of life in postwar industrial society (in the GDR and elsewhere). DFF viewers called for "evening-filling entertainments," and they increasingly relied on them to relax at the end of a hard day's work.

Television's purpose as a medium of entertainment and relaxation, already recognized in the early 1960s, was ratified once again at the Eighth Party Congress of the SED in 1971. Walter Ulbricht's successor, Erich Honecker, took the stage and pronounced DFF television "boring." According to Honecker, the DFF

> could look back on good achievements, [but] should endeavor more strongly to improve the program, overcome a certain boredom, take into account the need for good entertainment, frame television journalism more effectively, and match the expectations of that group of the working people, who start their working day very early and therefore want to see valuable television programs already in the early evening hours.[16]

The "boredom" identified by Honecker was a situation of the SED's own making. Since the cultural conference of 1960, the Party had held television programming up as an example to other GDR media, because it engaged the lives of East Germans in entertaining and thoughtful ways.[17] Its television plays depicted the transformation of socialist life in inspiring narratives of positive heroes and their contributions to socialism, modeling, by the early 1960s, what socialist realism should look like. Television also fulfilled SED expectations of the kind of impact that socialist realist art should have, because it could reach so many Germans in East and West. But by 1963, the inexorable pressure of the schedule, compounded by the political mandate to appeal to two populations inhabiting diverse viewing positions while still transmitting "politically reli-

able" messages, took its toll. After the Eleventh Plenum, the DFF took the path of least resistance in meeting these contradictory challenges: filling the airwaves with programming that would easily pass muster, regardless of the artistic value, potential for uplift, or other, perhaps idealistic, values that had characterized the earlier program. The huge live spectacles that consumed as many as one-quarter of DFF staff to broadcast just one day of programming disappeared by the late 1960s.[18] Claudia Dittmar asserts that Honecker took a personal interest in television when he took power, even reserving the right to make mundane decisions about programming and the television schedule.[19] The path he defined for television, in the interests of making it "more entertaining," was to look westward. In the 1970s, but especially in the 1980s, the DFF expanded the amount of programming that featured Western "stars," reproduced Western models, or even originated in the West.[20]

Television in East Germany emerged and grew in a way that was not exceptional for modern, Western, industrial societies. Writing in 1965, American media scholar Wilson Dizard noted that the viewing density (number of receivers per capita) in the GDR was the highest in the eastern bloc. He described the DFF as the "professional equal of any in the world," which broadcast a diverse range of programming, including operas and plays that were "often superior to West German television."[21] Dizard's role as a contemporary observer limits the historical usefulness of his assessments, and historical analysis does not confirm all of his assertions. For example, he described the DFF as a "heavy-handed propaganda outlet" and claimed that, in 1964, the DFF had fired commentator Eduard von Schnitzler because (political) "liberalization was out of hand" on East German television.[22] As I have shown here, the SED attempted to achieve political discipline, but in a very different way than Dizard describes, and, in any case, "liberalization" would not have come from von Schnitzler, moderator of, among other things, *Black Channel*.[23] Dizard also characterized television as "developing as a powerful force for ending party-imposed isolation that separated East from West for two decades." As we have seen here, the SED never conceived television broadcasting as a means of cutting East Germans off from the West, but rather as a means of attracting and shaping a pan-German audience.

If GDR television developed unexceptionally for modern, industrialized societies in the broadcast era, the question remains in what ways it was particularly "socialist." Television exhibited a number of cultural continuities with the German past, not least the SED's reliance on the legacy of German classicism. As television workers grew more adept at representing the world on screen, they began to experiment with program forms, but this increasingly

gave way to audience expectations, which had been defined by the media universe of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[24] The content of early television—the world represented within those forms—was quite different, and programming defined people not by their family, neighborhood, or region, but by their occupation, encouraging them to identify with their class interests. But even that gave way in the 1970s and 1980s. "Family" series (shows that combined elements of the sitcom and the soap opera), that had once sought to remove the idealized family from bourgeois structures, had, by the late 1970s, "abandoned the uniqueness of the socialist family in favor of international trends."[25] This reflected and was compounded by the rising influence of Western and Western-influenced content. As the program was increasingly saturated with Western and Western-influenced programming, the DFF (at the behest of the SED) undermined its own nation-building project.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. See, for example, work such as Günter Holzweissig, *Die schärfste Waffe der Partei* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2002).

2. Jens Hacker was particularly critical of Détente-era accounts reevaluating the GDR. Jens Hacker, *Deutsche Irrtümer: Schönfärber und Helfershelfer der SED-Diktatur im Westen* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1992).

3. Eckhard Jesse, "War die DDR totalitär?" *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte (APuZ)* 40 (1994): 12–23; Horst Möller, "Der SED-Staat—die zweite Diktatur in Deutschland," in *Lexikon des DDR-Sozialismus. Das Staats- und Gesellschaftssytem der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik*, ed. Rainer Eppelmann (Paderborn: P. Schöningh, 1996); Klaus-Dietmar Henke, *Anatomie der Staatssicherheit: Geschichte, Struktur und Methoden* (Berlin: Der Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der Ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1995), and Klaus-Dietmar Henke, *Totalitarismus: sechs Vorträge über Gehalt und Reichweite eines klassischen Konzepts der Diktaturforschung* (Dresden: Hannah-Arendt Institut für Totalitarismusforschung, 1999). Klaus Schroeder, *Der SED-Staat. Partei, Staat und Gesellschaft* (Munich: C. Hanser, 1998).

4. This is also noted by Corey Ross, *The East German Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of the GDR* (London: Arnold, 2002); Mary Fulbrook, "Approaches to German Contemporary History since 1945," *Zeithistorische Forschungen* 1 (2004); and Geoff Eley, "The Unease of History: Settling Accounts with the East German Past," *History Workshop Journal* 57 (2004): 175–201, here page 188. The early work of the Enquete commission also exemplified this tendency.

5. Norman Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945–49* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1995), and David Pike, *The Politics of Culture in Soviet-occupied Germany, 1945–1949* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992).

6. Hartmut Kaelbe, Jürgen Kocka, and Harmut Zwahr, eds., *Sozialgeschichte der DDR* (Stuttgart: Klett Cotta, 1994). See, in particular, Jürgen Kocka and Dorothee Wierling, "Die Jugend als innerer Feind. Konflikte in der Erziehungsdiktatur der sechziger Jahre," in Kaelbe et al., *Sozialgeschichte*, 404–425. Also Konrad Jarausch, "Care and Coercion: The GDR as Welfare Dictatorship," in *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-cultural History of the GDR*, ed. Konrad Jarausch (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999).

7. Richard Bessel and Ralph Jessen, eds., *Die Grenzen der Diktatur: Staat und Gesellschaft in der DDR* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996).

8. Alf Lüdtke, ed., trans. William Templer, *The History of Everyday Life: Reconstructing Historical Experience and Ways of Life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), and Alf Lüdtke, *Eigen-Sinn. Fabrikalltag, Arbeitserfahrungen und Politik vom Kaiserreich bis in den Faschismus* (Hamburg: Ergebnisse-Verlag, 1993). The study of "*Herrschaft als sozialer Praxis*" was the guiding principle of four projects undertaken at the ZZF in the late 1990s, published in Thomas Lindenberger, ed., *Herrschaft und Eigensinn in der Diktatur: Studien zur Gesellschaftsgeschichte der DDR* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1999), and in Jarausch, ed., *Dictatorship as Experience*. Everyday life in the GDR drew much popular interest after the tenth anniversary of the end of communism there, demonstrated by works such as Hans-Herman Hertle and Stefan Wolle, *Damals in der DDR: Der Alltag im Arbeiter- und Bauernstaat* (Munich: Bertelsmann, 2004), and the related documentary series produced by the ARD.

9. For the development of German communism see Eric Weitz, *Creating German Communism, 1890–1990: From Popular Protests to Socialist State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997). For works looking specifically at the development of the GDR see Gareth Pritchard, *The Making of the GDR: From Antifascism to Stalinism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000); Corey Ross, *Constructing Socialism at the Grass-roots: The Transformation of East Germany, 1945–65* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); or Patrick Major and Jonathan Osmond, eds., *The Workers' and Peasants' State: Communism and Society in East Germany under Ulbricht, 1945–71* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002).

10. See Lynn Hunt, ed., *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), the introduction in Victoria Bonnell and Lynn Hunt, eds., *Beyond the Cultural Turn* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), or, for recent evaluations of the "linguistic" and "cultural" turns, see comments by (especially) Julia Adney Thomas and James Cook in the AHR Forum "Historiographic Turns in Critical Perspective," *American Historical Review* 117 (2012).

11. Katherine Pence and Paul Betts, eds., *Socialist Modern* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006), 6.

12. For example, Corey Ross and Hedwig Richter have demonstrated significant leeway exercised by East Germans in bargaining with the government before and after the Berlin Wall. Corey Ross argues that before the Wall some East Germans negotiated for better jobs, salaries, or housing in return for remaining in the GDR. Corey Ross, "Before the Wall: East Germans, Communist Authority and the Mass Exodus to the West," *Historical Journal* 45 (2002): 459–80. Hedwig Richter has shown a similar bargaining position exercised by GDR citizens during election campaigns. Hedwig Richter, "Mass Obedience: Practices and Functions of Elections in the German Democratic Republic," in *Voting for Hitler and Stalin: Elections under 20th Century Dictatorships* eds., Ralph Jessen and Hedwig Richter (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2011), 103–25. Donna Harsch has argued that "women and the SED adapted to one another's position and worldview." Donna Harsch, *Revenge of the Domestic: Women, the Family, and Communism in the German Democratic Republic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 1. For an overview of similar French research, see Sandrine Kott, ed., *Die ostdeutsche Gesellschaft: eine transnationale Perspektive* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2006).

13. Arguing against what he calls the "Fulbrook School," Eli Rubin argues that "there *was* a distinctly East German society; it was not *just* the state or the party, but it was constituted and shaped by the economic processes put in motion by the state." Eli Rubin, *Synthetic Socialism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 7.

14. Jeffrey Kopstein, *The Politics of Economic Decline in East Germany, 1945–1989* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997). The GDR did not just "liv(e) in the shadow of the West, but actively recreated parts of its consumer culture." Jonathan Zatlin, *The Currency of Socialism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). See also Judd Stitziel, *Fashioning Socialism: Clothing, Politics, and Consumer Culture in East Germany* (Oxford: Berg, 2005), and David Crew, ed., *Consuming Germany in the Cold War* (Oxford: Berg, 2003). More generally, this approximates the view of Susan Buck-Morss that socialism failed not on its own merits, but "because it mimicked capitalism too faithfully." Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe: The Passing of Mass Utopia in East and West* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), xv.

15. Mary Fulbrook summarizes recent historiographical trends, including the emergence of a "new paradigm" normalizing GDR history, in Fulbrook, "Approaches to German Contemporary History," 31–50. See also Mary Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 11.

16. Susan Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld and Catastrophe*, xii.

17. Pence and Betts, eds., *Socialist Modern*, 7–8.

18. For Buck-Morss, "the construction of mass utopia was . . . the driving force behind industrial modernization in both its capitalist and socialist forms . . ." and "the mass democratic myth of industrial modernity—the belief that the industrial reshaping of the world is capable of bringing about the good society by providing material happiness for the masses—has been profoundly challenged by the disintegration of European socialism, the demands of capitalist restructuring, and the most fundamental ecological constraints." Buck-Morss, *Dreamworld*, ix–x. Pence and Betts "hope to shift the way modernity is assessed from the achievement of particular standards of industrialization or political structures to the examination of a commitment to the full reshaping of society." Pence and Betts, *Socialist Modern*, 8. The definition of modernity is contested, but whether you define it as Buck-Morss and Pence and Betts do, as a program of reshaping society for the better, or as Detlev Peukert did (see note 22), most scholars can agree that its central characteristic is not sheer adherence to political liberalism.

19. I am referring here to Thomas Lindenberger, who argues it simply is no longer enough to undertake a narrow, political history of a society without considering the "audiovisions" of that political and social world. Thomas Lindenberger, "Vergangenes Hören und Sehen: Zeitgeschichte und ihre Herausforderung durch die audiovisuellen Medien," *Zeithistorische Forschungen* (2004): 1. Lindenberger borrows the conception of "audiovisions" from Siegfried Zielinski. Please see Siegfried Zielinski, *Audiovisions: Cinema and Television as Entr'actes in History* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1999); originally published in German: Zielinski, *Audiovisionen: Kino und Fernsehen als Zwischenspiele in der Geschichte* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1989).

20. Italics mine. Pence and Betts, *Socialist Modern*, 10, 12.

21. In Habermas's view, the public sphere is space between state and private life where "people came together to form a public, readied themselves to compel public

authority to legitimate itself before public opinion" (26). Cultivated in the social institutions of the salon, the coffeehouse, and secret societies, these private people formed a "public opinion" that held the ruler accountable to the people and influenced his decision-making power. But this public sphere, which had once facilitated participation in the political process, decayed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, monopolized by corporate media. In the twentieth century, the public sphere was increasingly dismantled while maintaining the illusion of integrity, depriving the public of participation in public life, and denying true "public opinion" in favor of "public relations." Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989).

22. Detlev Peukert (and others) challenged the view that National Socialism resulted from Germany's lack of modernization—its social and political "misdevelopment"—in the nineteenth century, arguing instead that it emerged out of the "crisis of classical modernity" that could not be overcome in the Weimar period. Nazism was "an exaggerated development of Nazi Germany's dark side." Detlev Peukert, *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992). In his analysis, Peukert "reclaimed" Max Weber to present "an ambiguous and contradictory 'modernity'" characterized by the "progressive rationalization of everyday life through the processes of secularization and bureaucratization that threaten(ed) to produce the complete 'disenchantment of the world' and the growth of a misplaced faith in the capacity of rational science to solve all human problems." David Crew, *Germans on Welfare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 4.

23. Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere,* ed. Craig Calhoun, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992).

24. Similarly, in a historiographical survey of scholarship entitled "Media and the Making of British Society," James Curran identifies a strong liberal narrative that casts the history of British media since the eighteenth century as the story of how "a succession of media became independent over two centuries, and contributed to the cumulative empowerment of the people. The media exposed government to public scrutiny. They enlarged the political community, and facilitated public debate. They spoke up for the people, and increased public influence over government." He contrasts this with other narratives, including "feminist," "populist," "radical," and "libertarian" interpretations. James Curran, "Media and the Making of British Society," *Media History* 8 (2002): 137. In the context of the GDR, scholars have long seemed convinced that any real challenge to the state was made through literature or, to a lesser extent, film. Television, still understood as a less legitimate object of study and a conduit of SED propaganda, plays no part in this vision. Goodbody et al. claim, for example, "If television emerged from the Eleventh Plenum relatively unscathed, this was because it was practically insignificant as a channel for social criticism. . . ." Yet "(t)he Eleventh Plenum for Christa Wolf was a traumatic experience, which resulted in months of depression. The bitterness of her disillusionment . . . is reflected in her next novel. . . ." Alex Goodbody, Dennis Tate, and Ian Wallace, "The Failed Socialist Experiment: Culture in the GDR," in *German Cultural Studies,* ed. Rob Burns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

25. Gramsci argued that, although coercion was an important component of rule by a dominant social group, particularly in authoritarian societies, the power to rule could

not be reduced to force. Instead, the ability to rule resulted from a complex combination of factors that allowed the ruling classes to take a hegemonic position in society. The battle for hegemony—or the ideological dominance of a particular social system—was waged in particular on the field of civil society. The dominant social group ruled "political society" by coercion, establishing its authority by means of force and "repressive bodies" such as the police, government, or judiciary. But they derived as much or more of their power by generating consent to legitimate their rule among those they subordinated. They accomplished this by organizing consent through the institutions of "civil society," or "the ensemble of organisms commonly called private," including educational or religious institutions, trade unions, or the media. David Forgacs, ed., *An Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings, 1916–1935* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1988), 227, 304.

26. In post-socialist works, Cold War triumphalism has corrupted "civil society" to the point where it stands so amorphously for concepts of liberal institutions and political forms that it has come to mean nothing. John Downing, *Internationalizing Media Theory* (London: Sage, 1996).

27. Where Adorno and Horkheimer tended to focus on the authoritarian tendencies of modern mass culture, Walter Benjamin and Siegfried Kracauer were more ambivalent. Bourdieu's concepts of "cultural capital" and "habitus" have been influential in cultural history and cultural studies (as well as television studies). Scott Denham, Irene Kacandes, and Jonathan Petropoulos, eds., *A User's Guide to German Cultural Studies* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997). One of the purposes of the volume is to collect some good, recent work and bring greater profile to this emerging field.

28. Denham et al., *User's Guide*, 15–16. I describe this interdisciplinarity as collaborative to reflect Kacandes's differentiation between "interdisciplinarity" and "multidisciplinarity."

29. For a good synopsis of the German historians' relationship to cultural studies see David F. Crew, "Who's Afraid of Cultural Studies," in Denham et al., *User's Guide*, 45–62. See also the Introduction to Adelheid von Saldern, ed., *The Challenge of Modernity: German Social and Cultural Studies, 1890–1960* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002).

30. Comment at "Reframing East German Culture," Georgetown University, 27 March 2010.

31. Television studies have taken a "historical" turn in the last decade, but work is still fairly narrowly focused on the United States and Great Britain, most notably the work of Lynn Spigel or William Boddy (on the United States). On the United Kingdom see Jason Jacobs and Janet Thumim. Jason Jacobs, *The Intimate Screen: Early British Television Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). Janet Thumim, *Inventing Television Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Only recently have studies interested in the cultural and social history of the (European) medium begun to emerge. See Jonathan Bignell and Andreas Fickers, eds., *A European Television History* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), or Andreas Fickers and Catherine Johnson, eds., *Transnational Television History: A Comparative Approach* (London: Routledge, 2011). Recently there has been a flurry of attention paid to the mass media in Germany. Kate Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies: Gender, German Radio, and the Public Sphere, 1923–1945* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996). Adelheid von Saldern

and Inge Marssolek, eds., *Radio in der DDR der fünfziger Jahre* (Tübingen: Edition Diskord, 1998); Marssolek and von Saldern, eds., *Radiozeiten: Herrschaft, Alltag, Gesellschaft* (Potsdam: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 1999); Karl-Christian Führer and Corey Ross, eds., *Mass Media, Culture, and Society in Twentieth-century Germany* (New York: Palgrave, 2006); Führer, *Medienmetropole Hamburg* (Munich: Dölling und Gallitz, 2008); and Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

32. Thankfully I worked on a national television service that was centrally organized, administered, and, most important, archived, unlike the West German system of federated television broadcasters, for example.

33. Jason Jacobs described the difficulty of dealing with the scraps of information in thin files containing the "residue of artistic endeavor" he found in his first trip to the archive. In fact, it seems there was much more in (some of) his files than mine: he was able to consult "studio plans indicating various camera positions," for example, that allowed him to ask questions about "how creative practitioners practically and intellectually deal with a new medium." As in other historical work, these documents needed to be read against the grain. Jacobs noted, "there was a debate about the aesthetics of this new medium but it was couched within the pressure of production. Complaints about the lack of camera practice time, for example, were part of legitimate bids to explore the mobility of televisions mise en scène rather than simply a ruffled producers gripe." Jason Jacobs, "The Television Archive: Past, Present, and Future," *Critical Studies in Television* 1 (2006): 13–20.

34. Williams compares television to cinema, which existed "on the margins" (in variety shows, for example) until the construction of film theaters allowed it to be capitalized (10–11). He argued, in 1974, that television served the purpose of "mobile privatisation," which "resolved the contradictory pressures of . . . industrial capitalist society," which he identified as mobility on the one hand, and the "apparently self-sufficient family home" on the other. Television, which provided "news from the 'outside,'" was one of the important elements that maintained the illusion of self-sufficiency of the postwar (suburban) Anglo-American home. Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (New York: Schocken Books, 1975), 20–21.

35. One of television's most defining characteristics, Williams argued, was the introduction of almost endless sequence and flow. That is, one could not consider television programs as discrete units, as was commonly the case in contemporary television criticism and in the average TV guide; instead, the "constant interruptions" of commercials, for example, were central to the operation of the medium and its programming.

36. Williams identified as particularly (potentially) innovative those programs that blurred the line between drama and reality, provided "education by seeing," opened up space for sustained "discussion," embraced the intrinsic sequential nature of television, and "features" that "combine(d) and extend(ed) elements of the essay, the journal and the film documentary." Williams, *Television*, 71. To be sure, Williams saw innovation in what we have come to call "reality tv," which, in 2013, is often derided for its distortion of reality. But Williams argued, perceptively, that "(s)ome of the complaints about 'confusion between reality and fiction' is naïve or disingenuous. This attempt hold a hard line between absolutely separated categories seems to depend on a fiction about reality itself. It depends also on the convention that 'factual' television simply shows, neu-

trally, what is happening. The real engagement of every observer in the events he or she is observing is doubtless a matter of degree. But it is so crucial and general a fact that its possibilities for creative television drama, of a new kind, ought to be directly examined rather than ruled out by an ultimately untenable classification."

37. Williams, *Television*, 75.

38. Mass communications scholarship initially posited the "direct effects" understanding of television—that, like a "hypodermic needle" or "transmission pipe," television could transmit stable messages to unsuspecting viewers. Mass communications researchers were set on identifying and quantifying who watched television, when, and to what effect. Due, in part, to the difficulty of proving such a hypothesis, "direct effects" eventually gave way to more nuanced work speculating that audiences played a more active role in making meaning, exemplified by the "uses and gratifications" approach. Robert Allen, *Channels of Discourse Reassembled* (London: Routledge, 1992), 13–14.

39. Research on television took some time to emerge from the shadow of the better-established fields of film and media studies. By the 1980s, television had arrived on American college campuses, though courses on the subject still fought for legitimacy among scholars and even practitioners. In 1986, one professor of mass culture claimed of television that "everybody watches it, but no one really likes it. . . . Its only champions are some executives, the advertisers who exploit it, and a compromised network of academic boosters. Otherwise, TV has no spontaneous defenders, because there is almost nothing in it to defend." As late as 1990, the former head of the American network NBC, Brandon Tartikoff, dismissed television courses as without academic rigor: "When I hear about college professors writing books about people who do prime-time shows, my natural cynicism says there's got to be courses for all these athletes to make them academically eligible to play football." Mark Crispin Miller and Brandon Tartikoff, respectively, cited in David Bianculli, *Teleliteracy* (New York: Continuum, 1992), x, 284.

40. Gary Burns and Robert Thompson, *Television Studies: Textual Analysis* (New York: Praeger, 1989), 1. In 1992, John Hartley wrote *Tele-ology* explicitly to "contribute to television studies (*tele-logos*), an academic discipline which does not in fact exist." John Hartley, *Tele-ology: Studies in Television* (London: Routledge, 1992), 4–6. That same year critic and professor of film and television David Bianculli—familiar to some American readers as a regular contributor of television reviews on National Public Radio (NPR)—published a manifesto of sorts arguing that "television has developed to the point where it deserves respect, and serious examination as an art form." Bianculli, *Teleliteracy*, 285. He has since founded *TV Worth Watching*, a website devoted, in part, to identifying a canon of "good" television.

41. Horace Newcomb, ed., *Television: The Critical View*, 4th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

42. Lynn Spigel, cited in Jonathan Gray and Amanda Lotz, *Television Studies* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2012), 21. Gray and Lotz argue that "television studies" is less a *field* than an *approach.* See discussions in Stephen Lacey, "Some Thoughts on Television History and Historiography," *Critical Studies in Television* (2006) 1: 3–12, and Jeremy Butler, *Television: Critical Methods and Applications* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1994), x; See also the short-lived 2010 discussion on the academic listserv for film and

screen studies Screen-L http://screensite.org/screen-l/ on the question of whether television studies can "stand on its own two feet." Jeremy Butler, "TV Critical Studies vs. Mass Comm Research?" June 29, 2010, with responses from Cathy Johnson, Michele Hilmes, and Donald Larsson.

43. Gray and Lotz, *Television Studies*, 21. Lynn Spigel, "TV's Next Season?" *Cinema Journal* 45, no. 1 (2005): 86. In 2003, television scholar Toby Miller published a five-volume collection of important historical and scholarly writings on the medium. Toby Miller, ed., *Television: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 2003).

44. For example, the British government financed a research working group on Television Drama in the late 1990s; the French government—unlike most—has taken steps to make the French audio-visual heritage widely available through a digital archive and website (http://www.ina.fr/); and the German Research Society (DFG) financed the research project "Program History of GDR Television—comparative" (2001–2007) (which followed on the DFG project "Aesthetics, Pragmatics, and History of the Screen Media" of the Federal Republic, begun in the mid-1980s).

45. Gray and Lotz, *Television Studies*, 22.

46. Karolus-Heinz Heil, *Das Fernsehen in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone Deutschlands, 1953–1963* (Bonn: Deutsche Bundesverlag, 1967). Jörg Lingenberg, *Das Fernsehspiel der DDR* (Munich: Verlag Dokumentation, 1968). See also Rolf Geserick, *40 Jahre Presse, Rundfunk und Kommunikationspolitik in der DDR* (Munich: Minerva, 1989).

47. When I began this project, there was not much historical scholarship (in English, certainly) on television in Eastern Europe and, in general, media research on the area was still mired in the mass communications approach of an earlier era. This work was hampered by a lack of access to and, often, a deep skepticism about sources from the countries of the Soviet bloc. According to Karol Jakubowicz, for example, "by the early 'fifties media no longer represented reality, but rather replaced it." Jakubowicz, "From Party Propaganda to Corporate Speech? Polish Journalism in Search of a New Identity," *Journal of Communication* 42 (1992): 65. There were a number of studies from mass communications researchers concerned with the general problem of press freedom, but few works that dealt primarily with television broadcasting. Tomas Goban-Klas, *The Orchestration of the Media* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994). Goban-Klas was a former Polish journalist writing about the pressures that constrained and, at times, allowed some liberalization of the Polish media. Burton Paulu produced an informative reference work on broadcasting in the Eastern bloc. Burton Paulu, *Radio and Television Broadcasting in Eastern Europe* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1974). Political scientist Jane Leftwick Curry wrote a timely book that began to revise the Western view of a thoroughly controlled media and even break down the binary model of the state against society in Eastern Europe, opening up space to shed some of the assumptions of liberal scholarship that had defined Western research on communist media in the postwar period. Jane Leftwich Curry, *Poland's Journalists: Professionalism and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). As the Cold War ended, media scholars tended to leave historical work behind and move directly on to post-socialist developments, such as how the media transformed during the fall of communism. See, for example, Ellen Mickiewicz, *Split Signals: Television, Power and*

Politics in the Soviet Union (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), or her *Changing Channels: Television and the Struggle for Power in Russia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), which looks at Russian television in the 1990s.

48. Ingeborg Munz-Koenen, *Fernsehdramatik: Experimente, Methoden, Tendenzen; ihre Entwicklung in der 60er Jahre* (Berlin: Akademie Verlage, 1974). Media researcher Heide Riedel published a broad institutional account of radio and television for the German Broadcasting Museum: Heide Riedel, *Hörfunk und Fernsehen in der DDR* (Cologne: Literarischer Verlag Braun, 1977); Käthe Rülicke-Weiler, *Film- und Fernsehkunst der DDR* (Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1979).

49. Hans Müncheberg and Peter Hoff, eds., *Experiment Fernsehen. Vom Laborversuch zur sozialistischen Massenkunst* (Berlin: Verband der Film- und Fernsehschaffenden der DDR, 1984).

50. See, for example, Peter Hoff's chapters in Knut Hickethier, *Geschichte des deutschen Fernsehens* (Stuttgart: Verlag J. B. Metzler, 1998).

51. Goodbody et al., "The Failed Socialist Experiment." Peter Ludes, "Das Fernsehen als Herrschaftsinstrument der SED," in *Materialien der Enquete-Kommissionz*, ed. Deutscher Bundestag (12. Wahlperiode des Deutschen Bundestages) Band II/2, 2194–2217.

52. See, for example, Nina Schindler, *Flimmerkiste: ein nostalgischer Rückblick* (Hildesheim: Gerstenberg, 1999).

53. The group published early results of their work in a special issue of the *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 24 (2004). An overview of their results is found in Rüdiger Steinmetz and Reinhold Viehoff, eds., *Deutsches Fernsehen Ost: Eine Programmgeschichte des DDR Fernsehens* (Potsdam: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 2008). The Leipziger Universitätsverlag is home to a series resulting from the project.

54. The preponderance of available sources on the DFF date from the period after 1965, which is reflected in the publications of the project.

55. This dilemma was discussed at "Aufgewickelt: Deutsches Fernsehen Ost," held at the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek—Museum für Film und Fernsehen, in cooperation with the Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv (DRA), Potsdam-Babelsberg, 2 June 2007.

56. See, for example, Claudia Dittmar, "Television and Politics in the Former East Germany," *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 7 (2005): http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/clcweb/vol7/iss4/3.

57. And television in the FRG may not even be the best context for comparison to the DFF. Historian of technology Raymond Stokes argued, for example, that the best way to draw conclusions about the (technological) development of the GDR was not to compare it directly to the FRG but to compare and contrast the trajectories of technological development to similar patterns and differences between the United States and the United Kingdom (that is, to compare each country not with its German "other," but rather compare its relationship with its "other" to the corresponding partner in a similar geopolitical or economic relationship. Raymond Stokes, *Constructing Socialism* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000], 8). I have often thought that the best comparison to make to the GDR–FRG might involve the Canada–United States relationship: both have the problem of cross-border programming, and Canada developed a small, but effective, public broadcasting service with a clear political mandate, whereas the United States built a sprawling system with (in its early days) significant regional

differences. The comparison is not perfect, but it suggests other ways of measuring developments in the two German states.

58. Already in 2002, Adelheid von Saldern called for historians to go beyond the "real" level of historical events traditionally examined by historians to recognize the importance of "media realities." Adelheid von Saldern, "Entertainment, Gender Image and Cultivating an Audience: Radio in the GDR in the late 1950s," in von Saldern, ed., *Challenge*.

59. Gary Wilder, "From Optic to Topic: The Foreclosure Effect of Historiographic Turns," *American Historical Review* 117 (2012): 729–730.

60. The history of the Cold War, long defined by political, diplomatic, and even social explanations, has been reinvigorated by cultural analyses demonstrating the deeply political nature of music, film, tourism, hotel construction, and Cold War kitchens, for example. See Uta Poiger's *Jazz, Rock and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in Divided Germany* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Susan Reid's "The Cold War in the Kitchen: Gender and the De-Stalinization of Consumer Taste in the Soviet Union under Khruschev," *Slavic Review* 61 (2002): 211–252; Christina Klein's *Cold War Orientalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); Christopher Endy's *Cold War Holidays: American Tourism in France* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Anna Beth Wharton's *Building the Cold War: Hilton Hotels and Modern Architecture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Thomas Lindenberger, ed., *Massenmedien im kalten Krieg* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2006); Greg Castillo, *The Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Midcentury Design* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010); Anna Vowinckel, Marcus Payk, and Thomas Lindenberger, eds., *Cold War Cultures: Perspectives on Eastern and Western Societies* (New York: Berghahn, 2011).

61. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1991).

62. Authorities referred to Adlershof first as the "Central Television Laboratory" and later, the "Television Center." By 1952 the television service was called *Deutscher Fernsehfunk* ("German television-radio communication," reflecting the conceptual dependence of television on radio in those early years). After 1972, authorities renamed it "Television of the GDR" (*Fernsehen der DDR*), reflecting both the recognition of television as a medium independent of and different from radio, and the cultural demise of the SED's "one Germany" policy. In the interest of clarity, though, I will refer to Adlershof as the Television Center, and the television service as the DFF throughout the book.

CHAPTER 1

1. Peter Hoff in Müncheberg, ed., *Experiment Fernsehen*, 14–15.

2. Boris Rosing had some early success, transmitting in 1911 an image described as "dim and not well focused." Richard C. Webb, *Tele-visionaries: The People behind the Invention of Television* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Interscience, 2005), 13. Also in Albert Abramson, *The History of Television, 1880–1941* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1987), 29–36. John Logie Baird undertook the first public demonstration of television in En-

gland in 1926. A. Michael Noll, *Television Technology: Fundamentals and Future Prospects* (Norwood, MA: Artech House, 1988), 6.

3. Mechanical television used cameras with scanning discs mounted in front of a photoconductive "eye," while electronic television used a beam of electrons to scan the image. The major advantages of electronic over mechanical television were light insensitivity (mechanical systems required lots of artificial light) and the ability to produce much higher definition images. One could say that mechanical television produced an image that was more of a shadow of the object, while electronic television could reproduce the interplay of light and shadow, and thus a better picture of the object.

4. In the mid-1920s, technological fairs across Germany drew up to 300,000 enthusiasts a year. William Uricchio, "Envisioning the Audience: Perceptions of Early German Television's Audiences, 1935–1944," *Aura Filmvetenskaplig Tidskrift* 2 (1996): 8.

5. Monika Elsner, Thomas Müller, and Peter Spangenberg, "The Early History of German Television: The Slow Development of a Fast Medium," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 10 (1990): 196.

6. Laura Heins, "The 'Experiential Community': Early German Television and Media Theory," *Screen* 52 (2011): 47–48.

7. Gary Edgerton argues that, in the United States, "Throughout the 1920s and most of the 1930s, no new communication form had ever been more anticipated in the press—then postponed again time and again for a variety of legitimate technological, economic, and cultural reasons. . . ." Gary Edgerton, *The Columbia History of American Television* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 3.

8. *Berliner Tageblatt,* cited in Elsner et al., "Early History," 200.

9. Elsner et al., "Early History," 200.

10. William Uricchio, "Introduction to the History of German Television, 1935–1944," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 10 (1990): 172–173. William Uricchio, "High-Definition Television, Big Screen Television and Television-Guided Missiles, 1945," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 10 (1990): 312.

11. William Uricchio, "Television as History: Representations of German Television Broadcasting, 1935–1944," in *Framing the Past: The Historiography of German Cinema and Television,* ed. Bruce Murray (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992), 176. Also Elsner et al., "Early History," 207.

12. On American use of television technology for the war effort, see Edgerton, *American Television*, 69–73.

13. Uricchio, "High-Definition Television," 311–315; Manfred Hempel, "German Television Pioneers and the Conflict between Public Programming and Wonder Weapons," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 10 (1990): 123–162. William Uricchio argues that there was a considerable power struggle between industry and the Postal Service, which wanted to introduce home reception, and the Propaganda Ministry, which favored the ostensibly politically more valuable reception conditions of public viewing; William Uricchio, "Envisioning the Audience." Laura Heins argues that Nazi-sympathizing television theorists envisioned television not as a mass medium to be consumed in public exhibition spaces, but rather as a "literate high art" that could achieve greater intimacy, realism, and spirituality than other media, making it "the most

modern expression of a literate national culture with roots in the eighteenth century." Heins, "Experiential Community," 46–47.

14. Eugen Hadamovsky, cited in Uricchio, "Television as History," 173. Also in Helmut Kreuzer, "Von der Nipkow-Scheibe zum Massenmedium," in *Fernsehsendungen und ihre Formen: Typologie, Geschichte und Kritik des Programms der Bundesrepublik Deutschland,* eds. Helmut Kreuzer and Karl Prümm (Stuttgart: Reklam, 1979), 10.

15. Uricchio, "Television as History," 172.

16. Although he made great use of film appearances for propaganda purposes, television was not nearly well enough developed to be used in the same way. Hickethier, *Geschichte,* 37.

17. Edgerton, *American Television*, 69–72.

18. Edgerton, *American Television*, 102–106.

19. As in Germany, it was American radio manufacturers that first took interest in developing television, intent on capitalizing on the potentially lucrative new market in television receivers and maintaining (or expanding) their market share. Williams, *Television*. See the discussion over postwar television standards in Edgerton, *American Television*, 74–76.

20. Hans Kleinsteuber and Peter Wilke, "Germany," in *The Media in Western Europe: The Euromedia Handbook,* ed. B. S. Ostergaard (London: Sage, 1992).

21. Sean Allan, "DEFA: An Historical Overview," in *DEFA: East German Cinema, 1946–1992*, edited by Sean Allan and John Sandford (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999), 3.

22. Wired (as opposed to wireless) radio broadcasts signals through electrical or telephone lines. It is a popular choice in Europe: in 1992 estimates suggested there were 800,000 wired sets in Western Europe and perhaps 100 million in Eastern Europe. Wired radio was cheaper and, since it is hardwired, could not be jammed. Claude-Jean Bertrand, "Radio Beyond the Anglo-American World," in *Radio:The Forgotten Medium,* eds., Edward Pease and Dennis Everette (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1995), 113–114.

23. See, for example, Heide Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

24. John Sandford, *The Mass Media of the German-Speaking Countries* (London: Wolff, 1976), 19–25. Norbert Frei, "Hörfunk und Fernsehen," in *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Geschichte in drei Bänden,* ed. Wolfgang Benz, (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1983), 419. Peter Humphreys, *Media and Media Policy in West Germany* (New York and Oxford: Berg, 1990), 24. See also 25–43.

25. Media scholar Steve Craig argues that the Soviets' early domination of Berlin Radio, and the subsequent American refusal to accept European policy on the allocation of broadcasting spectrum space at the Copenhagen Conference (in 1948, discussed below), shaped the postwar future of German broadcasting. Steve Craig, "Medium-Wave Frequency Allocations in Postwar Europe: US Foreign Policy and the Copenhagen Conference of 1948," *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* 34 (1990): 121, 130.

26. Craig, "Medium-Wave Frequency Allocations," 121–122.

27. Martin McCauley, *The German Democratic Republic since 1945* (London: Macmillan, 1983), 7–8. Weitz, *Creating Communism*, 323.

28. Frei, "Hörfunk," 418.

29. The decentralized nature of the broadcasting system persisted as television developed, resulting in stations with very different personalities." American media scholar James Schwoch questions contemporary American authorities' characterization of NWDR as a "British" station, because so few scholarly studies refer to it that way, arguing instead that this was simply the rhetoric of policymakers in the Cold War. But scholarly studies tend to focus on the unifying and leveling impulse of the ARD; (German) studies of early West German television (and sometimes Germans today) very clearly identify NWDR this way, but less so after it split to become NDR and WDR.

30. "Muscovites" were (German) communists who emigrated to the Soviet Union during the Nazi period, most of whom returned with the end of the war. Eric Weitz reminds us that, during the early occupation period, the Soviets worked toward denazification and the spread of anti-fascism, while conservative "Muscovites" of the so-called Ulbricht Group instead worked toward realizing their goal of establishing communism in Germany. Moreover, documents that surfaced after the collapse of the GDR have "more fully demonstrated [that] . . . KPD/SED leaders sought the establishment of a separate socialist state in Germany far earlier, far more completely than their Soviet mentors." Not until 1948 did Soviet and SED interests become much more consistent. Weitz, *Creating German Communism*, 341.

31. James Schwoch, *Global TV: New Media and the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 25.

32. Heide Riedel, *Hörfunk*, 116.

33. Craig, "Medium-Wave Frequency Allocations," 123–124.

34. Schwoch, *Global TV*, 28.

35. Riedel, *Hörfunk*, 116. Craig, "Medium-Wave Frequency Allocations," 119.

36. Riedel argues that the major offenders were the Americans and Soviets, but that illicit use had been instigated by smaller states unsatisfied with their own frequency allotment. Riedel, *Hörfunk*, 117.

37. Craig, "Medium-Wave Frequency Allocations," 129.

38. Heil, *Fernsehen der SBZ*, 35.

39. Frei, "Hörfunk," 428. John Sandford, "Television in Germany," in *Television in Europe,* eds. James Coleman and Brigitte Rollett (Exeter, UK: Intellect Books, 1997), 49.

40. BArch, DR 6 279, "Darstellung der derzeitige Lage im Fernsehen der DDR," 20 November 1953, 3.

41. BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II 465, "Technische Entwicklung von 1950–1955" [1955].

42. Peter Hoff in Hickethier, *Geschichte*, 98.

43. BArch (DH), DM3 BRF II/633, Untitled, December 1955, 2.

44. BArch (DH), DM3 BRF II/74, "Bericht über die Schwierigkeiten der Fernsehsenderbau im Planjahr 1954," 29 September 1953, 3.

45. On the difficulties, both technical and political, facing industrial manufacturing in the GDR, see Stokes, *Constructing,* and Dolores Augustine, *Red Prometheus* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007).

46. BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/465, "Zusammenarbeit mit der Industrie," [1955], 1.

47. Ibid.

48. BArch (DH), DM3 BRF II/74, "Schwierigkeiten der Fernsehsenderbau," 8. Stokes, *Constructing*, 21.

49. BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/6341, "Republikflucht im Funkwesen," 1 December 1956.

50. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 J IV 2/3/530, "Protokoll Nr. 32/56," 6–7.

51. BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/1786, "Über den technisch-wissenschaftlichen Fortschritt 1959," (1959), 4–5.

52. BArch, DR 6/279, "Darstellung der derzeitige Lage," 20 November 1953, 3.

53. BArch, DR 6/279, "Darstellung der derzeitige Lage," 20 November 1953, 3. BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/465, "Technische Entwicklung," [1955], 5.

54. BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/465, "Technische Entwicklung," [1955], 1.

55. This according to Günter Puppe, cited in Müncheberg, *Experiment*, 26.

56. BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/604, Letter from Sachsenwerk Radeberg to Ministerium für Maschinenbau, Abt. Elektrotechnik, 16 April 1952.

57. For clarity, I use the international currency designation for East German Marks in the postwar period, DDM, to denote the GDR's currency and DM when referring to the West German currency.

58. BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/633, "Fragen des Genossen Horn," [20 December 1954].

59. The average monthly salary was about DDM 256 in 1950, rising gradually to about 354 DDM by 1955. Dietrich Staritz, *Geschichte der DDR* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1996), 55.

60. Authorities considered 800 DDM to be "affordable" due to an analysis of receiver prices internationally that showed that it should be possible to manufacture sets cheaply enough to offer them at this price. BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/929, "Beschluss über Massnahmen zur Verbesserung des Fernsehens in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik," [January 1956], 3. BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/604, "Bericht über die Tagung der Kommission 'Fernsehempfänger' am 13.5.1953," 14 April 1953.

61. BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/49, "Entwurf einer Vorlage an das Ministerrates der DDR über Ausbau und Verbesserung des Fernsehprogramms," 14 January 1954. American media scholar James Schwoch reports that (American authorities thought that) East Germans could buy sets on credit. Schwoch, *Global TV*, 37.

62. Knut Hickethier, "Der Fernseher: zwischen Teilhabe und Medienkonsum," in *Fahrrad, Auto, Fernsehschrank: zur Kulturgeschichte der Alltagsdinge*, ed. Wolfgang Ruppert (Frankfurt: Fischer, 1993), 172.

63. Herbert Köfer recalled that watching the Leningrad, "often . . . one could tell only with great difficulty, whether [the person onscreen was] Quermann or Köfer." Köfer, cited in Jost-Arend Bösenberg, *Die aktuelle Kamera (1952–1990)* (Potsdam: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 2004), 91n37.

64. BArch, DR 6/279, "Darstellung der derzeitige Lage im Fernsehen der DDR," 20 November 1953, 4. In 1947, a "top-of-the-line" twenty-inch DuMont (American) television cost $2,495, "one quarter of the price of a new automobile." Edgerton, *American Television*, 101.

65. A. Michael Noll, *Principles of Modern Communications Technology* (Boston: Artech House, 2001), 117.

66. DRA, Zuschauerforschung, H074-00-02/0002, "Zur Situation der Fernsehstuben im Bezirk Frankfurt/Oder," 23 June 1956, 1.

67. BArch, DR 6/279, "Darstellung der derzeitige Lage," 20 November 1953, 5.

68. See complaints in audience research including DRA, Zuschauerforschung, H074-00-02/0002, "Erfahrungsaustausch mit Berlin Fernsehstuben am 27.9.1956." For similar examples in the American context, see Edgerton, *American Television*, 100–101.

69. DRA, Zuschauerforschung, H074-00-02/0002, "Zur Situation der Fernsehstuben im Bezirk Frankfurt/O," 23 June 1956, 1. On the American "television hunger," see Edgerton, *American Television*, 104–106.

70. BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/2431, "Jahresbericht für den deutschen Post für das Jahr 1959," Article 2.131 'Hör- und Fernsehrundfunk.' BArch, DR 8/9, "Bericht über die Verkaufslage von Fernsehgeräten" [1957].

71. DRA, Zuschauerforschung, H074–00-02/0003, "Entwicklung des Schriftwechsels mit Zuschauern," [1956]. Hoff in Hickethier, *Geschichte*, 186.

72. BArch, DM 3 BRF II/2431, "Jahresbericht für den deutschen Post für das Jahr 1959."

73. Hoff in Hickethier, *Geschichte*, 186. Media scholars have historically, and rather arbitrarily, understood the one million mark as the point at which reception becomes a mass phenomenon.

74. With four times the population, West German ownership reached the million mark in 1959. Of course, viewership always exceeds ownership, and we can estimate that at least two and perhaps as many as four people watched any registered television set.

75. For American historians, these roots are often found in the Russian Revolution of 1917; European historians, on the other hand, point to the emergence of a Western habit of mind that defined "asiatic Russia" in opposition to their own, more developed "civilization." Bernd Stöver, *Der Kalte Krieg* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2003), 8.

76. See David S. Painter, *The Cold War: An International History* (New York: Routledge, 1999), and Melvyn Leffler and David S. Painter, eds., *The Origins of the Cold War: An International History* (New York: Routledge, 2005), or Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

77. Mike Sewell, *The Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1. Bernd Stöver, *Kalter Krieg*.

78. Patrick Major and Rana Mitter, *Across the Blocs* (London: Frank Cass, 2004).

79. Tony Shaw, *British Cinema and the Cold War* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2001), 1.

80. Arthur Schlesinger, "Some Lessons from the Cold War," *Diplomatic History* 16 (1992): 47–53.

81. Media scholars such as Peter Hoff have long recognized the importance of the emerging Cold War in driving the development of television in the GDR. Certainly, the potential loss of the VHF frequencies allocated at the Stockholm Conference was a decisive moment, which convinced Kurt Heiss of the SRK that the DFF needed to go on the air. And as I will demonstrate in chapter 3, it was the Hungarian uprising of 1956 that convinced the Central Committee that television was a medium worth their attention.

82. All quotes in Schwoch, *Global TV*, 35.

83. Hickethier, *Geschichte*, 76.

84. Hickethier, *Geschichte*, 78–79.

85. Schwoch, *Global TV*, 39–40.

86. Cited in Schwoch, *Global TV*, 36.

87. Under the Nazis, audiences had watched television in a number of public viewing facilities in Berlin for not more than one (Reichs-) mark per visit, and it is possible they considered public viewing a more politically reliable environment for reception. But that was not to be the case in postwar East Germany.

88. BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/604, "Protokoll über die am 5.12.1952 im Haus des Ministeriums für Post und Fernmeldewesen durchgeführte Besprechung über Fernsehempfänger," 5 December 1952. See also BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/604, "Bericht über die Tagung der Kommission 'Fernsehempfänger' am 13.5.1953," 14 April 1953, 5.

89. BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/604, "Plan zur Entwicklung des Fernsehens in Berlin für 1952," 31 July 1952. In August 1952, the Central Committee prioritized the individuals and organizations that should receive television sets, starting with the Politburo and members of the Central Committee, followed by large businesses, hospitals, universities, and the party academy "Karl Marx." SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 J IV 2/3/318, "Protokoll Nr. 189/52 der Sitzung des Sekretariats des ZK am 21.August 1952," 21 August 1952, 2. But this did not reflect, as Bösenberg claims, a collective ideology of socialism that privileged community viewing. Bösenberg, *Aktuelle Kamera*, 91.

90. DRA, Zuschauerforschung, H074-00-02/0002, "Bericht von der Dienstreise nach Erfurt, Suhl und Landkreise vom 26.3–30.3.56," 3 April 1956, 1.

91. BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/74, "Feststellung über die Fernsehversorgung im Grossberliner Bereich," [1954], 2.

92. Ibid.

93. Ibid.

94. Ibid., 2–3.

95. "It appears that the small antennas everywhere in the GDR serves the reception of transmitters in Band 3. Those kind of transmitters are not yet up and running in the GDR. Despite this, there are a whole bunch of this type of antenna. . . ." Ibid., 1.

96. Ibid., 3.

97. In December 1954, the government opened negotiations with Poland and Czechoslovakia over interference on the airwaves. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 J IV 2/3/449, "Protokoll Nr. 27/54 der Sitzung des Sekretariats des ZK am 15.12.1954," 1954, Article 23 'Fragen des Rundfunks.'

98. BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/465, "Technische Entwicklung," [1955]. Already in 1955 NWDR officials had begun to discuss the possibility of lining the border with small transmitters to protect their signal, a situation that would have saturated the border regions with ARD programming. BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/633, [Beobachtungen in Westdeutschland], 8 November 1955.

99. BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/929, "Abschlussbericht über die Änderung des Frequenzabstandes der Bild- und Tonträger der Fernsehsender und Empfänger im Gebiet der DDR . . . ," 13 February 1957.

100. Significantly, when GDR authorities were faced with a similar decision a decade later, this time about what standard to use for color programming, they came to a different decision. West German viewers, who by the 1970s were largely ignorant of DFF programming anyway, would have to watch DFF programming in black and white.

More important, East Germans would have to do the same with the more colorful West German television program.

101. On SED policymakers' desire to compete with Western broadcasting, see Joseph Naftzinger, "Policy-making in the German Democratic Republic: The Response to West German Trans-border Broadcasting" (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland at College Park, 1994).

102. BArch, DR 6/280, Transcript of "Sowjetzonalen-Regierung startet Fernsehoffensive: Es begann in Schwerin; 60 Millionen DM-Ost für die Bildschirm-propaganda" (from *Vorwärts,* 31 January 1958), 11 February 1958.

103. "Konkurrenz: Programm aus dem Osten" *Der Spiegel*, Nr. 36 (1957): 48–49. Also cited in Rolf Geserick, *40 Jahre Presse, Rundfunk und Kommunikationspolitik in der DDR* (Munich: Minerva, 1989), 74. *Spiegel* elaborated the narrative of a Fernsehoffensive in 1958: "Fernsehen: Sowjetzone—Die politische Kaffee stunde," *Der Spiegel*, 36 (1957): 48–49.

CHAPTER 2

1. Günter Hansel, cited in Hans Müncheberg, *Blaues Wunder aus Adlershof: der Deutsche Fersehfunk—Erlebtes und Gesammeltes* (Berlin: Das neue Berlin, 2000), 13.

2. Williams, *Television*, 28.

3. See Introduction, note 59.

4. Wolfgang Stemmler, "Bemerkungen über die Unterhaltungssendungen vom Beginn des DDR-Fernsehens bis zum Ende der fünfziger Jahre," in *Mit uns zieht die neue Zeit: 40 Jahre DDR-Medien*, ed. Heide Riedel (Berlin: Vistas, 1994), 77.

5. Stemmler, "Bemerkungen," 79. By 1957 there were over nine hundred DFF staff (about as many as employed by the BBC). On DFF staff, see Thomas Wilke, "Arbeitsbericht zur Entwicklung der Organisationsstruktur," in *Zwischen Experiment und Etablierung: Die Programmentwicklung des DDR-Fernsehens 1958–1963*, ed. Claudia Dittmar and Susanne Vollberg (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2007), 23; on BBC staff, see Rob Turnock, *Television and Consumer Culture* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 29.

6. This was also the case in early postwar radio. Adelheid von Saldern, "Radio in the GDR."

7. She played the title character in "Bianca Maria and the Dripping Dagger," for example. Müncheberg, *Experiment*, 46.

8. Müncheberg, *Experiment*, 20.

9. Whereas DEFA films could be denied exhibition rights, television programming was almost always transmitted. If, later, it was deemed a "negative result," that could be discussed, rather than ignored (according to accounts from 1961). Thomas Beutelschmidt, *Kooperation oder Konkurrenz? Das Verhältnis zwischen Film und Fernsehen in der DDR* (Berlin: DEFA Stiftung, 2009), 77.

10. Walter Baumert in Müncheberg, *Experiment*, 9.

11. The date 21 December 1952 marked the beginning of the "official test program" in the GDR. Some make much of the fact that the program debuted on Stalin's birthday; others concentrate on the fact that the DFF began broadcasting the "official test pro-

gram" only four days before the West Germans began their own official program. I have found no evidence that Stalin's birthday drove the DFF to begin on 21 December; more likely, it was a matter of fortunate coincidence, since beating the West Germans to the punch was far more important.

12. BArch, DR 8/1, "Protokoll über die Abteilungsleiter-Besprechung am 26.1.53," 26 January 1953. Although paper rationing can be politically motivated when regimes attempt to curb the media, in this case the DFF was simply not important enough to adequately provision, especially given the conditions of scarcity in other parts of the economy.

13. Müncheberg, *Experiment*, 38. On the "business hours" of public viewing rooms, see Bösenberg, *Aktuelle Kamera*, 91.

14. BArch, DR 8/1, "Protokoll über die Abteilungsleiter-Besprechung am 26.1.53," 26 January 1953.

15. Film could be shown on television through the use of the "telecine," which shone light through the film, turning the light into the electrical charges that could be read by the television transmitter.

16. Müncheberg, *Experiment*, 16.

17. Contemporary cameraman Herbert Kutschbach, noted that "one wanted to make the viewer of the television image believe he saw the picture from the point of view of a theater spectator sitting in the parquet." Kutschbach, cited in Knut Hickethier, "The Television Play in the Third Reich," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 10, no. 2 (1990): 172.

18. Peter Hoff, *Protokoll eines Laborversuchs* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2002), 73–74. On the Nazi era studios and programming, see Hickethier, "Television Play," 172.

19. Similarly, BBC producers complained of a shortage of studio space in the early 1950s, anticipating the opening of a new "purpose-built television studio" slated for the late 1950s. Turnock, *Television*, 29.

20. Herkner, cited in Müncheberg, *Experiment*, 30.

21. Media scholar Knut Hickethier describes the quite similar conditions of the Nazi period. Knut Hickethier, "Television Play," 166.

22. Müncheberg, *Experiment*, esp. 94–103.

23. Bösenberg, *Aktuelle Kamera*, 85.

24. Müncheberg, *Experiment*, 16.

25. Müncheberg, *Experiment*, 15.

26. According to this report from 1955, the DFF produced no original programming before December 1952, but they discounted the slide series. BArch, DR 8/3, "Über die Programmtätigkeit des Fernsehens in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik," [October 1955].

27. Müncheberg, *Blaues Wunder*, 17.

28. DRA, H074-00-02/0003, "Zur Entwicklung des Programms im Fernsehzentrum Berlin von 1953–1955," 1.

29. Ibid.

30. Viable recording technology first emerged in April 1956 in the United States, when Ampex demonstrated its VTR for CBS executives. Chapter 4, "The Ampex Revolution (1954–1956)," in Albert Abramson, *The History of Television, 1942 to 2000* (Jef-

ferson, NC: McFarland, 2003), 71. The use of videotape may have saved CBS $8,400 a week in film and film processing costs. Ibid., 78. Video recording technology arrived in Britain in 1958 but took some time to win over television producers. It was expensive and, though videotape could be reused, unlike film, it could not (at this early date) be edited. Turnock, *Television*, 93–97. The GDR did not acquire recording technology until the early 1960s.

31. On the use of DEFA films in television, see Beutelschmidt, *Kooperation*, 326–355.

32. Stemmler, "Bemerkungen," 78–79, and Müncheberg, *Blaues Wunder*, 16–17.

33. Müncheberg, *Blaues Wunder*, 14.

34. Stemmler, "Bemerkungen," 78.

35. BArch, DR 8/3, "Gedanken zu einer Dramaturgie des Fernsehens," 1955, 9.

36. On the aesthetics of broadcast-era television technology, see Herbert Zettl, "Aesthetics of Television," in *Understanding Television*, ed. Richard P. Adler (New York: Praeger, 1981), 115–142.

37. Stemmler, "Bemerkungen," 78.

38. Günter Kaltofen, cited in Müncheberg, *Experiment*, 85.

39. Müncheberg, *Experiment*, 74.

40. Müncheberg, *Experiment*, 97.

41. Müncheberg, *Experiment*, 66.

42. Müncheberg, *Experiment*, 67. Patricia Holland, *The Television Handbook* (London: Routledge, 2000), 91.

43. Müncheberg, *Experiment*, 40.

44. Hickethier, "Television Play," 173.

45. On the 180-degree rule, see Holland, *Television Handbook*, 63.

46. Hanna Christian, cited in Müncheberg, *Experiment*, 112, and Müncheberg, *Blaues Wunder*, 80.

47. A group of television workers, including Ernst Augustin, attended the filming of a soccer match in 1951 while on a trip to view the television center in Moscow. But Augustin and his colleagues were technicians interested in technology, not programming. Nor did they involve themselves in programming after their return. By the same token, camerawoman Christian had had plenty of opportunity to work with television technology in the studio. Yet the few cameras were housed in small studio spaces. Before August 1954, no studio existed that was large enough to get a 180-degree view through the camera. Hanna Christian in Müncheberg, *Experiment*, 72.

48. Extant film clips suggest that, in their broadcasts of Olympic soccer matches in 1936, the Nazis filmed most, but not all, of the action from positions behind the goal line at one end of the field. Michael Kloft, *Television under the Swastika: Unseen Footage from the Third Reich* (Chicago: International Historic Films, 2001). Cutting between those perspectives produced an astonishingly chaotic spectacle. But those transmissions likely were intended less to provide an intelligible representation of the game than to exploit the shock value of visual simultaneity by providing moving images for those who were watching from public viewing rooms in Berlin. Such conventions were not "natural" but had to be learned.

49. Müncheberg, *Experiment*, 109–114.

50. The DFF broadcast four hours daily in 1957, five hours in 1958, and seven hours

in 1959. By 1962 the daily broadcast had grown to nine hours. Hoff in Hickethier, *Geschichte*, 191.

51. BArch, DR 8/3, "Gedanken zu einer Dramaturgie des Fernsehens," [1955], 3–4.

52. Fehlig distinguished this experience from that of theater, which he characterized as establishing a strong personal relationship with the audience over the course of a specific play. BArch, DR 8/3, "Gedanken zu einer Dramaturgie des Fernsehens," [1955], 8–9.

53. BArch, DR 8/3, "Gedanken zu einer Dramaturgie des Fernsehens," [1955], 6, 7, 10.

54. BArch, DR 8/3, "Gedanken zu einer Dramaturgie des Fernsehens," [1955], 3.

55. Jost Hermand, "The 'Good New' and the 'Bad New': Metamorphoses of the Modernism Debate in the GDR since 1956," *New German Critique* 3 (1974): 73–92.

56. Manfred Jäger, *Kultur und Politik in der DDR* (Leipzig: Edition Deutschland Archiv, 1994), 34.

57. Johannes Becher, cited in Jäger, *Kultur*, 37.

58. Jäger, *Kultur*, 45–46.

59. Hermand, "Good New," 87–88.

60. "Drama," "topical" (or "political"), or "entertainment" programming were categories used by the television service. I am using them here because they reflect the ways in which television workers understood the programming they were creating. More important, these categories are not irrelevant, because a program defined as explicitly political often commanded more resources and greater attention from state representatives than other types of programming. So, these categories serve here not as interpretive categories but as a reflection of the administrative taxonomy mobilized by historical actors.

61. In her work on GDR radio, Monika Pater argues that the state tolerated entertaining genres in hopes of drawing audiences not just to the political message of the larger program but also to "high value" cultural edification. But state authorities always associated "entertainment" with mindless kitsch and could not recognize other, more profound effects, such as providing a release valve or "mood-management." Monika Pater, "Auf der Suche nach sozialistischer Unterhaltung," in *Zwischen Pop und Propaganda,* ed. Klaus Arnold and Christoph Classen (Berlin: Christoph Links, 2004), 94.

62. DRA-Frankfurt, NWDR, "Programm für den Aufbau und die Durchführung des öffentlichen Fernsehens," Anlage 6: "Grundsätzliche Bemerkungen zum Programm des Fernsehens," 1952, 1–4.

63. Television scholar John Caughie notes that, in Britain, early "television was a technology for relay and adaptation," which reflected both an "instrumental view of the medium" and "a general mindset that placed television in a dependent relationship to the other forms which it served [*sic*]." John Caughie, *Television Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 41.

64. BArch, DR 6/279, "Einige Erfahrungen der Programmtätigkeit des Fernsehens in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik," 14 November 1955, 20. BArch, DR 8/3, "Dramatische Kunst," [1955], 6–7.

65. BArch, DR 8/3, SKF, "Über die Programmtätigkeit des Fernsehens in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik," [October 1955] 27. BArch, DR 6 279, SRK, "Einige Erfahrungen der Programmtätigkeit," 14 November 1955, 5.

66. Müncheberg, *Blaues Wunder*, 44.

67. Stemmler, "Bemerkungen," 79.

68. Müncheberg, *Experiment*, 50.

69. This was performed in a newly finished, larger studio than the one described above though. It is apparent from a photo of the set that there were at least twelve actors working on the opera. Müncheberg, *Experiment*, 52.

70. BArch, DR 8/3, "Einige Erfahrungen aus der Arbeit der aktuell-politischen Redaktionen," [1955], 1.

71. BArch, DR 8/3, "Einige Erfahrungen aus der Arbeit der aktuell-politischen Redaktionen," [1955], 1. BArch, DR 6/279, "Einige Erfahrungen der Programmtätigkeit," 14 November 1955, 4.

72. BArch, DR 6/279, "Einige Erfahrungen der Programmtätigkeit," 14 November 1955, 4–5. BArch, DR 8/3, "Einige Erfahrungen aus der Arbeit der aktuell-politischen Redaktionen," [1955] 1.

73. BArch, DR 6/279, "Einige Erfahrungen der Programmtätigkeit," 14 November 1955, 5. BArch, DR 8/3, "Einige Erfahrungen aus der Arbeit der aktuell-politischen Redaktionen," [1955], 2.

74. BArch, DR 6/279, "Einige Erfahrungen der Programmtätigkeit," 14 November 1955, 5. BArch, DR 8/3, "Einige Erfahrungen aus der Arbeit der aktuell-politischen Redaktionen," [1955], 2.

75. DRA, Zuschauerforschung, H074–00-02/0003, "Analyse der Zuschauerpost im Monat April 1956," under Sendeablauf, esp. Punkt d: "Aktuelle Beiträge."

76. BArch, DR 8/3, "Über die Programmtätigkeit," [October 1955], 36.

77. DRA, Zuschauerforschung, H074–00-02/0003, 1956.

78. Paterson, "Drama and Entertainment," in *Television: An International History,* ed. Anthony Smith and Richard Paterson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 64, 66.

79. DFF announcer Maria Kühne and chief director Gottfried Herrmann moderated the show, *Who Guesses, Who Wins* (*Wer rät mit wer gewinnt*). Müncheberg, *Blaues Wunder*, 28.

80. On *Out of the Request File*: BArch, DR 6/279, "Einige Erfahrungen der Programmtätigkeit," 14 November 1955, 12–13, 35.

81. Material in this paragraph from BArch, DR 8/1, "Protokoll über die 1. Sitzung des Kollegiums," 3 December 1953. BArch, DR 8/1, "Protokoll über die 2. Sitzung des Kollegiums des Fernsehzentrums," 8 December 1953.

82. The Bitterfeld Conference marked the beginning of a cultural campaign to bring lay and professional artists into dialogue in order to create a new, socialist culture that was imbued with and reflected the people's lives (see the end of chapter 3). David Bathrick notes that contemporary playwrights, such as Heiner Müller and Peter Hacks, were also doing this by the mid-1950s, and argues that the policy of the Bitterfeld Conference simply codified what was already happening in the East German arts. David Bathrick, *The Powers of Speech: The Politics of Culture in the GDR* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 120.

83. See, for example, DRA, H074–00-02/0002, "Bericht von der Dienstreise nach Erfurt, Suhl und Landkreise vom 26.3.-30.3.56."

84. On socializing with television in the United States and Britain, see Lynn Spigel,

Make Room for TV: Television and the Family Ideal in Postwar America (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), or Spigel, *Welcome to the Dreamhouse* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001); Turnock, *Television*.

85. DRA, Zuschauerpost, H074–00-02/0003, Analyse der Zuschauerpost im Monat Januar 1957, 3 February 1957.

86. DRA, Zuschauerforschung, H074–00-02/0002, "Bericht über die Dienstreise am 30.11. bis 2.12. nach Leipzig und Halle," 5 December 1956, 5. DRA, Zuschauerforschung, H074–00-02/0002, "Fernsehstuben: Bezirk Berlin," 13 June 1956, 1.

87. Quotes in this paragraph are from DRA, H074–00-02/0002, "Bericht ueber die Dienstreise am 30.11. bis 2.12. nach Leipzig und Halle," 5 December 1956.

88. See also Beutelschmidt, *Kooperation*, 351–354.

89. DRA, Zuschauerforschung, H074–00-02/0002, "Bericht von der Dienstreise nach Erfurt, Suhl und Landkreise vom 26.3.-30.3.56." The FDGB estimated they had between 250 and 300 sets.

90. DRA, Zuschauerforschung, H074–00-02/0003, "Analyse der Zuschauerpost im Monat Januar 1957," 6 February 1957.

91. In this way, the GDR television audience approximated contemporary audiences elsewhere. See, for example, Caughie, *Television Drama*, 38.

92. DRA, Zuschauerforschung, H074–00-02/0003, "Analyse der Zuschauerpost im Monat Januar 1957," 6 February 1957.

93. DRA, Zuschauerforschung, H074–00-02/0003, "Analyse der Zuschauerpost der Monat Juni 1956," 6.

94. Hans Müncheberg, cited by Hoff in Hickethier, *Geschichte*, 193.

95. BArch, DR 6/280, "Für ein interessantes massenwirksames Fernsehprogramm" [1958]. Müncheberg, cited by Hoff in Hickethier, *Geschichte*, 193.

CHAPTER 3

1. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV 2/9.02/84, Briefwechsel Eisler-Sindermann, 27 November 1956, 1.

2. Italics original. Ibid., 2.

3. For a discussion of the institutional and political factors that have shaped postwar approaches to the study of technology and its histories, see Gabrielle Hecht and Michael Thad Allen, "Introduction," in *Technologies of Power*, ed. Gabrielle Hecht and Michael Thad Allen (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001), 1–23.

4. Quote from Hermann Weber, *Geschichte der DDR* (Munich: DTV, 1999), 138, but noted by others as well, for example, Thomas Lindenberger.

5. BArch, DR 8/3, "Über die Programmtätigkeit," [October 1955], 1. It should be noted that although the holdings of DR 8 are attributed to the the State Committee for Television, between 1952 and 1968 this body was a "Television Council" that included members of the television leadership and liaised between television and its overseer, the State Broadcasting Committee. The SED established the State Committee for Television in the context of wider social and political upheaval in Europe in 1968, reflecting the desire for increased control over the organs of communication in the GDR.

6. At best, most East German leaders could have experienced the medium only at

technical fairs demonstrating mechanical television in the late 1920s, in public viewing rooms in Berlin and Leipzig in the 1930s, or in exile in London, Moscow, or parts of the United States in the late 1930s.

7. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 J IV 2/3 318, "Protokoll Nr. 189/52 der Sitzung des Sekretariats des ZK am 21.August 1952," 21 August 1952, 2: "4. Die Aufstellung der Fernsehempfänger geht in folgender Reihenfolge vor sich: a. Mitglieder und Kandidaten des Politbüros des ZK; b. Mitglieder des Sekretariats des ZK; c. Staatsfunktionäre; d. Grossbetriebe und Institute. 5. Die Bezahlung der Fernsehempfänger übernimmt bei den Mitgliedern und Kandidaten des Politbüros sowie bei den Mitgliedern des Sekretariats des ZK die Hauptkasse des ZK. Bei den Staatsfunktionären erfolgt die Bezahlung aus eigenen Mitteln, bei den Betrieben aus den Direktorfonds. . . ."

8. BArch, DR 6/1, "Protokoll der Leitungssitzung am 2.1.53," 2 January 1953, 1–2.

9. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV 2/2 187, "Anlage Nr. 4 zum Protokoll Nr. 87 vom 15. Januar 1952," 15 January 1952, 4 (Blatt 27).

10. Udo Wengst, "Der Aufstand am 17. Juni 1953 in der DDR," *Vierteljahrshefte für Geschichte*, (1993) 41: 277–278. Christian F. Ostermann, *Uprising in East Germany, 1953* (New York: Central European University Press, 2001), xxii.

11. Csaba Bekes, "The 1956 Hungarian Revolution and World Politics," Working Paper No. 16, *Cold War International History Project*, Washington, DC, 1996, 4.

12. Wengst, "Aufstand," 278.

13. Scholars estimate that the uprising involved anywhere from 300,000 to half a million participants, in at least 270 but perhaps as many as 700 localities across the GDR. Karl Wilhelm Fricke, "Die nationale Dimension des 17. Juni 1953," *APuZ* 23 (2003): 5. The uprising was initially understood as primarily a workers' revolt, spurred on by economic factors and demands of the demonstraters. Arnulf Baring, *Der 17. Juni 1953* (Stuttgart: DVA, 1982), and Karl Wilhelm Fricke and Ilse Spittmann, *17. Juni 1953: Arbeiteraufstand in der DDR* (Cologne: EDV, 1982). More recent scholarship argues that it was a much more widespread revolt in which political factors were more important. Armin Mitter and Stefan Wolle, *Untergang auf Raten* (Munich: Bertelsmann, 1993), and Gary Bruce, *Resistance with the People: Repression and Resistance in East Germany, 1945–1955* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003). A recent work by Ulrich Mählert finds a convincing middle road, arguing that the uprising was an economic protest that turned political. Ulrich Mählert, *Der 17. Juni 1953* (Bonn: Dietz, 2003).

14. Fricke, "Die nationale Dimension," 5.

15. Weber, *Geschichte*, 166. Scholarly interpretations of the significance of the uprising argue that it was the "beginning" or, alternatively, the "beginning of the end" for the GDR. For Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk, Armin Mitter, and Stefan Wolle, June 1953 achieved an "innere Staatsgründung," the moment that truly established the GDR, and as an authoritarian dictatorship. For Wilke and Voigt, Walter Ulbricht was able to consolidate his power in the aftermath of the failed uprising, which also resulted in a deeper divide between East and West Germany. Manfred Wilke and Tobias Voigt, "Neuer Kurs und 17. Juni Die zweite Staatsgründung der DDR 1953," in *Satelliten nach Stalins Tod,* ed. Manfred Wilke and András Hegedüs (Berlin: Akademie, 2000). The GDR had faced a crisis of legitimacy that had made apparent that the GDR could not exist without the

Red Army. Michael Lemke, "Der 17. Juni in der DDR-Geschichte," *APuZ* 23 (2003): 11. The GDR could not overcome this event; exposed as illegitimate, it was just a matter of time before it collapsed, and some scholars draw a direct line between the events of 1953 and 1989. Rolf Steininger, *17. Juni 1953: Der Anfang vom langen Ende der DDR* (Munich: Olzog, 2003); Kowalczuk, Mitter, and Wolle, *Untergang auf Raten*. Torsten Diedrich and Kowalczuk assert that scholars writing on the uprising have historically identified it as one of the most important events (if not *the* most important event) in the history of the GDR, although it has yet to be convincingly located in the wider history of the GDR. A recent conference has begun to change that, as well as to revise the standard view in favor of a much more complex picture of the events and processes under way at the time. Torsten Diedrich and Ilko-Sascha Kowalczuk, *Staatsgründung auf Raten?* (Berlin: Christoph Links, 2005), 5–9. Christian Ostermann reminds us that 1953 was a crisis moment not just in the GDR but across the Eastern bloc. Ostermann, *Uprising.*

16. Pritchard, *Making of the GDR*, 208.

17. Pritchard, *Making of the GDR*, 208; W. R. Smyser, *From Yalta to Berlin: The Cold War Struggle over Germany* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 125.

18. At the same time the Broadcasting Committee undertook what became a prolonged discussion over the role and character of "socialist" entertainment and humor. Monika Pater, "Rundfunkangebote," in *Zuhören und Gehörtwerden II: Radio in der DDR der fünfziger Jahre,* ed. Adelheid von Saldern and Inge Marssolek (Tübingen: edition diskord, 1998), 182–183.

19. Pater, "Rundfunkangebote," 182–183.

20. BArch, DR 6/1, "Kommunique über die ausserordentliche Sitzung der Leitung des Staatlichen Rundfunkkomitees am Mittwoch, 11 November 1953," 1.

21. Riedel, *Hörfunk*, 22. The Central Committee accused three more employees of "ideological carelessness" and "un-comradely behaviour" toward their Soviet colleagues. One defended herself vigorously, insisting that Schmidt had kept her from reading the Soviet press and rejected her suggestion to introduce Russian language training to the airwaves. Further, she claimed she had persistently tried to bring attention to "these developments" and even told deputy director Goldhammer, "we are covering things up here, that can no longer be covered up." SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/ J IV 2/3/060, "Anlage 2 'Die Lage am Berliner Rundfunk' zu der Protokoll Nr. 60," 1. Corroborated by the Politburo in SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV 2/2/51, "Zum Protokoll Nr. 51," Article 17 "Die Lage am Berliner Rundfunk, blatt 5."

22. He required employees to participate in schooling in the basic principles of the politics of the SED and established more rigid rules governing the planning of radio broadcasts. Riedel, *Hörfunk*, 23. For Monika Pater, this is evidence that authorities believed messages could be unproblematically broadcast and monosemically received. See note 19.

23. Interview with Hans Mahle, in *So dürften wir glauben zu kämpfen—Erfahrungen mit DDR-Medien,* ed. Edith Spielhagen and Maryellen Boyle (Berlin: Vistas, 1993), 35. Mahle had returned to Germany with the "Ulbricht Group" in 1945 and was a member of the Central Committee until 1947. Soon after his return, Soviet occupation authorities appointed him the Director of Broadcasting with the mandate to reconstruct broadcasting services in the Soviet zone. Hoff in Hickethier, *Geschichte*, 97.

24. According to Riedel, the Agitation Commission fired Mahle on the pretext that radio listeners were bored with the program. Riedel, *Hörfunk*, 24. Mahle claimed, somewhat plausibly, in an interview in the 1990s that he had "built up the Television Center at Adlershof against the will of the Central Committee." Mahle, cited in Spielhagen and Boyle, *So dürften wir*, 47.

25. Thereafter Mahle essentially disappeared from DFF television history. Hoff in Hickethier, *Geschichte*, 98.

26. Hoff in Hickethier, *Geschichte*, 185.

27. BArch, DR 6/1, "Kommunique über die ausserordentliche Sitzung der Leitung des Staatlichen Rundfunkkomitees am Mittwoch, 11 November 1953," 1.

28. On cadres politics in radio, see Daniela Münkel, "Produktionssphäre," in *Zuhören*, ed. von Saldern and Marssolek, especially 80–95.

29. BArch, DR 6/1, "Beschlussprotokoll Nr. 18a/54 der ausserordentlichen Leitungssitzung am 28.6.54," 29 June 1954, 1. Adameck remained director of the service until the end of the GDR.

30. It was a "political institution, like the press and radio, [that serves] the consolidation of the Worker- and Peasant-power and with that the preservation of peace and the creation of a unified, democratic Fatherland." BArch, DR 8/3, "Über die Programmtätigkeit," [October 1955], 1.

31. See, for example, BArch, DR 8/2, "Protokoll Nr. 11/54," 18 November 1954.

32. BArch, DR 8/2, "Protokoll Nr. 11/54 der Kollegiumssitzung des Fernsehzentrums Berlin am 18.11.1954," 30 September 1954.

33. The SRK appointed Zahlbaum as Adameck's deputy at the service; in 1953 he had been charged with finding a way to "build" propaganda shows into radio programming. BArch, DR 6/1, "Protokoll Nr. 58 der Leitungssitzung am 3.11.1953," 2.

34. She had difficult working relationship with colleagues and had not informed Adameck promptly that a television worker had "left democratic Berlin." BArch, DR 8/3, "Protokoll Nr. 1/55," 28 January 1955.

35. BArch, DR 8/3, "Protokoll Nr. 6/55," 31 March 1955.

36. BArch, DR 6/1, "Beschlussvorlage zur Durchführung der staatspolitischen Schulung."

37. Cafeteria workers, janitorial staff, and security personnel were exempt from this. SAPMO-BArch, DR 8/2, "Beschluss Nr. 2: Zur Durchführung der staatspolitischen und fachlichen Schulung der Mitarbeiter des Fernsehzentrums Berlin," 30 September 1954.

38. BArch, DR 8/3, "Vorlage für die Kollegiumssitzung der 26.1.55: zum 3. Tagesordnungspunkt, staatspolitische und fachliche Schulung," 4.

39. There are veiled references to the flight of technical personnel in BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/1823, "Kommunique," 1 September 1959.

40. BArch, DR 8/2, "Beschlussvorlage Nr. 2," 15 December, 1954, 3 Article 3.f.

41. BArch, DR 8/2, "Beschlussvorlage für das Kollegium Nr. 5," 23 September 1954.

42. BArch, DR 8/3, "Protokoll Nr. 6/55," 31 March 1955. In this meeting, the Television Committee decided to find someone to deal exclusively with film exchange with the "Eastern bloc" countries.

43. BArch, DR 8/7, "Entwurf: Auslandsreisen," [January 1957]. A year later, the

Television Committee established a photo library. BArch, DR 8/12, "Kollegiumsvorlage Nr. 39/58: Bildung einer Foto-Abteilung," 24 May 1958.

44. Markus Schubert and Hans-Jörg Stiehler argue that the DFF program was really only a "test program" during the first year of service. Markus Schubert and Hans-Jörg Stiehler, "Programmentwicklung im DDR-Fernsehen zwischen 1958 und 1963," in *Zwischen Experiment und Etablierung: Die Programmentwicklung des DDR-Fernsehens 1958–1963*, ed. Claudia Dittmar and Susanne Vollberg (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2007), 36.

45. International Olympic Committee. http://www.olympic.org/uk/games/index_uk.asp (accessed 18 April 2006). Now http://www.olympic.org/cortina-d-ampezzo-1956-winter-olympics (last accessed 21 June 2013).

46. For example, they had difficulty with sound transmission: BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/484, "Tonstörung bei der Direktübertragung 'Frohe Burschen—frohe Mädchen' am 22.3.56," 28 March 1956. The MPF-BRF was separate from the DFF, but they had to work together and had a troubled relationship that worsened as pressure on the television service grew more intense. In mid-1957, for example, the BRF sent a detailed letter of complaint over conflicts between BRF and DFF staff over a broadcast from Leipzig. See for example, BArch (DH), DM 3 BRFII/484, "Bericht über den Einsatz des Ü-III vom 28.6.-1.7.1957," 3 July 1957.

47. BArch, DR 8/4, "Beschlussvorlage Nr. 9/56: Bericht über die Auswertung der Übertragungen von den VII. Olympischen Winterfestspielen in Cortina d'Ampezzo," 20 February 1956.

48. Italian television (RAI) did not charge licensing fees for the rights to coverage, but requested that foreign services cover costs for film processing and use of television transmission facilities. Stephen Wenn, "A History of the International Olympic Committee and Television, 1936–80" (Ph.D. diss., Pennsylvania State University, 1993), 43.

49. "The task was particularly difficult in that the pictures were commentated from the studio. It was not possible to let the athletes speak about their own development in original interviews." But we should remember that these "weaknesses" are today standard operating procedure: most coverage of sporting events relies on the visual coverage provided by a host broadcaster, with audio commentary provided by the reporter of the network carrying the broadcast, who is likely not at the event. BArch, DR 8/4, "Beschlussvorlage Nr. 9/56: Bericht über die Auswertung der Übertragungen von den VII. Olympischen Winterfestspielen in Cortina d'Ampezzo," 20 February 1956, 2.

50. BArch, DR 8/4, "Bericht über die Auswertung der Übertragungen von den VII. Olympischen Winterfestspielen in Cortina d'Ampezzo," 20 February 1956, 2.

51. BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/1824, Letter to Heinz Geggel [Deputy Chairman of the State Broadcasting Committee], [March 1958].

52. From Intelligence Reports from the United States Office of Research and correspondence between NBC's news director William McAndrew and reporter Romney Wheeler, cited in Schwoch, *Global TV*, 39.

53. Johanna Granville, "Ulbricht in October 1956: Survival of the *Spitzbart* during Destalinization," *Journal of Contemporary History* 41 (2006): 500.

54. Granville, "Ulbricht," 477, 483.

55. Bekes, "1956," 8–11.

56. Granville points to criticisms from Zaisser in 1953 and Schirdewan in 1956, for

example. Wolfgang Harich proposed a platform of liberalization and was imprisoned. Granville, "Ulbricht." Michael Lemke argues that the Ulbricht group of the SED leadership feared Moscow would let go of the GDR in return for a neutral Germany and sought to stay firmly in the Soviet sphere of influence, making reunification less likely especially after 1953. Herrnstadt, Zaisser, and Grotewohl, on the other hand, argued against Ulbricht's hard line. Michael Lemke, *Einheit oder Sozialismus? Die Deutschlandpolitik der SED, 1949–1961* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2001).

57. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 JIV 2/3/534, "Protokoll Nr. 36/56 der ausserordentlichen Sitzung des Sekretariats des ZK am 5.November 1956," 5 November 1956, "Punkt 1," 1.

58. Schnitzler was a fervent advocate of socialism on the airwaves, broadcasting some of the DFF's most ideological programming. He was also infamous for his penchant for expensive cars and a Western lifestyle, which, though troublesome, the SED often overlooked due to the "service" he provided otherwise. All quotes here from SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 J IV 2/3/534, "Protokoll Nr. 36/56 der ausserordentlichen Sitzung des Sekretariats des ZK am 5 November 1956," 5 November 1956, 3.

59. BArch, DR 8/4, "Beschlussvorlage Nr. 58/56: Bericht über den Filmaustausch mit den befreundeten Fernsehstationen," 18 October 1956. BArch (DH), DM3 BRFII/6341, "Bericht über den Stand der Entwicklung der Technik auf dem Gebiet des Rundfunk, Fernsehens und Kommerziellen Funks auf der Grundlage des Beschlusses vom 23.2.1956" [1957], 12–14.

60. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 J IV 2/3/538, "Protokoll der Sitzung des Sekretariats des ZK vom 28.11.1956," 28 November 1956, article 2. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 J IV 2/3/530, "Protokoll Nr. 32/56," 3 October 1956.

61. There is no known extant copy of this report. The point I am making here is that television workers already had spent much time analyzing television's deficits. Yet it was only in the aftermath of the Hungarian uprising that such information became important to the Central Committee.

62. In one such report the Postal Ministry, which was responsible for developing television technology, identified the lack of available resources as the cause of GDR television's technical lag. The Ministry maintained that the decision to develop television technology in 1949 had not taken into account that indigenous East German industry could not yet develop or deliver the necessary technical equipment. BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/465, "Technische Entwicklung," [1955], 5. Furthermore, the Postal Ministry claimed that, "after small successes in 1950–1951, industrial interest in our developmental task essentially plunged to zero," and it traced the East Germans' lack of success in developing television technology to the fact that "the economic importance of the industrial production of radio and television equipment is not appreciated." BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/465, "Zusammenarbeit mit der Industrie," [1955], 1. But few, if any, of these reports had come to the attention of the Central Committee. The Committee's discussions of Rundfunk ("broadcasting," later "radio") were restricted to the development of radio. For example, as late as 29 June 1956 they discussed a report entitled the "Verbesserung des Rundfunks," which outlined a program of general tasks for the State Broadcasting Committee, the radio stations Berlin I and II, and the Deutschlandsender, but made no mention of television technology or the program. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 J IV 2/3/475, "Anlage Nr. 2 zum Protokoll Nr. 26/55 vom 29.6.1955," 29 June 1955.

63. BArch (DH), DM3 BRFII/6341, "Bericht über den Stand der Entwicklung der Technik auf dem Gebiet des Rundfunks, Fernsehens und Kommerziellen Funks auf der Grundlage des Beschlusses vom 23.2.1956," [1957], 4.

64. BArch, DR 8/9, "Bericht über die Verkaufslage von Fernsehgeräten," [1957]. BArch (DH), DM3 BRF II/929, "Beschluss über Massnahmen zur Verbesserung des Fernsehens in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik," 2, and "Begründung," 3.

65. BArch (DH), DM3 BRF II/929, "Beschluss über Massnahmen zur Verbesserung des Fernsehens in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik: Begründung," [December 1956], 2. They did not expect to be able to produce this technology domestically before 1959.

66. For example, they were considering a cable link with Czech television and possibly Polish and Soviet television. BArch (DH), DM3 BRFII/6341, "Bericht über den Stand der Entwicklung der Technik auf dem Gebiet des Rundfunks, Fernsehens und Kommerziellen Funks auf der Grundlage des Beschlusses vom 23.2.1956," [1957], 14.

67. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV 2/9.02/84, Brief an das Politbüro des ZK der SED, 10 December 1957, 2.

68. BArch (DH), DM3 BRF II/6341, "Bericht über den Stand der Entwicklung der Technik auf dem Gebiete des Rundfunks . . ." [1957], 20–21.

69. Much of that "turnover" had to do with *Republikflucht*, especially at the Radio and Television Works around Berlin. Patrick Major, *Behind the Berlin Wall* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). Later, in 1959, the MPF-BRF still described occurrences of "technische Ausfälle" due to the fact that the "class enemy tries to lure away technical personnel." (By this time they described television as the "most important tool (Werkzeug) of the government and Party.") BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/1823, "Kommunique," 1 September 1959.

70. The Central Committee suggested establishing a new group of politically reliable staffers to take responsibility for the television service under the leadership of the SRK. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 J IV 2/3/534, "Protokoll Nr. 36/56 der ausserordentlichen Sitzung des Sekretariats des ZK am 5.November 1956," 5 November 1956, article 4.d. 3. But Adameck managed to retain his position as director of the service, and, in December 1956, a new statute concentrated power in the hands of the Director. BArch, DR 8/4, "Beschlussvorlage Nr. 66/56: Statut des Deutschen Fernsehfunks," 17 December 1956, 1.

71. BArch, DR 8/5, "Protokoll Nr. 32/56 . . ." 28 November 1956, 3. "Innerhalb der Arbeitsbereiche der Produktion, der Technik, des Betriebsschutzes und der Feuerwehr werden Tagesfragen nicht genügend behandelt. Nach dem Beispiel der Feuerwehr wird stark diskutiert, aber oftmals falsch."

72. BArch, DR 8/5, "Protokoll Nr. 32/56," 28 November 1956, 4.

73. Indeed, by 1958 the Television Committee had to address the problem of *Republikflucht* among DFF cameramen (in response to extreme overtime and low pay), which had begun to threaten continued television service. Vorlage Nr. 42/57 discussed in BArch, DR 8/6, "Protokoll Nr. 18/57 der Kollegiumssitzung des Deutschen Fernsehfunks," 26 June 1957.

74. In the speech, given at Pula on 11 November 1956, Tito toed a fine line between the Soviets and the Hungarian reformers: he criticized the former for intervening in

what he characterized as a grass-roots revolution and the latter for endangering socialism in Hungary. Johanna Granville, "Hungary, 1956: The Yugoslav Connection," *Europe-Asia Studies* 50 (1998): 498. There is no other extant evidence of this broadcast, but this testimony suggests that the DFF broadcast only remarks that suggested Tito was in favor of the Soviets and against the Hungarian "counterrevolutionaries," omitting comments in favor of Hungarian liberalization.

75. All quotes from BArch, DR 8/5, "Protokoll Nr. 33/56," 5 December 1956, 1–2.

76. Weber, *Geschichte*, 198.

77. Hermand, "Good New," 74–75.

78. Bathrick, *Powers*, 110.

79. On the rich and contradictory history of the "Proletkult"—mass cultural activity of lay people between 1917 and 1932—and its relationship to "official" Soviet culture, see Lynn Mally, *The Culture of the Future* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

80. Hermand, "Good New," 73–74, and David Bathrick, "The Dialectics of Legitimation: Brecht in the GDR," *New German Critique* 2 (1974): 96. Writing in 1974, Hermand characterized this as the "indiscriminate suppression of all avant-garde tendencies," while Bathrick, by contrast, saw this also as a "plea for tradition as a means to legitimize the building of a socialist national state."

81. Bathrick describes Heiner Müller and Müller Hagen-Stahl's first attempt at "agiprop montage" as "at the dramaturgical level, somewhat of a theatrical disaster" but argues that it achieved the important step of "reawakening a revolutionary tradition. By deviating from the plot-, character-, and stage-centered 'theater-works' of conventional socialist realism . . . they offered new possibilities for the development of a more broad-based theatrical public life." Bathrick, *Powers*, 110–112.

82. For media scholar Judith Kretzschmar, this new campaign instead represents the emergence of the GDR's first indigenous cultural movement, unfettered by the example of Soviet cultural policy and the primacy of socialist realism. That was a clear shift from 1957, when socialist realism "could no longer be a future vision, but had to become reality." Judith Kretzschmar, "Zwischen Schein und Sein," in Dittmar and Vollberg, eds., *Zwischen Experiment und Etablierung*, 140–145.

83. Andreas Malycha, "Von der Gründung bis zur Mauerbau," in Herbst, ed., *Die SED*, 3.

84. This according to a contemporary periodical (uncited), in Jürgen Winkler, "Kulturpolitik," in Herbst, 396. Hermann Weber identifies it as *Neuer Weg*. Weber, *Geschichte*, 209.

85. BArch, DR 6/280, "Für ein interessantes, massenwirksames Fernsehprogramm," [1958], 8.

86. One of television's great advantages was that it could reach into the FRG. The SED planned the launch of a second program for the Western audience intended to reach that audience more effectively and counter the influence of the FRG's planned second program (struck down by the FRG's constitutional court in 1961). Claudia Dittmar argues that this cross-border mandate, so important in 1957, was no longer a priority by 1959. Claudia Dittmar, *Feindliches Fernsehen: Das DDR-Fernsehen und seine Strategien im Umgang mit dem westdeutschen Fernsehen* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2010), 222–227.

87. Beutelschmidt, *Kooperation*, 44.

88. SED, *Bericht des Zentralkomitees an den V. Parteitag der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands* (Berlin: Dietz, 1958), 126. This campaign continued into the Bitterfeld Conference of 1959, where the SED challenged artists and East German workers to "overcome the gulf between art and life" and bring art closer to the people. This meant, on the one hand, that professional art should reflect everyday life, and do so in an accessible way, thus proscribing the visual language of abstraction. On the other hand, it called for workers themselves to become producers of art. Weber, *Geschichte*, 211.

89. BArch, DR 6/280, "Für ein interessantes, massenwirksames Fernsehprogramm," [1958], 1.

90. See, for example, BArch, DR 8/6, "Protokoll Nr. 34/57 der Kollegiumssitzung des Deutschen Fernsehfunks am 9.10.57," 9 October 1957 and BArch, DR 8/5, "Protokoll Nr. 10/56."

91. Italics mine. BArch, DR 8/9, "Beschlussvorlage Nr. 75/57: Programmperspektiven der Redaktion Kulturpolitik," 16 November 1957.

92. BArch, DR 6/279, "Bericht über den Stand der Programmarbeit im Deutschen Fernsehfunk und einige wichtige politisch-ideologische Aufgaben in der nächsten Zeit," 25 April 1957, 2.

93. Ibid., 3. This likely refers to the televised versions of the radio entertainment show *The Laughing Bear* and the "Distel" cabaret. On GDR cabaret see, for example, Sylvia Klötzer, *Satire und Macht. Film, Zeitung, Kabarett in der DDR* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2005).

94. BArch, DR 8/7, "Direktive des Komitees, 1. Halbjahr 1957," 24 January 1957, 5.

95. BArch, DR 6/279, "Bericht über den Stand der Programmarbeit im Deutschen Fernsehfunk und einige wichtige politisch-ideologische Aufgaben in der nächsten Zeit," 25 April 1957, 3.

96. On DFF sports programming, see Jasper Friedrich, Lothar Mikos, and Hans-Jörg Stiehler, eds., *Anpfiff: Erste Analysen zum DDR-Sportfernsehen* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2004), or Lutz Warnicke, "Der Aufbau und die frühe Entwicklung des Programmbereichs Sport," in Dittmar and Vollberg, eds., *Zwischen Experiment und Etablierung*, 311–369.

97. BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/929, "Beschluss über Massnahmen zur Verbesserung des Fernsehens in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik," [24 January 1957], 9 (also in BArch (DH), DM3 BRF II/6337). Peter Hoff, "Das Projekt eines Fernsehsehund Rundfunkstudios in Leipzig als erster Versuch einer Dezentralisierung der Fernseharbeit," in *KultuRation: Online-Journal für Kultur, Wissenschaft und Politik* 2 (2003), http://www.kulturation.de/ki_1_thema.php?id=18 (last accessed 21 June 2013).

98. *Bildung* can be translated narrowly as "education" but is closer to "cultivation" or "cultural development."

99. This show emerged in the context of a concerted push to finally collectivize agriculture. SAPMO-Barch, DY 30 IV 2/9.02/84, "Übersicht über die Sendungen, die die Grundlage für die Schaffung einer Fernsehuniversität bilden können" [1960].

100. Hoff in Hickethier, *Geschichte*, 288. The DFF also provided programming on language instruction in English and Russian.

101. BArch, DR 6/280, "Für ein interessantes, massenwirksames Fernsehprogramm," [1958], 1.

102. Ibid., 2.

103. Discussion of *Current Camera* is developed in chapter 4.

104. The first film segment appeared even before the "official" beginning of the test program, on 11 July 1952, which represented "an accomplishment, that television producers had taken a step into the unknown." Bösenberg, *Aktuelle Kamera*, 89.

105. Despite this shift, the program still used filmed material extensively. Some segments simply broadcast excerpts of the People's Chamber, Walter Ulbricht's speeches, or speakers at party events such as the Youth Congress, while other filmed material continued to reproduce the style of newsreels. See, for example, Ulbricht's appearance at the Jugendkongress Leipzig (and the anti-Radio Luxembourg comments of one East German youth). DRA, Fernseharchiv, "Aktuelle Kamera," OVC 1542.

106. On *Current Camera* in the schedule: BArch, DR 8/3, "Beschlussvorlage Nr. 3/55" 18.3.1955, 1. BArch, DR 8 3, SKF, "Zur Beschlussvorlage Nr. 3/55" 1. Plans to improve Aktualität included expanding the network of DFF correspondents to five within the Republic, three in West Germany, and sending one each to the Soviet Union and China. BArch, DR 6/279, "Bericht über den Stand der Programmarbeit," 25 April 1957, 5.

107. All quotes in this paragraph from BArch, DR 6/280, "Für ein interessantes, massenwirksames Fernsehprogramm," [1958], 2.

CHAPTER 4

1. Williams, *Television*, 105.

2. Heil, *Fernsehen der SBZ*, 42–43.

3. Interference noted by Ministerrat, BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/724, "Beschluss," 24 September 1956, 12; Umstellung mandated by Ministerrat BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II 929, MPF-BRF, "Beschluss über Massnahmen zur Verbesserung des Fernsehens in der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik: Begründung," [1957], 3.

4. Markus Schubert and Hans-Jörg Stiehler demonstrate the correlation between the expanding program (in the East) and rising viewership. Schubert and Stiehler, "Programmentwicklung," 26. At this early date, though, DFF transmissions still reached far more East viewers than those of the ARD.

5. Heil, *Fernsehen der SBZ*, 93.

6. "Drama," entertainment" or "political" programming refer to categories used by the television service and thus reflect the ways in which television workers understood the programming they were creating. But what I am arguing here is how liminal the boundaries between programming they defined as "entertainment" or "political" were.

7. Raymond Williams, *Television,* or Lynn Spigel, *Make Room for TV*.

8. Lutz Haucke, "Die Träume sozialistischer Massenunterhaltung in der DDR," in *Kahlschlag: Das 11. Plenum des ZK der SED 1965. Studien und Dokumente,* ed. Günter Agde (Berlin: Aufbau Taschenbuch Verlag, 1991), 115–116.

9. Haucke, "Träume," 111–121. For specific ways in which this operated in the GDR see Heather Gumbert, "Cold War Theaters: Cosmonaut Titov at the Berlin Wall,"

in *Into the Cosmos: Space Exploration and Soviet Culture,* ed. James Andrews and Asif Siddiqi (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), 240–262.

10. Müncheberg, cited in Hoff in Hickethier, *Geschichte*, 193.

11. BArch, DR 6/280, "Für ein interessantes massenwirksames Fernsehprogramm," [1958]. Müncheberg, cited in Hoff in Hickethier, *Geschichte*, 193.

12. A letter from a school principal asserted that *Black Channel* was popular with children (who must have known it from re-broadcasts at midday for shift workers) and requested that it be broadcast earlier in the evening. The DFF response allowed that while it was popular in the East, it was meant for the West. DRA, Sammlung Zeitgeist (1958–60), Box 2 Section 8.

13. Peter Hoff, "Projekt eines Fernsehstudios," Paragraph 16.

14. Dittmar, *Feindliches Fernsehen*, 146. Wilke, "Arbeitsbericht," 102–103. I think Wilke, in particular, takes this too much at face value from DFF documents stating intent. Dittmar argues that the cross-border mandate lost support by 1959, in part because this kind of attempt failed: there was no evidence that DFF programming had achieved the desired transformation of West German values. This goes, again, to the instrumental view of television held by authorities at the time—put a message out there and watch television work its "magic." On the other hand, one might ask how they would know what kind of an impact it had on West viewers, given this view of television's purpose and power. The SED (per Dittmar) measured it by the West German election results.

15. Hoff in Hickethier, *Geschichte*, 293. In 1965, however, a Stasi IM (unofficial collaborator) reported that the DFF continued to broadcast Monday evening films to keep the *East* German audience from watching the West German news shows *Panorama* and *Report*. Jochen Staadt, Tobias Voigt, and Stefan Wolle, *Operation Fernsehen: Die Stasi und die Medien in Ost und West* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008), 337.

16. It was one of two East German television shows to survive the *Wende*.

17. Visit the Sandman's website: http://www.sandmann.de/index.html.

18. BArch, DR 6/280, "Für ein interessantes massenwirksames Fernsehprogramm" [1958].

19. A report from the DFF Chefredaktion estimated that by 1955 the number of reports devoted to West German and West Berlin had fallen to 8 percent; of that, 3 percent of the reports now focused on the "activities of the working class" in West Germany. By contrast, 37 percent of reports examined "questions of the development of the GDR" and reportage concerning the people's democracies had risen from 2 to 10 percent of AK reports. BArch, DR 8/3, "Zur Beschlussvorlage Nr. 9/55: Aktuelle Kamera," 30 March 1955, 1.

20. Soviet cosmonauts Titow and Gargarin enjoyed significant airtime during during 1961 and after.

21. Weber, *Geschichte*, 177.

22. Weber, *Geschichte*, 177. J. K. Sowden, *The German Question, 1945–73* (London: Bradford University Press, 1975), 171–173.

23. Hope M. Harrison, "Ulbricht and the Concrete 'Rose': New Archival Evidence on the Dynamics of Soviet-East German Relations and the Berlin Crisis, 1958–61," *Cold War International History Project (CWIHP): Working Paper No. 5* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1993), 6 ff. Vladislav M.

Zubok, "Khrushchev and the Berlin Crisis (1958–62)" *CWIHP: Working Paper No. 6* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1993), 7.

24. Hope Harrison writes that although less studied than the Cuban Missile Crisis, "the Berlin Crisis lasted far longer than the Cuban Missile Crisis, witnessed the greatest post-World War II risk of direct US-Soviet hostilities, and had significant long-term effects on US-Soviet relations and on relations within the NATO alliance and the Warsaw Pact. Further, such observers as President Kennedy believed it may have been a key factor in the Soviet initiation of the Cuban Missile Crisis." Hope M. Harrison, "Concrete Rose," 5.

25. Hope M. Harrison, *Driving the Soviets Up the Wall* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 139. Michael Lemke, *Die Berlin Krise 1958 bis 1963. Interessen und Handlungsspielräume der SED im Ost-West-Konflikt* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995). Edith Sheffer, *Burned Bridge: How East and West Germans Made the Iron Curtain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 170.

26. Christoph Klessmann, *Zwei Staaten, eine Nation: Deutsche Geschichte 1955–1970* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1988), 320.

27. Major, *Berlin Wall*, 83–85.

28. Sheffer details a wide variety of scenarios in which Germans found themselves on the "wrong" side of the border, including deliberate flight, daredevil exploits challenging border security, aggrieved relatives "fleeing" domestic disputes, and even completely inadvertent border-crossings (due to extreme drunkenness, for example). She also demonstrates how quickly the border became rhetorically (and actually) associated with crime after the Second World War. Sheffer, *Burned Bridge*, esp. chapter 3, 98.

29. Major demonstrates that the state differentiated between the "passive recruitment" made possible by the postwar economic boom in West Germany and more active recruitment strategies undertaken by, for example, businesses that relocated in the West, encouraging their former workers to follow. Major, *Berlin Wall*, 76.

30. Patrick Major notes that contemporary Germans associated *Republikflucht* with "military desertion of the flag." Major, *Berlin Wall*, 56.

31. Major, *Berlin Wall*, 93–96. See also Sheffer, *Burned Bridge*.

32. People left in greater numbers only in 1953 (331,390). Numbers leaving the Republic 1956–1960 were: 1956: 279,189; 1957: 261,622; 1958: 204,092; 1959: 143,917; 1960: 199,188. Weber, *Geschichte*, 220.

33. Weber, *Geschichte*, 216–218.

34. Harrison, *Driving the Soviets*, 184.

35. Weber, *Geschichte*, 219. Harrison, *Driving the Soviets*, 189.

36. Harrison, *Driving the Soviets*, 189.

37. Weber, *Geschichte*, 220. Between 1.1.1961 and 8.15.1961 it amounted to 159,730.

38. Indicated by BArch, DR 8/12, "Beschlussvorlage Nr. 40/58: Sendungen der Aktuellen Kamera und der Sportredaktion im Herbst- und Winterprogramm 1958/59," 30 May 1958, 2, which reminds the Kollegium that Treffpunkt Berlin is no longer simulcast.

39. Heil, *Fernsehen der SBZ*, 104.

40. Nina Verheyen, *Diskussionslust: Eine Kulturgeschichte des "Besseren Arguments" in Westdeutschland* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010).

41. DRA, Zuschauerforschung, H074–00-02/0003, "Analyse der Zuschauerpost im Monat Juli 1956," 7 August 1956, 6.

42. All quotes in this paragraph from DRA, Zuschauerforschung, H074–00-02/0003, "Analyse der Zuschauerpost Monat Mai 1956," Article d: Aktuelle Beiträge, 6 June 1956.

43. DRA, Zuschauerforschung, H074–00-02/0003, "Analyse der Zuschauerpost im Monat Juli 1956," 7 August 1956, 3.

44. Heil, *Fernsehen der SBZ*, 106.

45. See *Tele-BZ* in Anja Kreutz, Uta Löcher, and Doris Rosenstein, *Von "Aha" bis "Visite": Magazinreihen im DDR-Fernsehen* (Potsdam: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 1998); Wilke, "Arbeitsbericht," 103–104.

46. Hoff in Hickethier, *Geschichte*, 283. Correspondence between viewers and the DFF indicated that *Black Channel* was not initially intended for East German viewers. See note 12 above.

47. USIA report, cited in Schwoch, *Global TV*, 40.

48. Kreutz, Löcher, and Rosenstein,*Von "Aha" bis "Visite."*

49. "*Blue Light*" is a reference to the flashing light on the roof of East German police cars.

50. Andrea Guder, *Genosse Hauptmann auf Verbrecherjagd: der Krimi in Film und Fernsehen der DDR* (Bonn: ARCult Media, 2003).

51. Andrea Guder has noted that one of the programs catalogued as an episode of *Blaulicht*, "Schüsse in Kabine 7," appears not to be part of the series. Guder, *Genosse Hauptman*.

52. See, for example, articles collected in the press clippings collection of the DRA under the rubric "Blaulicht": DRA Babelsberg, Sammlung Presseausschnitte, (*Blaulicht*): "'Blaulicht' wird unterbrochen: Gespräche bei Dreharbeiten," *Der Morgen*, 26 February 1961; or "Krawalle in Schönefeld: Pressekonferenz des Deutschen Fernsehefunks zur "Blaulicht"-Reihe," *Neues Deutschland*, 27 February 1961.

53. As expressed during a panel discussion at the "Lange Nacht der Fernsehkrimis," Arsenal Berlin, 8 June 2002. Also Jörg Lingenberg, "Fernsehspiel."

54. Although the forms were similar, the content, or the world represented within those forms, was quite different. Programs defined people not by their family, neighborhood, or region, but by their occupation—encouraging them to identify with their class interests.

55. DRA Babelsberg, *Blaulicht*, "Tunnel an der Grenze," DFF, 20 August 1959.

56. See for example *Blaulicht*, "Butterhexe" (1960) or *Blaulicht,* "Antiquitäten" (1961).

57. See the ninth scene of the script for "Antiquities."

58. DRA Babelsberg, *Blaulicht*, "Tunnel an der Grenze," DFF, 20 August 1959. The promotional material for this episode published in the television magazine *FF dabei* included this speech in slightly revised form, according to Guder, 82.

59. DRA Babelsberg, *Blaulicht*, "Tunnel an der Grenze," DFF, 20 August 1959.

60. Guder cites the example of *Schwarzes Benzin* (*Bootleg Gas*). Guder, *Genosse Hauptmann,* 87.

61. For examples, see the episodes "*Zweimal Gestorben*" (1959), "*Kippentütchen*"

(1960), "*Ein gewisser Herr Hügi*" (1960), or "*Die Butterhexe*" (1960), DRA Babelsberg.

62. In another exchange from the same episode, the fair and wise police captain, Wernicke (played by Bruno Carstens), scolds the youths for reading Western criminal novellas that dramatize shoot-outs with police officers. DRA Babelsberg, *Blaulicht*, "Kippentütchen," DFF 14 January 1960.

63. See the twenty-fifth scene of the script "Kippentütchen," 68.

64. DRA Babelsberg, Zuschauerforschung, H074–00-02/0004, "Auswertung zum Fragenkomplex Nr. 13," (Sendereihe Blaulicht), 26 September 1960.

65. Even the flashing blue light and siren of the opening title of each episode could normalize the police presence in Berlin.

66. DRA Babelsberg, *Blaulicht*, "Antiquitäten," DFF, 12 November 1961.

67. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV 2/2.028/92, "Begründung zur Auszeichnung mit dem Nationalpreis für das Blaulicht-Kollektiv," 25 August 1962.

68. DRA Babelsberg, Zuschauerforschung, H074–00-02/0004, "Auswertung zum Fragenkomplex Nr. 13," (Sendereihe Blaulicht), 26 September 1960, 4.

69. According to a contemporary newspaper, Lt. Thomas was coded as an intellectual.

70. DRA Babelsberg, *Blaulicht*, "Zweimal Gestorben," 15 October 1959.

71. In this case the authorities would refer to Heinz's crossing as people-smuggling.

72. DRA Babelsberg, *Blaulicht*, "Zweimal Gestorben," 15 October 1959.

73. BArch, DR 8/22, "Plan der Arbeit des deutschen Fernsehfunks zu den Wahlen," [6 July 1961], 1–2.

74. DRA Babelsberg, Ostaufzeichnung, "Die aktuelle Kamera," 29 June 1961, 3.

75. See transcript: "Es war ein ganz normaler Tag . . . normal auch deswegen, weil sich etwas vollzog, was sich seit Gründung unserer Republik zu vollziehen pflegt. . . ." DRA Babelsberg, Ostaufzeichnung, "Die aktuelle Kamera: Hauptausgabe," 13 August 1961.

76. DRA Babelsberg, Ostaufzeichnungen, "Die aktuelle Kamera: Hauptausgabe," 13 August 1961.

77. Berliners had seen television images of Berliners "protesting" before: in the context of the 17 June uprising the West German television station in Berlin had broadcast pictures from the streets of Berlin. They were, however, pictures of *West Berliners*, in West Berlin neighborhoods, and did not reflect the goings-on in East Berlin, despite those reports that claim Western television was "inside the mob" on 16 June (see, for example, Schwoch, *Global TV*, 37). Heinz Riek, comments during *In geteilter Sicht: Fernsehgeschichte als Zeitgeschichte*, Hans Bredow Institut, Hamburg, 5–6 December 2002. Some of the presentations and discussion are reproduced in Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv, *In geteilter Sicht: Fernsehgeschichte als Zeitgeschichte* (Potsdam: Verlag für Berlin-Brandenburg, 2004).

78. DRA Babelsberg, Ostaufzeichnung, "Die aktuelle Kamera: Hauptausgabe," 13 August 1961.

79. Parts of some episodes are missing due to deterioration from mold or other conditions (13 August 1961 Hauptausgabe), while some episodes from August 1961 no longer have sound (e.g., 24 August 1961).

80. Sheffer argues that the August border closure provoked "nowhere near the level of opposition that either East or West German officials had anticipated," and that, by this time, border events were "painful to witness, but not as shocking as the border closure in 1952." Sheffer, *Burned Bridge*, 171–172.

81. Patrick Major, "'Mit Panzern kann man doch nicht für den Frieden sein.' Die Stimmung der DDR-Bevölkerung zum Bau der Berliner Mauer am 13. August 1961 im Spiegel der Parteiberichte der SED," *Jahrbuch für Historische Kommunismus-Forschung* 3 (1995).

82. Workers of the VEB Isokont quoted in "Kurzinformation über der Lage in Berlin," Dokument 5 in Major, "Mit Panzern," 221.

83. Major, *Berlin Wall*, 95. This suggests significant continuities with Nazi attitudes toward stigmatized social groups (including legislation requiring Jews, homosexuals, and others to identify themselves by means of symbols attached to their clothing) among the East German population.

84. "Kleines Forum," *Funk und Fernsehen der DDR*, 27 August 1961.

85. Testimony of an unidentified woman broadcast on *Aktuelle Kamera*. DRA Babelsberg, Ostaufzeichnung, "Die aktuelle Kamera: *Hauptausgabe*," 13 August 1961.

CHAPTER 5

1. In late August, *Aktuelle Kamera* reported the ongoing registration of former border-crossers: "Yesterday and today there were quite a few looking for honest work. Now those come too, who until now still believed in miracles and set all their hopes on [the American vice-president] Johnson's visit with Adenauer in Berlin. They will all take up honest work that appeals to them and fits their capabilities in the numerous state- and privately-owned factories of our capital. The registration of border-crossers must be completed by 26 August . . . [by] those who have not yet registered or have tried to get around the laws of our state in other ways." DRA Babelsberg, Ostaufzeichnungen, "Die aktuelle Kamera," [25 August 1961] 3. The date on the transcript is 25.9.1961, but this and other entries indicate that the show was actually broadcast in late August.

2. Weber, *Geschichte*, 225–226.

3. See, for example, Mitter and Wolle, *Untergang auf Raten*, or a recent reconsideration, Diedrich and Kowalczuk, *Staatsgründung auf Raten?*

4. Major, *Berlin Wall*, 5. Edith Sheffer ably demonstrates, too, that the August 1961 border closure simply fortified an already well-developed boundary between East and West Germany, that had already manifested itself in a widespread "wall in the head" among Germans living on either side of the border. Sheffer, *Burned Bridge*.

5. Weber, cited in Major, *Berlin Wall*, 5.

6. On the Second Berlin Crisis, see chapter 4.

7. Hoff in Hickethier, *Geschichte*, 284.

8. Peter Hoff, "Die Beziehungen zwischen den Fernsehinstitutionen der BRD und der DDR zwischen 1952 and 1989," in *Deutsche Verhältnisse: Beiträge zum Fernsehspiel in Ost und West*, ed. Knut Hickethier (Siegen: Universität Siegen, 1993), 45–46.

9. Hoff, "Die Beziehungen," 46. Simone Barck, Christoph Classen, and Thomas

Heimann, "The Fettered Media," in *Dictatorship as Experience*, ed. Konrad Jarausch (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999), 223.

10. SAPMO-BArch, DY 24/512, "Argumentation," 31 August 1961, 1.

11. SAPMO-BArch, DY 24/512, "Plan für Durchführung der Aktion 'Blitz-contra-Nato-Sender' 5–9.9.1961," 31 August 1961.

12. SAPMO-BArch, DY 24/512, "Beispiele und Ergebnisse der Aktion 'Blitz kontra NATO-Sender,'" 6 September 1961.

13. SAPMO-BArch, DY 24/512, "Pressematerial zur Aktion 'Blitz contra NATO Sender,'" 9 September 1961.

14. In German: "*Du wirst kluger auf der Stelle, versuchst Du es mit unserer Welle*" and "*Soll dein Geist nicht rosten, dreh Deine Antenne nach dem Osten.*"

15. SAPMO-BArch, DY 24/512, "Pressematerial zur Aktion 'Blitz contra NATO Sender,'" 9 September 1961, 1–2.

16. One can imagine adventurous teens, excited to scramble across East German rooftops. In such cases, it should come as no surprise that most residents returned their antennae to their original positions soon thereafter. But, keep in mind that, as others have pointed out, simply turning antennae was ineffective in large parts of the GDR where transmitters from East and West were very close and could be received no matter which direction the antenna was pointing.

17. SAPMO-BArch, DY 24/512, "Einschätzung über die Aktion 'Blitz kontra NATO-Sender,'" 11 September 1961, 4.

18. SAPMO-BArch, DY 24/512, "Zusammenstellung von Argumenten und Meinungen zur Aktion 'Blitz kontra NATO-Sender,'" 6 September 1961, 1–2.

19. SAPMO-BARch, DY 24/512, "Einschätzung über die Aktion 'Blitz kontra NATO Sender,'" 11 September 1961, 3.

20. SAPMO-BArch, DY 24/512, "Zusammenstellung von Argumenten und Meinungen zur Aktion 'Blitz contra NATO Sender,'" 6 September 1961, 2.

21. SAPMO-BArch, DY 24/512, "Einschätzung über die Aktion 'Blitz kontra NATO Sender,'" 11 September 1961, 3.

22. SAPMO-BArch, DY 24/512, "Erste Einschätzung über den Verlauf der Aktion "Blitz-kontra-NATO-Sender," 7.9.61.

23. SAPMO-BArch, DY 24/512, "Einschätzung über die Aktion 'Blitz kontra NATO Sender,'" 11 September 1961, 4.

24. In her account of the Ochsenkopf campaign, for example, media scholar Judith Kretzschmar reconstructs the events almost entirely from stories published in *Junge Welt*, replicating their pronouncements of success. But she admits that, due to the fact that "dismantled antennas were quicky reinstalled," the SED could no longer rely on simple prohibitions. Kretzschmar, "Zwischen Schein und Sein," 151–152 (see chap. 3 n. 82, this volume).

25. Mark Fenemore, *Sex, Thugs, and Rock n' Roll: Teenage Rebels in Cold-War East Germany* (New York: Berghahn, 2007), 157.

26. On mediated memory see Jerry Lembcke, *The Spitting Image* (New York: New York University Press, 1998).

27. Peter Hoff, "Von 'da lacht der Bär' über 'Ein Kessel Buntes' ins 'Aus': Politische Geschichte der DDR in Unterhaltungssendungen des DDR-Fernsehens," in *Mit uns zieht die neue Zeit*, ed. Heide Riedel (Berlin: Vistas, 1994), 89. Hoff reports that the

program was often held up as an example of the "operational effectiveness" of the medium of television. Hoff in Hickethier, *Geschichte*, 283.

28. Müncheberg, *Blaues Wunder*, 165. This was an "adventure" mini-series that followed a legionnaire, played by Armin Müller-Stahl, from the front of the Algerian independence movement to the GDR, and included scenes filmed in Tunisia. Beutelschmidt, *Kooperation*, 287–288.

29. BArch, DR 8/22, "Kollegiumsvorlage Nr. 51/61: Aufgaben der HA Dramatische Kunst nach dem 13. August 1961," 6 September 1961, 1.

30. BArch, DR 8/22, "Kollegiumsvorlage Nr. 48/61: Einige Konsequenzen für die Gestaltung des Unterhaltungsprogramms nach dem 13. August," 6 September 1961.

31. BArch, DR 8/22, "Kollegiumsvorlage Nr. 50/61: Massnahmen der Jugendredaktion, die sich für die weiteren Sendearbeit nach dem 13. August 1961 ergeben," 6 September 1961, 1.

32. BArch, DR 8/22, "Kollegiumsvorlage Nr. 48/61: Einige Konsequenzen für die Gestaltung des Unterhaltungsprogramms nach dem 13. August," 6 September 1961, 1.

33. BArch, DR 8/22, "Kollegiumsvorlage Nr. 51/61: Aufgaben der HA Dramatische Kunst nach dem 13. August 1961," 6 September 1961, 1–2.

34. Matthias Judt, *DDR Geschichte in Dokumenten: Beschlüsse, Berichte, interne Materialien und Alltagszeugnisse* (Berlin: Christoph Links, 1997).

35. Schwaen noted another example of the difficulties posed by the newly reinforced border while working on *Fetzers Flucht* in 1962: the "difficult commute" for members of the Leipzig Radio Choir—from East Berlin to Babelsberg, where they recorded the score—disrupted their rehearsals and recording sessions. On the other hand, it put an end to the *Republikflucht* of DFF cameramen that was such a concern in the 1950s.

36. Monika Pater, "Rundfunkangebote" (see chap. 3, n. 19, this volume); Hoff, "Von 'da lacht der Bär,'" 86.

37. In this regard, the entire thrust of the show fell afoul of shifting SED policy, but it survived until 1965.

38. Heinz Quermann, *Das dicke Quermann-Buch* (Berlin: Eulenspiegel, 2006), 85.

39. Quermann wrote: "Speaker 1: What do you think of the [Streuung]? / Speaker 2: Why, everything works out, what does Eberhard Cohrs say? A ship will come, and see there, it came. / Speaker 1: Wasn't colleague Cohrs criticized for that? / Speaker 2: Why, is he now working in Trade and Supply? / Speaker 1: Oh, you prankster. But I didn't mean the deviation, but rather the salting of the ice!" SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV 2/9.02/84, Letter from Herta Classen, director of Berlin Broadcasting (radio) to the Central Committee of the SED, 2 February 1962.

40. Ibid.

41. Classen described the discussion as "collegial." She suggested that, although in Quermann's view he was protecting his reputation, really he was trying to raise his own profile at the cost of state policy. Ibid.

42. Sylvia Klötzer and Siegfried Lokatis, "Criticism and Censorship: Negotiating Cabaret Performance and Book Production," in *Dictatorship as Experience*, ed. Konrad Jarausch (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999), 241–264.

43. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV 2/9.02/84, Brief Heinz Quermann an Horst Sindermann (Agitation), 28 February 1962, 1.

44. Eisler incident reported in Quermann, *Quermann-Buch*, 147.

45. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV 2/9.02/84, Brief Heinz Quermann an Horst Sindermann (Agitation), 28 February 1962, 1. Quermann's concern for freelancers was not misplaced: Hans Bentzien, the last Culture Minister of the GDR, asserted that freelancers who looked to radio, film, and television for their next job were hardest hit after numerous works of art came under fire at the Eleventh Plenum of 1965. "3. Workshop 22.6.1992 11. SED-Plenum 1965," in *Mit uns zieht die neue Zeit*, ed. Heide Riedel, 143.

46. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV 2/9.02/84, Brief Heinz Quermann an Horst Sindermann (Agitation), 28 February 1962, 2.

47. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV 2/9.02/84, Brief Wagner an Heinz Quermann, 15 March 1962.

48. Emphasis in original. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV 2/9.02/84, Briefwechsel Norden an Eisler, 26 March 1962. It goes on: "In any case, someone has to speak to him in the upcoming days or weeks, who he recognizes as an authority figure and whose advice he respects; in doing so it is advisable that (due to the impression on Cohrs) no party functionary should appear. If [one were to appear], then he'll stick to his opinion and will construct his future appearances accordingly, and it will then inevitably end in scandal, which will come down on Broadcasting and Television. Therefore I beg you, that a meeting with Cohrs be arranged as quickly as possible, in order to clarify these questions *before* the next 'laughing Bear'" (emphasis in original). The following day Heinz Adameck reported on Cohrs's continued recalcitrance to the Television Council, further indicating that Cohrs would have to meet with the head of the Department of Agitation and Propaganda Horst Sindermann on 5 April. BArch, DR 8/24, "Protokoll Nr. 10/62," 27 March 1962.

49. William Boddy discusses debates in the United States in the 1950s and early 1960s, when the FCC, sponsors, and networks were still working out exactly who was responsible for "creative censorship." William Boddy, *Fifties Television: The Industry and Its Critics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990).

50. The "official" start of DFF broadcasts was Stalin's birthday, 21 December 1952. With Stalin out of favor, the DFF pushed the anniversary forward a week, pegging the anniversary instead to Adameck's birthday. Gerhard Scheumann in "3. Workshop," 147.

51. Günter Agde, "Fernsehoper Fetzers Flucht wieder entdeckt," in Mitteilungen der Kurt-Schwaen-Archiv, 9 (2005), 8.

52. Müncheberg, *Blaues Wunder*, 176.

53. Horst Knietzsch, "Experiment mit Film und Musik," *Neues Deutschland*, 2 April 1962.

54. Hoff, "Das 11. Plenum," 103–104.

55. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV 2/9.02/120, "Aktennotiz: betr. Fetzers Flucht/Monolog für einen Taxifahrer von Kunert," 20 Febraury 1963.

56. Kurt Schwaen Archiv (KSA), Tagebuch, "Fetzers Flucht," 1.1.59; the assertion that it was specifically composed for the 10th Anniversary of the GDR was made in *Sonntag*. KSA, Pressearchiv Fetzer, "Fetzers Flucht: eine Funkoper," *Sonntag* 32/59, 1959. There are two sets of transcripts of the Fetzer excerpts from the diaries. In cases where the second, newer, transcript diverges from the first, I will indicate that.

57. For discussion of the radio production of *Fetzer*, see Ingrid Pietrzynski, "Im Orkus verschwunden: Günter Kunerts frühe Hörfunkarbeiten (1953–1962)," in *Litera-*

tur im DDR-Hörfunk, ed. Ingrid Scheffler (Constance: UVK, 2005), 13–128.

58. KSA, Pressearchiv Fetzer, E.K. "Fetzers Flucht: eine Funkoper," *Sonntag* 32/59, 1959.

59. KSA, Pressearchiv Fetzer, E.K. "Fetzers Flucht: eine Funkoper," *Sonntag* 32/59, 1959; Karl Schönewolf, "Eine gegenwartsnahe Filmoper: 'Fetzers Flucht im Radio DDR,'" *Berliner Zeitung*, 30 July 1959; Ilse Schütt, "Fetzers Flucht," *BZ am Abend,* 29 July 1959; "Fetzers Flucht," *National Zeitung*, 1 August 1959.

60. Pietrzynski, "Im Orkus," 109.

61. Pietrzynski discusses the not-uncomplicated story of this prize in Pietrzynski, "Im Orkus," 108n195.

62. Pietrzynski, "Im Orkus," 109. One exception was critic Hansjürgen Schaefer writing in *Musik und Gesellschaft*. Schaefer argued that the music did not get enough of the blame for the wider criticism of the opera. He argued that the music was largely non-diegetic: it was mostly illustrative and fairly ineffective, which meant that many of the characters remain flat and schematic, especially Fetzer, who made an "unimpressive inner transformation." "For some reason," Schaefer lamented, "Schwaen gave up his strongly distinct musical language in this work." Hansjürgen Schaefer, "Versuch einer Fernsehfilmoper," *Musik u. Gesellschaft* 2 (1963): 78–80.

63. KSA, Tagebuch, "Fetzers Flucht," 23 July 1959.

64. KSA, Fetzer—Funkoper, "Fetzers Flucht: Eine Funkoper," *Sonntag* 35 (1959).

65. KSA, Tagebuch, "Fetzers Flucht," 12 August 1960. The DFF's Department of Music and Dance had first expressed interest in the opera in March 1959, but more than a year passed before they began to work with Kunert and Schwaen to get the project in the production pipeline. By June 1960, Stahnke had come onboard, writing a new version of the opera for television with Kunert, but Schwaen still complained to his diary that they had heard nothing from the DFF. Contentious negotiations began in July and continued through January 1962, when the head of dramatic programming, Werner Fehlig, dismissed the Department of Music and Dance from the project. KSA, Tagebuch, "Fetzers Flucht." KSA, Fetzer, Briefwechsel DFF, letters from 21 July, 16 September, and 7 November.

66. See numerous references in Schwaen's diary regarding their struggles to get contracts with the DFF. The DFF finally offered Schwaen a contract in January 1962, but finalizing it took weeks. The DFF reminded Schwaen that they "didn't have the possibilities of DEFA," likely referring to the lower level of compensation Schwaen would have to expect from the DFF. KSA, Tagebuch, "Fetzers Flucht" (second transcript), 17–31 January 1962, 12. They were not the only ones—the stars of 1961's *Gewissen in Aufruhr* (discussed in the next chapter) would not consider working for the DFF rate and completed the project with supplements paid by DEFA. Beutelschmidt, *Kooperation*, 297n775.

67. KSA, Tagebuch, "Fetzers Flucht," 22 February 1961.

68. "I regret it if you and Schwaen and Stahnke have had a falling out, but same time I have to emphasize that you cannot expect to have an opera filmed of which we do not have the complete music." KSA, Fetzer, Letter from Nagel (DFF) to Kunert, 21 July 1960.

69. KSA, Tagebuch, "Fetzers Flucht," 22 February 1961.

70. KSA, Fetzer, Letter from Nagel to Kunert, 21 July 1960.

71. KSA, Fetzer, Letter from Wambach (DFF) to Kunert, 16 September 1960.

72. Contractual negotations and differences over the content of the opera took their toll. By November 1960, Kunert had tired of DFF notes on the script, and the Director of Music and Dance Nagel had to appeal to him to continue with the project. By the end of 1961 Schwaen was ready to see the end of it and move on to other things. In July he even rejected Director Klingner's request to further develop Fetzer for the Frankfurt Theater. KSA, Tagebuch, "Fetzers Flucht."

73. Sybill Mehnert, "Gelingt Fetzers Flucht? Erste Fernsehoper mit Spannung erwartet," *Junge Welt*, 11 December 1962.

74. See, for example, Horst Knietzsch in *Neues Deutschland*, 2 April 1962, or reviews in *Das Volk* (Erfurt), 7 December 1962, the *Ostseezeitung Rostock* 8 December 1962, or Sybill Mehnert in *Junge Welt*, 11 December 1962.

75. See, for example, the *National Zeitung Berlin*, which advertised Fetzer by invoking the fame of Ekkehard Schall: "Ekkehard Schall as opera hero—that's how we'll see him on Thursday . . ." 11 December 1962.

76. Knietzsch, "Experiment."

77. KSA, Pressearchiv, "Fetzers Flucht," Unknown publication, 1962.

78. KSA, Pressearchiv, "Fetzers Flucht," Heinz Linde, "Erfülltes Versprechen," *Wochenpost,* December 1962.

79. KSA, Pressearchiv, Knietzsch, "Experiment," "Fetzers Flucht."

80. To contextualize: that Thursday evening program began with the ten-minute bedtime story of the East German Sandmann, a half-hour traffic-related show, the ten-minute weather report, and the nightly news *Current Camera*. The main event of the evening, *Fetzer*, aired at 8:00 p.m., followed by *The Adlershof Treasure Chest* (*Die Adlershofer Rumpelkammer*), a collection of "classic" television clips moderated by the beloved television personality Willi Schwabe, and, finally, the late news at 10:05 p.m.

81. KSA, Pressearchiv, Fetzers Flucht, "Bildschirm am Abend," *BZ am Abend*, 14 December 1962.

82. KSA, Pressearchiv, Fetzers Flucht, Kurt Specht letter to the editor, *Berliner Zeitung*, 21 December 1962.

83. All quotes from KSA, Tagebuch, "Fetzers Flucht," December 1962.

84. Schwaen felt the scandal over Fetzer quite deeply, and he continued to follow it even after the *Wende*. In 1991, for example, he addressed discussion of the opera in the press in a letter to the editor. Letter to the editor, "Fetzers Flucht vom Fernsehen gelöscht," *Neues Deutschland*, 20 September 1991. In 1995, a volume appeared celebrating his eighty-fifth birthday, with the transcript of an interview with Schwaen. The editor, Nico Schüler, asked Schwaen to discuss "low points" in his career/lifetime. Schwaen identified two: the first had to do with *Fetzer*: "Das war wahrhaftig ein Tiefschlag." The second had to do with criticism of his *1. Klavierkonzert*, which was nothing in comparison with the scandal over *Fetzer*. Nico Schüler, "Zwischen Noten und Gesellschaftssystemen," in *Festschrift Kurt Schwaen zum 85. Geburtstag*, ed. Ekkehard Ochs and Nico Schüler (Frankfurt: P. Lang, 1995), 18–19.

85. KSA, Tagebuch, "Fetzers Flucht," 27 December 1962

86. KSA, Tagebuch, "Fetzers Flucht," December 1962.

87. KSA, Pressearchiv, Fetzer, "Für und wider Fetzers Flucht," *BZ am Abend*, 5 January 1963.

88. Schwaen noted "Decadence—the old vocabulary." KSA, Tagebuch, 24 December 1962. VDK colleagues, especially Notowicz, Bab, Lesser, Czerny, Köhler, and Schröter, used this language to discuss the work. KSA, Tagebuch, January 1963. Surprising fault lines appeared. One of Kurt Schwaen's colleagues who worked in radio planned an entire broadcast devoted to Schwaen's work, "out of protest against the Fetzer critiques." Sometimes perfect strangers contacted the artists to express their support. Schwaen noted, "a woman unknown to me called and congratulated me on the piece in the newspaper [*BZ Evening Edition*—HG]. She hasn't heard *Fetzer*, but knows my opinion, which convinced her that the work must have been great. . . ." Kunert received the Heinrich-Mann Prize of the Academy of the Arts, which he regarded only as a gesture of goodwill from his friend and director of the Academy, Stephan Hermlin. But former friends and colleagues were also turning away from them: a "long-time" friend of Kunert's wife ignored her at a social gathering, "in order to preserve her position," while Schwaen recalled a colleague who greeted him smugly, inquiring, "Are you still alive?" Kunert, *Erwachsenenspiele: Erinnerungen* (Munich: C. Hanser, 1997), 246. KSA, Tagebuch, "Über eigene Werke," 8.-14.1.63.

89. Adameck appeared regularly on the *Kleines Fernsehforum*, literally a forum in which Adameck and a moderator discussed the issues of the television service, often answering questions posed by viewer mail. DRA Babelsberg, Ostaufzeichnungen, "Kleines Fernsehforum," 15 December 1962. This time he appeared, possibly at the behest of the Agitation Commission, which had contacted him the day after the broadcast to register its displeasure. BArch DY 30 IV A 2/9.02/120 "Aktennotiz: Fetzers Flucht," 1.

90. DRA Babelsberg, Ostaufzeichnungen, "Kleines Fernsehforum," 15 December 1962.

91. Walter Baumert, "Kunert's Flucht in den Schematismus," *Neues Deutschland*, 23 December 1962.

92. KSA, Tagebuch, 26 January 1963.

93. What follows is a fairly detailed plot description, which I have included so that the reader will be able to follow (perhaps even visualize for themselves) the opera and, below, the critique.

94. "Aristotelian" theater relied on stirring empathy in the audience. Brecht favored "epic" theater, which, by contrast, "hinder(ed) [the audience] from simply identifying itself with the characters in the play. Acceptance or rejection of their actions and utterances was meant to take place on a conscious plane, instead of, as hitherto, in the audience's subconscious." Bertolt Brecht, "Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting," in *Brecht on Theater: The Development of an Aesthetic,* ed. John Willett (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964, 1992), 91. See also Frederic Jameson, *Brecht and Method* (London: Verso, 1998), 45–61.

95. Smash cuts are quick cuts that do not use a fade—it can be a jarring effect for the viewer because there is no time between one shot or scene and the next to readjust to the new perspective. In swish pans the camera moves from one subject to another, sometimes in a circle, so quickly that the image blurs. A famous example of this in German film history is the "drunken" swish pan of the hotel doorman at his daughter's wedding in Murnau's *The Last Laugh* (*Der letzte Mann*), 1924.

96. Stahnke used this device again to represent Schall standing on the train bridge; in this case the "passing train" is projected behind him, to slightly less conspicuous effect.

97. In addition, a third-person narrator (singing) expressed many of the thoughts and emotions of the characters, and a Greek chorus narrated much of the action.

98. This is the scene the DFF filmed as a test scene, demonstrating to the DFF the general contours of the production. Wrage, *Zeit der Kunst*, 331n239.

99. Agde, "Fernsehoper," 9. Wrage, *Zeit der Kunst*, 325.

100. Hoff, "Das 11. Plenum," 101–102. Also, for example, Kretzschmar, "Zwischen Schein und Sein," 150 (see chap. 3 n. 82).

101. In this interpretation, Ulbricht returned from a contentious meeting in the Soviet Union, at which he had discussed the problem of artistic formalism with Khrushchev and a number of Soviet artists. Upon his return his wife Lotte informed him of a new, modernist work she had seen on television the night before. Ulbricht realized he could make an example of the opera, heading off any further attempts by artists to go down this decadent path. To take care of the matter once and for all, he banned *Fetzer* and another work by the same artists—*Monologue for a Taxi Driver* set to air 23 December. This narrative fit larger scholarly claims in the early 1990s regarding the charismatic nature of Ulbricht's rule over the GDR, on the one hand, and state control over the media and especially television, on the other. But the notion that Walter Ulbricht, or worse his wife Lotte, was responsible for banning *Fetzer* the day following its premiere originated in comments the director of the television film, Günter Stahnke, made in a 1990 interview with the television dramaturge and post-reunification curator of the DFF's past Hans Müncheberg. See Günter Stahnke, "Als Lotte mich lobte. . . ." *Filmspiegel* 10 (1990): 18–19. Works by Müncheberg, Peter Hoff, Günter Agde, and the press then disseminated this narrative. See, for example, Ute Thon, "Defa-Schubladenfilme sorgen nach 30 Jahre für unfreiwillige Heiterkeit," *TAZ*, 29 January 1990, and Müncheberg comments in "3. Workshop," 150.

102. These were the principles governing GDR society promulgated by Walter Ulbricht at the Fifth Party Congress of 1958. They included values such as respect for the international solidarity of the working class and other socialist countries; love of fatherland and defense of the nation; respect for, and maximization of, the People's property; a socialist work ethic; respect for one's family; and living a clean and decent life. Cited in Mählert, *Kleine Geschichte*, 88. Translations by the author.

103. Kunert, *Erwachsenenspiele*, 244.

104. Wrage, *Zeit der Kunst*, 344.

105. Costabile-Heming argues that Kunert's position in the GDR was always different from other writers in that he retained publication rights and could publish in the West with impunity. Carol Anne Costabile-Heming, "Censorship and Review Processes: The Case of Günter Kunert," in *What Remains? East German Culture and the Postwar Republic*, ed. Marc Silbermann (Washington, DC: AICGS, 1997). Kunert asserts that he was able to retain his licensing rights because Aufbau Verlag "gave up on him" during the 1963 crisis (discussed in chapter 6) and gave them back to him rather than be forced to represent him. Kunert, *Erwachsenenspiele*, 263.

106. Pietrzynski, "Im Orkus," 117, and Kunert, *Erwachsenenspiele*.

107. He finally left the GDR in the late 1970s in support of his friend, Wolf Biermann. Jay Rosellini, "Poetry and Criticism in the GDR," *New German Critique* 9 (1976).

108. Pietrzynski, "Im Orkus," 117–118.

109. Kunert legally blocked *Fetzer* from public exhibition. Wrage, *Zeit der Kunst*, 309. When I have presented archival clips at conferences, audiences seem fascinated. On the other hand, watching clips of the opera in 2007, Johanna Schall (daughter of Ekkehard Schall and a renowned actress and theater director in her own right) found it uncomfortable to watch, stilted, "a product of its time." Schall comment at Heather Gumbert, "Between Revolution and Tradition," given at the University of Toronto, 12 October 2007.

110. Rosellini, "Poetry," 156–157.

111. Günter Kunert, cited in Pietrzynski, "Im Orkus," 115, 117.

112. Stahnke was a first-time director when *Fetzer* was broadcast, and it seemed at first that he might not overcome the scandal. In the spring and summer of 1963, he had had to confess the "mistakes" of *Fetzer* and *Monologue*. He could not seem to get work directing—the DFF had passed on his television plans. KSA, Tagebuch. But Stahnke returned to television after the disastrous reception of his film *Der Frühling braucht Zeit*. Beutelschmidt, *Kooperation*, 73n190.

113. Pietrzynski, "Im Orkus," 115, 117.

114. Kurt Specht, letter to the editor, *Berliner Zeitung*, 21 December 1962.

115. Media critics Heinz Linde, Robert Richter, and Manfred Heidel continued to publish reviews in support of the work.

116. Sybill Mehnert (*Junge Welt*) wrote, "experiments always make for a healthy and fruitful climate for artistic work, although a single attempt may backfire. *Fetzer*, an attempt to create a new type of television opera, backfired without doubt. Whether *Fetzer* can communicate some kind of new impulse from the musical interpretation to modern operatic theater, more competent people will have to decide. Kurt Schwaen's music rushed by me; it seemed to me more conventional than modern, more illustrative than dominating. . . . The banality of some passages of text were doubly conspicuous in Günter Stahnke's completely stylized staging/production. The cameraman did the best; he found filmic answers that interpreted the events way over the literary and musical original [*sic*]." Sybill Mehnert, "Guter Start mit dem Ungeheuer," *Junge Welt*, 18 December 1962. "Pantomime with Music," from Christoph Funke, "Geschichten um Fetzer und Poldy: Fernsehoper von Schwaen und Kunert/Bildschirmspass von Radetz," *Der Morgen*, 15 December 1962.

117. The chorus set the scene: "Where Germany lay, lie two countries / two countries lie there, and it is divided / it is divided / more than a border / They speak the same language / the same / but can't understand each other because / they speak another language / another / because they are two countries, two countries / they are and lie, where Germany lay." KSA, Fetzer-Funkoper, script. In the television version we hear the first words of the opera two minutes in: "Where has the murderer disappeared to. . . ."

118. "Fur u. wider Fetzers Flucht," *BZ am Abend*, 5 January 1963.

119. "Grosses Forum," in *Funk u. Fernsehen der DDR* 3 (1963).

120. Ibid.

CHAPTER 6

1. Rudolf Petershagen, *Gewissen in Aufruhr* (Berlin: Verlag der Nation, 1956). The publisher printed eight editions of the book before the premiere of the television series and released it three more times in the 1960s, then again in 1976 and 1983. B. Thurm, "Die Massenresonanz von 'Gewissen in Aufruhr,'" in *Film- und Fernsehkunst der DDR: Traditionen, Beispiele, Tendenzen*, ed. Käthe Rülicke-Weiler (Berlin: Henschel-Verlag Kunst u. Gesellschaft, 1979), 197. Also in Müncheberg, *Blaues Wunder*, 166.

2. Peter Hoff, "Gewissen in Aufruhr: Kriegerlebnis und Kriegsdeutung im Fernsehen der DDR der fünfziger Jahre," in *Schuld und Sühne? : Kriegserlebnis und Kriegsdeutung in deutschen Medien der Nachkriegszeit (1945–1961)*, ed. Ursula Heukenkamp (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001), 787–788. Hoff in Hickethier, *Geschichte*, 294, and Thurm, "Massenresonanz," 197–199.

3. Thurm, "Massenresonanz," 198.

4. Alexander Prokhorov, "Size Matters: The Ideological Function of the Length of Soviet Feature Films and Television Mini-Series in the 1950s and 1960s," *Kinokultura* 12 (2006): 12.

5. Hoff in Hickethier, *Geschichte*, 294. Also, in part, in Müncheberg, *Blaues Wunder*, 166.

6. DEFA collaborated on the television production but kept a "strict division of labor" to limit their culpability. Beutelschmidt, *Kooperation*, 292–293.

7. Beutelschmidt, *Kooperation*, 298. Hoff in Hickethier, *Geschichte*, 294.

8. SED, *V. Parteitag*, 126.

9. Viewers from Schwerin and Magdeburg, in "Kleines Forum," *Funk und Fernsehen der DDR*, 8 October 1961.

10. Greg Castillo, *Cold War on the Home Front: The Soft Power of Mid-century Design* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010), 198.

11. Alan Ng, "The *Lyrikabend* of December 1962: GDR Poetry's Geburtsstunde as Historiographic Artifact," Ph.D. thesis, University of Wisconsin, Madison, 2 July 2002, 129–133.

12. Bathrick, *Powers of Speech*, 70.

13. Jean Albert Bédé and William Benbow Edgerton, eds., *Columbia Dictionary of Modern European Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 341. Peter Demetz, "Galileo in East Berlin: Notes on the Drama in the DDR," *German Quarterly* 37 (1964): 243–244.

14. Bathrick, *Powers of Speech*, 120. Demetz, "Galileo," 244.

15. Literature critic Horst Redeker, cited in Demetz, "Galileo," 244.

16. Demetz, "Galileo," 244.

17. Demetz, "Galileo," 245.

18. DY 30 IV 2/9.02 120, 1. The television weekly continued to publicize *Monologue* even after *Fetzer*.

19. They declared it "objectively, a reactionary message directed against the state, which is no different from the bourgeois philosophers Jaspers or Heydecker [*sic*]," referring to the existentialist philosophers Karl Jaspers and Martin Heidegger. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV 2/9.02/120, "Aktennotiz: betr. Fetzers Flucht/Monolog für einen Taxifahrer von Kunert," 20 February 1963.

20. This according to Kunert, who remembers this happening after the Party Congress. Kunert, *Erwachsenenspiele*, 256–257. In 1992, Gerhard Scheumann publicly apologized to Kunert for his role in the meeting. At Horst Sindermann's request he had read the *Monolog* script (though not seen the film), and read up on Kierkegaard, Camus, Sartre, and Jaspers to find examples of ways in which they matched, then spoke against the film at the meeting. Scheumann recalled, "When I saw the film, a year and half ago [in 1990—HG], then I understood what a disservice (*Unfug*) I had perpetrated back then . . . I'd like to take this opportunity to apologize to Günter Kunert, in every way, for the events of thirty years ago." Gerhard Scheumann, comments at "3. Workshop," 147.

21. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV 2/9.02/120, "Aktennotiz: betr. Fetzers Flucht/Monolog für einen Taxifahrer von Kunert," 20 February 1963.

22. Ibid., 2.

23. SED, *Der VI. Parteitag der SED, vom 15. bis 21. Januar 1963: Kommentar, Materialien und Dokumente* (Berlin: Dietz, 1963), 109.

24. SED, *VI. Parteitag*, 110.

25. Huchel and Hermlin soon lost their positions, Huchel in December 1962 and Hermlin in March 1963. Günter Erbe, *Die verfemte Moderne* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1993), 78–79.

26. Ulbricht is referring to the publication of Jean-Paul Sartre's work on ideological coexistence, published in the GDR in *Sinn und Form*.

27. All quotes Walter Ulbricht, in SED, *VI. Parteitag*, 110–111.

28. They could stake their reputations on this, he promised. Even world-renowned, modernist composer Dmitri Shostakovich had "stepped into the arena, in the service of entertainment," composing an operetta for a popular audience.

29. All quotes in SED, *VI. Parteitag*, 110–112.

30. Former culture minister Hans Bentzien claimed in 1992 that dividing the artists had been the goal of the SED. Bentzien comments, "3. Workshop," in *Mit uns zieht die neue Zeit*, ed. Riedel, 147.

31. Quermann ridiculed Kunert's "Erdreich" poem, published in Weltbühne in late 1962. Kunert wrote: "Auch die Würmer / haben ein Reich: Das Erdreich. / Wer sonst dort leben will, / muss tot sein." Quermann mocked the work with: "Auch der Bandwurm / Hat ein Reich: Den Darm. / Wer / Ihn los sein will, muss / Eine Kur machen." This version in Kunert, *Erwachsenenspiele*, 253.

32. KSA, Fetzer, "[Erstinformation über] die Reaktion von Kulturschaffenden der DDR auf den VI. Parteitag der SED," 23 March 1963, 11. Kunert quotes his Stasi file, which reported that informants "told him negative facts about people that Kunert criticized (Geerdts, Melcher)." Kunert *Erwachsenenspiele*, 258. Hans Jürgen Geerdts accused Kunert in the *Ostseezeitung* of "backwardness and confusion," a lack of loyalty, of "feigned talentlessness," and so on. Geerdts seemed particularly incensed that Kunert would allow his poetry to be published just days before the VI. Party Congress. Kunert felt so strongly about this incident that he reproduced the article seemingly in its entirety in his memoir, published in 1997. Kunert, *Erwachsenenspiele*, 246ff.

33. KSA, Fetzer, "[Erstinformation über] die Reaktion von Kulturschaffenden der DDR auf den VI. Parteitag der SED," 23 March 1963, 10.

34. Kunert, *Erwachsenenspiele*, 261–262.

35. Hermand, "Good New," 79.

36. The Stasi concluded that artists did not believe Hager when he said he believed in second chances. KSA, Fetzer, MfS reports, "Erste Reaktion auf die Beratung des Politbüros mit Künstlern und Schriftstellern," 26 March 1963, 2.

37. KSA, Fetzer, "Beschlussprotokoll Nr. 10/63 der Komiteesitzung," 2 April 1963, 2.

38. Erbe, *Verfemte Modern*, 81. Martina Langermann, "Edition und Adaption Franz Kafkas in der DDR (1962–1966)," in *Historische DDR-Forschung*, edited by Jürgen Kocka (Berlin: Akademie, 1993), 345–359.

39. Langermann, "Kafka," 359.

40. Lutz Haucke, *Nouvelle Vague in Osteuropa?* (Berlin: Rhombos, 2009), 564–566.

41. All quotes from SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV A 2/9.02/67, "Einschätzung der Arbeit des Deutschen Fernsehfunks," 23 March 1963, 8. Perhaps surprisingly, the representational style of *Fetzer's Flight, Monologue*, or even this Romanian film was not exceptional for DFF programming. A scholarly work describing the development of socialist film and television published in the GDR in 1979 noted that "(w)hat is remarkable is that in the *majority* of the television plays and television films in the first half of the 1960s the subjective narrative form is used." Italics mine. Thurm cites several examples. Thurm, "Die erste hälfte des Jahrzehnts," in *Film und Fernsehkunst*, ed. Rülicke-Weiler, 208.

42. Position taken by Central Committee member responsible for Agitation, Albert Norden, reported by Stasi IM in 1966, cited in Staadt et al., *Operation Fernsehen*, 337.

43. DRA, Sammlung Glatzer, "Beschluss . . ." Teil 2, [1966] 61–63.

44. Staadt et al., *Operation Fernsehen*, 337–338.

45. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV A 2/9.02/67, "Orientierung für die Arbeit des DFF nach der neuen Konzeption," 23 January 1964, 1.

46. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV A 2/9.02/67, "Einschätzung der Arbeit des Deutschen Fernsehfunks," 23 March 1963, 26–27.

47. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV A 2/9.02/67, "Einschätzung der Arbeit des Deutschen Fernsehfunks," 23 March 1963, 28. This was taken up by Paula Acker again in SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV A 2/9.02/67, "Aussprache Agitationskomission mit Kollegium," 4 April 1963, 4.

48. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV A 2/9.02/67, "Einschätzung der Arbeit des Deutschen Fernsehfunks," 23 March 1963, 28.

49. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IVA 2/2.028/60, "Einschätzung des Entwicklungsstandes des Deutschen Fernsehfunks" 10 September 1963, 2–4.

50. Both measures brought the DFF closer in line with the broadcasting principles of early West German television, which was mandated to include citizen advisers from relevant interest groups (except that in the case of the West Germans, most important were the religious groups). SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV A 2/9.02/67, [2. Deutscher Fernsehfunk, 1963].

51. That said, its popularity ebbed and flowed over the course of those decades. It was initially quite popular. Though it was never openly critical of the SED, by the 1970s it had become markedly docile. By the 1980s it focused increasingly narrowly on economic-political issues and lost the interest of the viewers. Susanne Pollert, "Wo Li-

cht ist, fällt auch Schatten: das zeitkritische Magazin 'Prisma' im Kontext der DDR-Fernsehgeschichte," in *Zwischen Service und Propaganda*, ed. Helmut Heinze (Berlin: VISTAS, 1998), 50. During the *Wende*, the DFF produced *Prisma* live for the first time since the 1960s and, in an atmosphere of openness and greater criticism, rapidly regained viewer support; see Hoff in Hickethier, *Geschichte,* 507.

52. Pollert, "Wo Licht ist," 19.

53. Heike Hartmann, cited in Pollert, "Wo Licht ist," 19.

54. Gerhard Scheumann, cited in Pollert, "Wo Licht ist," 19.

55. Ina Merkel, *Wir sind doch nicht die Meckerecke der Nation! Briefe an das Fernsehen der DDR* (Berlin: Schwartzkopf & Schwartzkopf, 2000), 34.

56. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30 IV A 2/9.02/67, "Einschätzung der Arbeit des Deutschen Fernsehfunks," 23 March 1963, 10.

57. Gerhard Scheumann, "Heikle Gratwanderung—Die Sendereihe Prisma," in *Mit uns zieht die neue Zeit*, ed. Riedel, 134. Also, in part, in Susanne Pollert, "Wo Licht ist," and Müncheberg, *Blaues Wunder*.

58. *Fernsehzuschauer*, 3 (1964): 14.

59. Viewers complained, for example, that the laundries took too long (sometimes three weeks passed before customers received their linens) or damaged the family linens. These complaints were answered, onscreen, by the responsible parties.

60. Eberhard Fensch, *So und noch besser* (Berlin: edition Ost, 2003), 110–111.

61. Andrew Port, *Conflict and Stability in the German Democratic Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 277.

62. Of the topical shows, *Prisma* was the one that received the most viewer mail in early 1964. So, for example, Ruth T. from Halle wrote: "your show appeals more and more not only to my family, but I find that this opinion is confirmed among my work colleagues after every episode." *Fernsehzuschauer* 3 (1964): 14.

63. Gerhard Scheumann, "Heikle Gratwanderung," 134.

64. Pollert, "Wo Licht ist," 37.

65. Gerhard Scheumann, "Prisma Testament" facsimile, reprinted in Riedel, ed., *Mit uns zieht die neue Zeit*, 136–138. Scheumann left the show in 1965. By that time the Agitation Commission had begun to warn against the "cultivation of stars" at the DFF, and Scheumann was their prime example. See, for example, BArch, DY 30 IV A 2/9.02/67, "Aussprache der Agitationskomission mit dem Kollegium des Deutschen Fernsehfunks," 4 April 1963, 6.

66. Scheumann, Articles 8 and 9, "Prisma Testament" in Riedel, *Mit uns zieht die neue Zeit . . . ,* 137.

67. Merkel, *Meckerecke*, 44.

68. Ibid.

69. This led to the *Fernsehurteil* of 1961 and the creation of *Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen* (ZDF). A similar, if earlier, situation in Britain led to the 1954 Television Act mandating the creation of Independent Television (ITV) in 1955.

70. Asa Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 615.

71. Anthony Smith, cited in Brian McNair et al., eds., *Mediated Access: Broadcasting and Democratic Participation in the Age of Media Politics* (Luton: University of Luton Press, 2003), 26. On American television news, see Thomas Doherty, *Cold War,*

Cool Medium (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), especially chapter 8.

72. Silke Satjukow, "'Früher war das eben der Adolf . . .' Der Arbeitsheld Adolf Hennecke," in *Sozialistische Helden: Eine Kulturgeschichte von Propagandafiguren in Osteuropa und der DDR*, ed. Silke Satjukow and Rainer Gries (Berlin: Christoph Links Verlag, 2002), 115–132.

73. Hoff, "Von 'da lacht der Bär,'" 90.

74. Haucke, "Träume," 117 (see chap. 4 n.8).

75. Haucke, "Träume," 112.

76. Hoff, "Von 'da lacht der Bär,'" 90.

77. Haucke, "Träume," 113.

78. Simone Tippach-Schneider, *Messemännchen und Minol-Pirol: Werbung in der DDR* (Berlin: Schwartzkopf & Schwartzkopf, 1999), 54–55.

79. DRA, Fernseharchiv, *Mit dem Herzen dabei*.

80. Haucke, "Träume," 113.

81. On television staff: Wilke, "Arbeitsbericht," 123; on *Spiel Mit!*: Gerd Hallenberger, "Graue Tage, Bunte Abende: Wege zur Fernsehshow," in *Drei Mal auf Anfang: Fernsehunterhaltung in Deutschland*, ed. Wolfgang Mühl-Benninghaus (Berlin: Vistas, 2006), 157.

82. Haucke, "Träume," 121, 124.

83. Honecker, "Bericht des Politbüros an das 11. Plenum des ZK der SED," reproduced in Klessmann, *Zwei Staaten*, 576.

84. Weber, *Geschichte*, 249–250. Agde, *Kahlschlag*, 184–185.

85. Erich Honecker, "Bericht des Politbüros an das 11. Plenum des ZK der SED," reproduced in Klessmann, *Zwei Staaten*, 577.

86. See brief references to the plot in Müncheberg, *Blaues Wunder*, 200; Hoff in Hickethier, *Geschichte*, 302. Here from Rülicke-Weiler, *Film- und Fernsehkunst*, 212–213. Also Erich Selbmann, *DFF Adlershof: Wege übers Fernsehland; zur Geschichte des DDR-Fernsehens* (Berlin: Edition Ost, 1998), 85–86.

87. Rülicke-Weiler, *Film- und Fernsehkunst*, 213.

88. Hoff, "Das 11. Plenum," 108.

89. Rülicke-Weiler, *Film und Fernsehkunst*, 212. Selbmann, *DFF Adlershof*, 87. Rülicke-Weiler and Selbmann interpret this as the direct result of the influence of the Eleventh Plenum. Yet in a speech he gave to journalists shortly before the Plenum on 9 December 1965, Adameck called on viewers to "express their opinion on the problems posed by the piece. After the fourth part of *Dr. Schlüter finds Germany* [the original title—HG], they should suggest ways to achieve resolution in the fifth part, which will be broadcast later. . . ."

90. Marc Silberman, "Writing What—for Whom? 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung' in GDR Literature," *German Studies Review* 10 (1987): 532.

91. In Hoff's view after 1963 a certain "political wishful thinking" hampered the ability of the state leadership to undertake necessary reforms, both political and economic (296). Further, "with the Eleventh Plenum of 1965 began the 'Aufbruch in die Illusion' of Honecker's politics, an illusion that burst [when faced with] reality in Fall, 1989." Hoff in Hickethier, *Geschichte*, 302.

92. Joshua Feinstein, *The Triumph of the Ordinary* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 6–7.

93. Leo Charney and Vanessa Schwartz, eds., *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

94. Corey Ross, *The Media and the Making of Modern Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), and Peter Jelavich, *Berlin Alexanderplatz: Radio, Film and the Death of Weimar Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006).

95. Pater, "Rundfunkangebote," and von Saldern, "Rundfunk."

96. Ross, *Media*, 160.

97. Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly, *The Cambridge History of German Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 413.

98. Haucke, "Träume," 115.

CONCLUSION

1. Helmut Hanke, cited in Leonie Naughton, *That Was the Wild East: Film Culture, Unification, and the "New" Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 80.

2. Leonie Naughton's work typifies this narrative, which considers a few reports from the 1970s (usually presenting the most dire analysis of the situation) and then moves quickly to 1989.

3. Michael Meyen, *Denver-Klan und Neues Deutschland: Mediennutzung in der DDR* (Berlin: Vistas, 2003), 63.

4. Meyen, *Denver-Klan*, 64.

5. Wrage, *Zeit der Kunst*, 4.

6. Daphne Berdahl, *Where the World Ended* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), and Sheffer, *Burned Bridge*.

7. Peter Caldwell claims that Ulbricht's call to "overtake and outstrip West German economic development" and his "call for a cultural revolution, . . . had little effect over the long run. Such proclamations by the shrill-voiced and pointy-bearded Moses of East Germany in no way addressed the systematic roots of poor work discipline, disorganized exchange networks, and chaotic planning. Where symbolism and enthusiasm failed, force stepped in" and led to the construction of the Berlin Wall. Peter Caldwell, *Dictatorship, State Planning, and Social Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 141. Dietrich Orlow, "The GDR's Failed Search for a National Identity, 1945–1989," *German Studies Review* 29 (2006). See also the Introduction, note 13.

8. Joseph Straubhaar, "Beyond Media Imperialism: Asymmetrical Interdependence and Cultural Proximity," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 8 (1991): 39–59.

9. BArch (DH), DM 3 BRF II/1824, Letter to Heinz Geggel [Deputy Chairman of the State Broadcasting Committee], [March 1958].

10. This also helps explain the dynamic second lease on life GDR programming enjoyed after 1990 in broadcasts especially from Middle German Television (MDR).

11. Wilson Dizard, *TV: A World View* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1965), 93. Intervision could also link to the Western European "Eurovision" network, and the first transatlantic television transmissions occurred in 1962 through the Telstar satellite.

12. Dizard, *TV*, 156.

13. In this, television followed a trajectory similar to that of American blockbuster films: to pay for such expensive spectaculars, the industry relies on foreign distribution sales, which means that such films are really made not for the domestic American audience but for a large transnational one: "They are oriented towards spectacle and hyperbolic special effects because these translate very well cross-culturally. No subtitles are required for a viewer in Thailand to enjoy the basic premise of Jurassic Park III, which is 'run from the dinosaurs.'" Stephen Prince, "World Filmmaking and the Hollywood Blockbuster," *World Literature Today* 77 (2003): 5.

14. See Boddy's discussion of a similar trajectory in the United States, during which shifting economic practices undermined the supposed "golden age" of television. Boddy, *Fifties Television*.

15. Fensch, *So und noch besser*, 150.

16. Erich Honecker, cited in Hoff, *Geschichte*, 384. An analogous shift took place in the United States, where critics lauded live television dramas (of the late 1950s), but shifting economic practices and, in particular, renewed adherence to the model of commercial broadcasting led FCC Chairman Newton Minow to define television in 1961 as a "vast wasteland." Boddy, *Fifties Television*, 2.

17. Beutelschmidt, *Kooperation*, 44.

18. See chap. 6.

19. Dittmar, "Ostdeutsches 'Westfernsehen': Das Projekt 'Deutschland-Fernsehen' in der DDR 1958–1964," in *Zwischen Experiment und Etablierung*, ed. Dittmar and Vollberg (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2007), 266.

20. On the DFF in the 1980s, see Claudia Dittmar and Susanne Vollberg, eds., *Alternativen im DDR-Fernsehen: die Programmentwicklung 1981–1985* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2004).

21. Dizard, *TV*, 197.

22. See chapter 3, note 58.

23. And, as the reader likely has noted, I have deliberately not used the term "propaganda," which has become so imprecise, especially in its usage to "describe" media in socialist societies, as to have no meaning. It has become a bludgeon to castigate nonliberal societies (democratic or otherwise), as if the "market mechanism" somehow allows a "free interchange of ideas." There might be a case to be made that the term works when used in reference to, for example, wartime propaganda posters produced by the state to sway public opinion against the opposing force, but even that likely should be defined as advertising.

24. Adelheid von Saldern notes that, in the early occupation period, German radio personnel objected to Soviet authorities' instructions to rely on folk music (*Volksmusik*), to help coalesce the nascent (East) German state. In their view, that was a Nazi method unsuitable to reconstructing the values of the German nation; they acquiesced anyway. See also chapter 6.

25. Sascha Trültzsch, "Changing Family Values from Straight Socialist to Bourgeois on East German TV," paper presented at "Framed Frames: Developments in East German Television in the Context of Cold War and National Separation," Toronto, University of Toronto, 13 October 2007, and Sascha Trültzsch, *Abbild—Vorbild—Alltagsbild* (Leipzig: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2007), 9.

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- DR 8 Staatliches Komitee für Fernsehen (SKF)

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- DM 3 Ministerium für Post und Fernmeldewesen, Bereich Rundfunk und Fernsehen (MPF-BRF)

Bundesarchiv Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR
- DY 24 Freie Deutsche Jugend (FDJ)
- DY 30 Büro Albert Norden (Norden)
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