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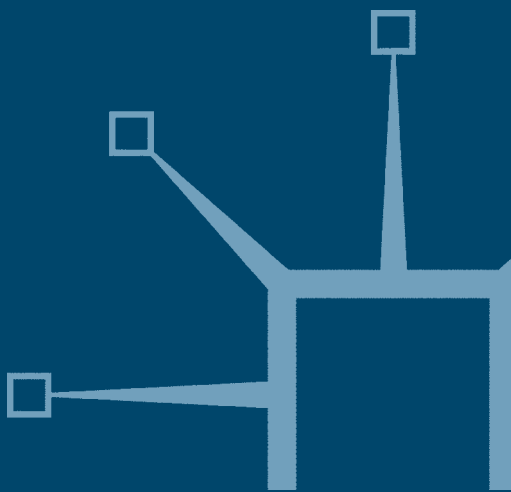
Mass Media, Culture and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany

Edited by

Karl Christian Führer and Corey Ross



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Mass Media, Culture and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany

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1

Mass Media, Culture and Society in Twentieth-Century Germany: An Introduction

Karl Christian Führer & Corey Ross

In January 1932, a journalist who had set out to report on modern aspects of everyday life took the unusual step of visiting the Sunday matinee shows in two movie theatres in Hamburg, Germany's second largest city. As was then customary, the audience of both matinees consisted almost exclusively of children under the age of 14. Despite this basic similarity, however, the show took on a very different character in these two cinemas. Throughout the screening, the children in one of Hamburg's working-class districts were very active viewers. Again and again, they commented noisily on the proceedings that they saw on the silver screen. Much to his surprise, the reporter learnt that this was true not only of the feature film but also of the preceding newsreel. According to the journalist the *Wochenschau* was heavily biased, offering a right-wing view of Germany's political and social situation, but this left the assembled working-class youngsters completely unimpressed. They laughed and whistled during footage showing a solemn memorial service for former *Freikorps* soldiers who had fought against Polish troops in 1921, and when Chancellor Brüning appeared on the screen the whole audience exploded with catcalls the Hamburg reporter thought unfit to print. Disruption soared once again when the newsreel finally offered pictures of German traditional dances (*Volkstänze*): 'What a load of rubbish!' ('*So'n Quatsch!*') was one of the more moderate comments emanating from the youthful audience.

The second cinema was situated in a well-to-do neighbourhood of Hamburg. In this theatre the young patrons behaved very differently from their working-class counterparts despite viewing the very same programme: during both the feature film and the newsreel this audience remained quiet and was impeccably behaved. At one point during the newsreel a boy tried to make a political comment, shouting 'Heil Hitler!', but this exclamation did not catch on and was greeted only with silence. The journalist (who wrote for a liberal newspaper) concluded: 'The young members of the middle class are much less inclined to protest against what they see than the young proletarians.'[1]

At first sight, this document may appear to offer little more than an amusing anecdote illustrating the unusual degree of working-class political passion in late Weimar Germany. Yet from another perspective it is arguably of much greater historical importance, for it not only reminds us how popular the cinema as a social institution already was in 1932, but it also clearly demonstrates that audience reactions are not solely determined by media content. In so doing, this inconspicuous newspaper article leads us directly to some of the most fundamental questions we can ask about the history of the mass media, their reception and their wider social impact.

Research in this field, it has to be said, is still relatively new. Though it might seem foreign to us in the first decade of the twenty-first century, it was not so long ago that the vast majority of historians showed either outright disdain or at best indifference towards the mass media, considering them either too recent to warrant their professional attention or as little more than epiphenomena that reflected the truly important developments of the past. In comparison to high politics, economics and social movements, the mass media simply did not feature as objects worthy of serious scholarly study – not even, apart from the occasional use of newspapers, as sources of information.

This widespread lack of professional interest is not very likely to have kept historians from being avid newspaper and/or magazine readers, from going to the cinema, from listening to radio or watching television. In this respect historians have differed little from people in all other walks of life. Indeed, the fact that all social groups have played a part in the rapid and continual growth of the media is one of the clearest expressions of their enormous importance in the twentieth century. Media use has become the dominant leisure activity in modern industrial and post-industrial societies, and in Germany (as elsewhere) ranks behind only sleep and work as a proportion of most people's time budgets. The media have been an integral part of the 'affluent society' as well as a driving force behind its advance, filling increased leisure time, creating new 'needs' and constantly offering new ways of satisfying them. Above all, they have both cultivated and sought to fulfil a seemingly insatiable appetite for entertainment, in the process introducing a variety of new norms and role models that have profoundly shaped individual and societal self-understanding. They have, in addition, transformed the nature of politics, prompting an intensive cultivation of popular appeal on the part of would-be leaders, exposing real or imagined scandals, and helping to set the parameters of political debate. In international perspective, however vague and diluted the buzzword 'globalization' has become, nothing to which it might refer is conceivable outside the context of the modern mass media.

There are, then, many reasons why one might dub the twentieth century the 'century of the mass media'.[2] While this notion makes no claim to be the basis of any new 'metanarrative', the enormous and wholly unprecedented expansion of the media is nonetheless absolutely central to the social, cultural and political history of the twentieth century. The revolution in

communications, especially the rise of electronic media since the First World War, is one of the factors that most clearly distinguishes this epoch from the ages that preceded it. Few, if any, areas of life have escaped their influence.

Yet if the ubiquity of the mass media has made their study important, it has also made it rather complicated. Not only does the daunting flood of information (at least in some areas) present the researcher with hard choices, but the multifaceted nature of the media has resulted in a plethora of different theoretical and methodological approaches. Numerous studies have engaged with the aesthetic development of the new media, focusing, for instance, on the emergence of new genres in film and radio, or the interaction between traditional arts and the new media.[3] The commercial organization and political control of the media has also been a focus of attention, and has long accounted for the bulk of historical research on the media in Germany, as in most countries. A more recent strand of cultural-historical research has focused on either the role of the media within wider societal 'discourses' or on the discourse surrounding the media themselves, especially during the cultural fermentation of the Weimar era.[4] Although the actual audiences have sometimes tended to fall between these stools, media reception has nonetheless been a subject of research and debate within sociology and cultural studies for several decades.[5]

While we therefore know quite a bit about the history of aesthetic movements in the German media, about production conglomerates, state censorship, the cultural pessimists who decried all of what was happening and the 'progressives' who celebrated it, historians have only recently begun to address how the media and their rapid growth fit into the wider history of twentieth-century Germany.[6] To be fair, historical overviews and syntheses have rarely failed to mention this in some form, whether under the rubric of 'modernization', 'Westernization', or more general social and cultural homogenization with the rise of 'mass culture'. But generally speaking, such observations have not only been necessarily brief and superficial, but also at times somewhat misleading, due to the questionable assumptions on which they are based.[7]

If the notion of the 'century of the mass media' is to become anything more than a convenient label, it seems necessary to adopt a 'societal history' (or what the Germans call *Gesellschaftsgeschichte*) approach to the media: one that firmly embeds them within their wider social, cultural and political context, that pays attention to their individual specificities, and that is alert to how their social roles changed over time. Over the last decade there has been a clear trend in German historiography towards supplementing the existing structural focus of 'societal history' with more serious consideration of the values, meanings and mentalities that both shape and are shaped by these structures.[8] An important part of this 'cultural expansion of social history' is to study the means by which such values and meanings are formulated, disseminated and reinforced. Quite obviously, the mass media play a central role in this process; studying them is an indispensable part of a culturally oriented social

history. This approach not only promises valuable new insights into the history of the media – and of the twentieth century more generally – but also furnishes the best guarantee against it becoming simply another sub-discipline encapsulated by its own particular interests and esoteric debates. In many ways Germany represents an especially fertile field for such research, above all because of its unique role as a laboratory of modernity that has witnessed all three of the dominant political systems of the age: liberal democracy, fascism and communism. This volume seeks to present some of the latest research on the media in twentieth-century Germany, and approaches them as an integral part of this most tragic and eventful period in Germany's history.

Mass media and 'mass culture' in Germany

Arguably the central question when examining the history of mass media as 'social history' is the impact they had on existing social structures, mores and cultural traditions – and, in turn, how the expectations and assumptions of producers and consumers shaped the media themselves. It has generally been assumed that the mass media have played an important role in the wider process of social 'levelling' and cultural 'standardization' in twentieth-century Germany, eroding traditional social milieus and flattening class hierarchies. They are commonly seen as the primary vehicle of modern 'mass culture' by dint of their sheer dissemination. The millions of readers, listeners and spectators partaking of the cultural products churned out by a highly commercialized entertainment industry are often perceived as conclusive evidence of a 'mass culture' and its levelling effects. Upon closer inspection, however, it becomes apparent that the existence of widely used mass media alone does not necessarily denote a universal 'mass culture'. For one thing, even at the most basic conceptual level, such ideas collide with the realities of media reception. Audiences were (and are) not passive recipients of media 'content'.[9] Quite the contrary: as numerous studies have shown, media reception is a highly variegated and 'creative' process in which much of the ultimate meaning of media messages lies in the eye of the beholder. Reception is therefore shaped by a wide range of factors such as generation, gender, class, region and education. Moreover, the particular media that one uses, and the way one uses them, are not simply *reflections* of such existing social distinctions, but indeed help to produce and reproduce these distinctions in the first place.[10]

While this was of course not a fundamentally new phenomenon in the twentieth century (literacy and what one read had long been a highly significant social marker), the vast proliferation of new media since the 1890s has dramatically increased their potential to shape social identities. Whereas there existed two genuinely 'mass' media around the turn of the century – newspapers and magazines – a series of technological innovations throughout the twentieth century vastly expanded the media ensemble in Germany, as elsewhere: cinema from 1895, recorded music from the 1890s onwards, radio

from 1923, television from 1954 (following an experimental phase in the later 1930s).

Yet it is worth emphasizing that the path to media 'saturation' such as characterized the latter decades of the twentieth century was a long one, with each of the different media undergoing their own particular twists and turns. Cinema, a regular feature of itinerant fairs and variety shows soon after its invention, first established itself as a permanent part of the urban entertainment scene after 1905. Although it was already a highly popular leisure activity among city-dwellers in the 1920s and 1930s, its real 'golden age' in terms of admissions was the 1950s – cut short by the meteoric rise of television after 1955–56. Recorded music developed at roughly the same time as cinema, and experienced its greatest growth in Germany in two phases, first during the 1920s and subsequently in the 1960s, when it first became an indispensable item of the modern household. Radio, first introduced in Germany in 1923, underwent extraordinarily rapid growth during its first decade, even through the acute economic crisis of 1930–32. Although the National Socialist government actively, and quite successfully, encouraged radio use, it should not be overlooked that roughly one-third of the German populace still did not have immediate access to radio at the end of the Second World War. 'Saturation' for radio came first in the 1950s, during the 'economic miracle' of the Federal Republic and the 'golden age' of cinema. In contrast to cinema, however, radio was not an obvious victim of the rise of television, at least not in terms of quantitative usage. The changes were rather qualitative, namely the emergence of new modes of programming and new patterns of everyday use – in particular the shift from radio as an object of concentrated attention to a provider of background music and 'ambient' entertainment.

As in all other industrial societies, television became the dominant medium in Germany from the mid-1950s onwards, and indeed in both a quantitative and qualitative sense. As for quantity, it is the only medium that experienced constant growth over the latter half of the twentieth century; use of all other media remained static or sank. As for its qualitative predominance, it seems clear that television engendered a unique fascination among its users. Its seemingly addictive attraction was manifested most conspicuously in its extraordinary power to shape everyday routines, ranging from patterns of familial intercourse to eating times and the wider unwritten laws of sociability: it was (and still is) bad form to phone someone during the main evening news. Television's predominance was further reinforced by the switch from black-and-white to colour in the Federal Republic in 1967 (and on the GDR's 'Second Programme' in 1969) which, like the introduction of the sound film – the 'talkies' – during the late 1920s and early 1930s, significantly increased its verisimilitude and, after initial technical shortcomings, also enhanced its popular appeal.

A further watershed in the Federal Republic was the licensing of private broadcasters from 1984–85, which broke the monopoly of the public service

broadcasters and greatly expanded programme choice in both radio and television. This was nothing short of revolutionary for German television, and (in so far as television was the dominant means of communication) marked an important shift in German society. Not only did it alter the discussion of political issues – indeed, the very definition of what constituted a 'political issue' – but it also created a new group of media celebrities, stretched the limits of what could legitimately be reported, and broke a variety of social and sexual taboos. At the same time, the social function of television changed. Whereas public service television had hitherto functioned primarily as a form of family entertainment, the new commercial programmes were geared above all to young people and therefore became an integral part of youth culture, functioning to some extent as recorded music had since the 1960s. The amount of time spent by the average German in front of the television also increased dramatically from two hours per day in 1985 to over three hours in 2000 – an increase that seems relatively small in view of the explosive growth of new broadcasters and programmes over the same period, but which nonetheless denotes a major shift in patterns of leisure activities. Overall, there can be no doubt that the expanding ensemble of mass media has engendered an ever-increasing 'medialization' of everyday life. Media use has been (and still is) an increasingly important component of people's free time.

The question of whether this immense media growth has rendered a 'mass culture' befitting its 'democratized' (or 'homogenized', depending on one's point of view) audiences has been a matter of considerable debate, both within and beyond the ivory towers of academia. This has been especially true in Germany, where the mass media and their usage have frequently been associated with 'manipulation', 'massification' and a decline of cultural standards. Significantly, such criticisms have been voiced from both the Right (conservative cultural pessimists) and Left ('Frankfurt School' of socio-cultural analysis) of the political spectrum. Above all, the 'Frankfurt School' and its spiritual forbears have exerted an immense influence on scholarly perceptions of the media as a 'culture industry' in the twentieth century. Cultural histories of the Weimar period in particular draw heavily on the writings of Siegfried Kracauer and Walter Benjamin, often in a fairly uncritical manner. As a result, the media of the 1920s – widely understood as a heyday of cultural modernization in Germany – are therefore generally cast in a negative light, with repercussions for their perception throughout the twentieth century.

By contrast, the chapters in this volume belong to a relatively recent strand of research showing that such critiques have more to do with elite perceptions, fears and anxieties than with actual historical developments. If one dispenses with the assumptions of contemporary cultural critics and looks more closely at the available evidence, the question of whether the mass media have had the 'standardizing' and 'levelling' effects so often attributed to them appears far more open. There is, it now seems clear, no simple answer and no singular formula that is equally valid for all media at all times. This is not to

discard wholesale the notion that the mass media, in their combined long-term impact, helped to erode traditional and more strictly hierarchical forms of cultural activity, and in this sense contributed to the emergence of a more widely shared 'mass culture'. The point is rather that the media could have integrative as well as divisive effects; they could both unite and divide audiences. Put differently, if broader dissemination of media products meant greater cultural commonality, wider choice of what to read, listen to or watch meant greater differentiation. As Anton Kaes has remarked, 'The differentiation of the audience is the inevitable consequence of the broadening of the market.'[11]

Even more importantly, the fact that the media propagated 'standardized' cultural artefacts (by virtue of their mass production and dissemination) does *not* mean that they necessarily exerted standardizing effects, as the reception of these artefacts in public and in the home was by no means uniform or predictable. To take newspapers as an example: whereas some readers focus their attention on the political news, others buy them chiefly for the sports pages, still others for the entertainment listings or the personal ads. Subscribers to the same newspaper are not necessarily reading the same things at all.

Gender has frequently been regarded as a primary dividing line for media use and reception, especially before the 1960s. Here, too, the example of newspapers is instructive: it was long assumed that women were primarily interested in entertainment, local news and advertisements, whereas men tended to read about politics and sports in addition to these other sections. Although such perceptions clearly resonated with (and were partly rooted in) common patriarchal prejudices, statistical surveys of the 1950s showed that they were to some extent based on fact.[12] Gender has, in other words, clearly been an important factor shaping media use. Yet it is worth emphasizing that this relationship worked in the other direction too: gender roles were also fundamentally influenced by the growth of the media. Private life – traditionally the 'feminine realm' – has undergone fundamental change over the course of the twentieth century, and the media have played a central role in this process. The introduction of radio and television in particular blurred the border between the public and private spheres, transforming domestic life by 'bringing the world into your living room'. Although newspapers had long conveyed public matters into the private domain, the electronic media greatly intensified this phenomenon. In principle, at least, the private household was henceforth in continual – not just sporadic – contact with the outside world, and indeed in 'real' time. The 'private' realm of the housewife was never quite the same again.

Taken together, the chapters that follow demonstrate that the social impact of the media varied greatly according to the specific nature of individual media, how they related to existing traditions and expectations, their economic organization and political regulation, as well as how these factors changed over time. For Germany in particular, the extent to which they changed over time deserves special emphasis. Given its traumatic and politically volatile history,

Germany represents a unique case for investigating how the mass media function across deep social caesura and under vastly different political regimes.

Mass media between integration and fragmentation

In spite of these national peculiarities, however, the history of the mass media in Germany was nonetheless very much a part of broader international trends. Film, for example, was from its very beginnings international in scope. In the years before the First World War, French and Scandinavian films constituted a large portion of the German market. During the 1920s it was American films that accounted for the bulk of foreign imports, while German films were simultaneously making a significant impact in other countries, above all in continental Europe. It was only during the Second World War that Hollywood films were forcibly excluded from German cinemas, signalling the high point of German film producers' international reach as they effectively cornered the market throughout occupied Europe. Along with film, the recording industry had a similarly international remit. Many of Germany's leading firms were jointly owned by British companies, and vice-versa. German recording firms (such as 'Deutsche Grammophon') have been leading players on the international market ever since the development of recorded sound, indeed even more successfully than German film-makers.

Yet the extent to which the media became truly 'internationalized', let alone acted as conveyors of a standardized 'international' mass culture, is open to question. Once again, there are no simple or universally valid answers. To take the example of film once more, the large number of Hollywood films imported during the 1920s – the peak of US film imports – appears to have had little 'Americanizing' influence on Weimar society. Hollywood films were, as a group, by no means the most popular in Germany. Mega-hits such as 'Ben Hur' or 'Anna Karenina' were very much the exception. The bulk of mediocre Hollywood films fared remarkably poorly at the box office in comparison to most German films, and often faced stinging criticism by German commentators.[13] Far from serving as a trojan horse of foreign cultural imperialism, it might even be said that the very presence of these films acted as a challenge to national culture and identity and actually encouraged a keener sense of 'Germanness', at least during the inter-war years. Yet over the longer term, the traumas of the Second World War and Nazi crimes tended to reduce such nationalistic sensitivities, and by the 1950s the barriers against the 'Americanizing' impulses of Hollywood film (or, for that matter, American rock-'n'-roll) were no longer so high as before, even if they never completely disappeared.

This tension between processes of cultural 'globalization' (in some eyes simply 'Americanization') and the persistence of national or regional particularisms has profoundly shaped all of the media in Germany. The first 'mass media' to emerge, newspapers, were in fact decidedly local in terms of both distribution and content. This was true even of the large Berlin dailies, which

were seldom read outside the capital. To some extent this local orientation of newspapers is rooted in the nature of the medium itself, in the difficulties involved in non-electronic distribution. Yet it also reflects the cultural expectations of readers: namely, the continuing demand for local news, advertisements and announcements (obituaries, births, marriages, etc.). Indeed, the first truly 'national' paper in Germany, the *Bild-Zeitung* (1952), began very quickly to cater simultaneously to regional interests by introducing local editions. Today the paper appears in 24 different editions.[14]

Regional concerns similarly moulded the development of German radio. The political architects of German broadcasting deliberately sought to avoid the spread of 'Berlin culture' via the new medium, and the foundations that they laid in the 1920s shape German radio to this very day. The various regional broadcasters have not been – apart from under the Nazi and SED regimes – part of a tightly centralized system, and have retained a great deal of autonomy in their programming, which explicitly serves regional interests. Although television in the Federal Republic was, before 1985, based on the same regional structure, in practice it worked quite differently due to a much more elaborate system of co-operation that gave rise to what was effectively a 'national' television service in the ARD (1950) and ZDF (1963). Moreover, West German television (and even more so the centralized East German service) were 'national' media not only in terms of their supra-regional character, but also in the sense that they were explicitly conceived as public service broadcasters capable of withstanding the commercial pressures of international (often American or British) pop culture and therefore of maintaining higher standards of programming.

If newspapers have tended to be local, radio regional and television national in scope, film has historically been the most decidedly international medium in Germany. Even the GDR film scene was enriched by foreign imports, most of them from other Eastern Bloc countries, though including a handful of Western and even Hollywood films during the more liberal Honecker years. Yet even in the case of film, the tension between 'globalization' and 'localism' was by no means absent. Especially in the first third of the twentieth century, film sometimes catered to local interests and served to maintain regional identities and allegiances. A prime example were the many 'Berlin films' of the 1920s and 1930s, which were highly popular in proletarian areas of Berlin and all but unknown elsewhere.

Despite the persistence of such regional and even local influences, many aspects of the mass media were nonetheless international in the sense that they could be observed across much of the industrialized world. This was not least the case in terms of their effects on everyday lifestyles. The massive expansion of the media and the huge proliferation of cultural artefacts that they offer have continually opened up new horizons for social behaviour and interaction. Every new medium brings new experiences for its audience, experiences that help to shape social roles and to promote new values, expectations and

identities. This has arguably been especially true for women, whose gradual entry into the 'public sphere' over the course of the twentieth century has been intimately related to new forms of media-based cultural activity. As scholars have long remarked, cinema in particular widened the cultural opportunities for women and young people beyond the narrow confines of hearth and home. Going to the cinema quickly became a 'respectable' way for women to participate in public amusements without male accompaniment. As such, it was an important structural element in the wider 'emancipation' of women. At the same time that it provided women with a new cultural 'space' in which to pursue their own interests, it was also a significant source of new ideas about gender roles – for example, the celebrated/vilified 'New Woman' of the 1920s. Although this 'New Woman' was by and large confined to the silver screen and pages of illustrated magazines, the fact that the vast majority of women's lives bore little resemblance to the screen ideal is arguably less important than the very existence of the icon itself, which was 'experienced' by millions of German women as a new and attractive form of femininity. The same argument applies to any number of new youth subcultures, whether the 'Swing Youth' of the 1930s and 1940s, the '*Halbstarken*' of the 1950s or the 'hippies' of the 1960s, all of which were either defined by specific forms of media use (especially particular music styles) or were deliberately modelled on media images.

The fact that many of these media 'images' were literally images in the pictorial sense is by no means coincidental. The oft-cited 'visualization' of modern popular culture has been another of the fundamental trends in the history of mass media. Beginning with illustrated magazines in the late nineteenth century, this trend was greatly enhanced by the rise of cinema and then further accelerated by the breakthrough of television. As a seemingly faithful and accurate reproduction of 'reality', the visual media have generally been regarded as a more powerful means of conveying messages than the spoken or written word. In addition, as 'the genuine mother tongue of humankind',[15] pictures were easily accessible to everyone regardless of education, and therefore lent themselves ideally to mass dissemination. For these very same reasons, the process of cultural visualization was also subjected to continual attacks from intellectual elites mindful of their traditional role as custodians of literate culture. Yet such rearguard actions of cultural defence have signally failed to halt the trend towards visualization. By the 1960s at the latest, the longstanding intellectual anxieties over the displacement of text by pictures were in fact wholly overtaken by reality. Nowhere has this been more clearly manifested than in the influence of television on the print media, especially on the layout and picture/text ratio of newspapers. Despite their best efforts, not even the most traditional broadsheets have been able to escape these developments. And as for tabloids, many nowadays make no bones about describing themselves as 'printed television'.[16]

The analogy of newspapers as 'printed television' is a particularly glaring – though by no means the only – indication of yet another fundamental trend

in the history of the mass media: namely, their ever-increasing self-referentiality. There are a number of aspects to this phenomenon. At the most basic level it reflects a self-induced form of media expansion, whereby media innovations beget other new media products or interrelationships. A primary illustration of this process was the introduction of radio broadcasting, which was perceived with great trepidation by newspapers, publishers and recording executives alike. Despite fears about the displacement of their own products by the new medium (as a new source of information and advertisements that also threatened to bring 'too much music into the world'[17] for the good of the recording industry), in the event radio created a range of synergies and new opportunities for cross-fertilization. Publishers were not only relieved to find that radio users continued to buy newspapers much as before, but also took the opportunity to supplement their product ranges with new radio 'programme guides'. Recording firms similarly found that radio increased rather than decreased demand for records by helping to popularize 'hit' tunes. The introduction of the sound film from 1928/29 greatly accelerated this trend, creating a qualitatively new media nexus in combination with radio and recording. It is in this sense significant that most of the 'hit' tunes of the 1930s and 1940s were 'sound film hits' (*Tonfilmschlager*), the film functioning as publicity for the record, the record for the film, the radio for both. At the same time, the increased popular interest in the sound film prompted newspapers to cover new releases and the activities of movie 'stars' as important news items – quite apart from the proliferation of special film magazines.

At one level this increasing self-referentiality can be seen as a pragmatic survival technique on the part of existing media producers when confronted by new competitors. Yet at another level, it also reflected the emergence of new desires for entertainment and a heightened demand for information on the part of consumers. People wanted more information about what was playing on the radio; they wanted to know more about personalities seen on the silver screen or heard on the airwaves. The existing media recognized this new demand, stimulated it and sought to fulfil it. This has been a general pattern throughout the twentieth century, conspicuously accompanying the rise of television and, more recently, the internet.

Yet once again, the rise of television was uniquely influential in this regard. Not only did it have a powerful impact on newspaper layout, it also greatly affected newspaper content, above all the inclusion of much more information about itself. Indeed, the expanding coverage of television by the other media occurred at a number of levels. While tabloid newspapers became packed with television celebrity gossip, 'serious' broadsheets and radio commentators became engaged time and again in lengthy debates about what was appropriate to show on television and when it should be shown (violence, sexuality, voyeurism) – questions which have justifiably been regarded as a key barometer of changing social values. It is not unfair to view these developments as the crystallization of an increasingly self-encapsulated 'media reality' in which media content is

to a large extent about media content. Although this process began in the first decades of the twentieth century, the unprecedented dovetailing of private television and tabloids since the 1980s has nonetheless marked a qualitatively new phase of self-referentiality.

In the light of all these changes, there can be no doubt that the 'public sphere', structured as it is by the media, has been dramatically transformed over the course of the twentieth century as the media ensemble itself has evolved. As even these preliminary comments demonstrate, it is not especially helpful to conceive of these changes as part of a one-way process of 'modernization' involving a gradual trend towards cultural democratization and the emergence of a universal, socially levelling 'mass culture'. For one thing, as the German case shows especially clearly, mass media can flourish under dictatorial systems as well as under liberal ones. Not only have the media been mobilized in support of dictatorships, but dictatorial regimes have also gone out of their way to foster greater media use – not just as a means of crude political 'indoctrination', but also as a more subtle conveyor of propaganda *qua* entertainment. Moreover, although the mass media can justifiably be seen as a structural precondition of a 'mass culture', it is highly misleading to view them as two sides of the same coin, since the expansion of media use can also encourage social and cultural fragmentation. This ambivalence between integration and fragmentation is precisely why it is impossible to carry out an empirical study of 'the public sphere' in itself. Rather, the best one can do is to analyse concrete media 'semi-publics' (*Teilöffentlichkeiten*) and how they functioned in practice. The abiding task is therefore to enquire into how the modern media unite and divide, how they can simultaneously exert both a homogenizing and a differentiating influence on the society and culture of which they form an integral part.

This book and its contents

This is clearly a huge and complex task, and one to which historians have only recently turned much attention. The vague but unmistakable sense that this attention is overdue has been reflected in a veritable boom in media history in Germany over the past several years. Yet despite all this recent industry, our ignorance still vastly outweighs our knowledge. The present volume can naturally only tackle certain aspects, emphasize certain themes, draw attention to certain issues. Yet taken together, the following chapters demonstrate the fruitfulness of approaching the history of the media as an integral part of society at large. In so doing, a number of central themes and questions emerge, albeit in different ways depending on the medium in question as well as the time frame of analysis. The volume thus seeks to highlight some of the overarching questions that historians face when reconstructing the history of the media in Germany, yet at the same time attempts also to paint a differentiated picture that eschews assumptions about a standard pattern of development and that does justice to the many complexities of the rise of the mass media.

The history of German radio, long dominated by organizational studies, has attracted especially keen interest over the last decade.[18] The recent expansion of research beyond the formal institutions of broadcasting is clearly reflected in the chapters by Kate Lacey and Konrad Dussel which engage with two very different but fundamental issues. As Lacey argues (Chapter 4), the constitution of a new 'radio public' in the early years of broadcasting was far more open than is often assumed. Although the paradigmatic 'private listener' eventually became the dominant form of radio reception, this was neither an inevitable nor uncontested outcome. The fact that 'collective listening' and the encouragement of the 'interactive listener' remained explicit goals of radio enthusiasts into the 1930s raises a number of questions about the relationship between an 'audience' and a 'public' – two quite different things that are often conflated. Konrad Dussel (Chapter 5) addresses the basic question of continuity and change in radio programming across the deep historical divides of twentieth-century Germany's turbulent political history. During the 'radio years' from the 1920s to the early 1960s (before the dominance of television), the balance between education, information and entertainment shifted greatly due to a variety of economic, political and ideological factors. Entertainment was, perhaps predictably, triumphant in the end. Yet somewhat less predictably, Dussel shows that entertainment made its greatest advance during the years of the National Socialist regime. While elites in both of the two post-war German states deliberately sought to develop their programmes in contrast to National Socialist radio, there were in practice a number of striking continuities across the caesura of 1945, especially in the GDR's understanding of radio as a medium of propaganda and diversion.

In contrast to radio, recorded music has attracted very little scholarly attention apart from a handful of mostly antiquarian and highly specialized accounts. Corey Ross (Chapter 2) surveys the relatively uncharted social and cultural history of recorded music from its origins in the late nineteenth century to the 1940s. Although the rise of recorded sound was widely perceived as a threat to both the social function and even the very nature of music, in the event its impact was highly unpredictable, shoring up or reviving some cultural traditions while undermining others. As Ross argues, the Nazis seem to have recognized this ambivalence, which helps explain why the recording industry escaped the level of micro-management imposed on all other media. Another reason for this relatively 'light touch' was of course that recorded music was less widely used in the 1930s and 1940s than radio or cinema. In this respect the 1960s were a different matter entirely. Indeed, as Detlef Siegfried (Chapter 3) emphasizes, records constituted a crucial element in the seismic cultural shifts of that decade, shifts in which the public broadcasting services of radio and television played, by contrast, almost no role at all. The importance of records to the counter-culture of the 1960s rested on a number of factors. First, the recording industry was by this time uniquely international, and therefore ideally suited to the import of American and British music and

clothing fashions – indeed to generating demand for such fashions in the first place. In addition, the very nature of the medium (that is that it did not have to rely on a broadcaster's repertoire) readily lent itself to a highly individualized form of reception, and therefore served as an expressive means of social distinction and lifestyle choice.

Literature on the history of German film is impressively broad, but at the same time also rather one-sided. Most studies in this field are concerned with cinematic art and cinema as an expression of allegedly characteristic traits of German society. In comparison, the history of cinema as a business, as a social institution and as popular entertainment is considerably less well researched.[19] Taking his cue from these gaps, Karl Christian Führer (Chapter 6) tries to assess the popular appeal of Hollywood movies for German audiences during the Third Reich. His findings demonstrate that reactions differed between the various strata and milieus constituting German society. While Hollywood films formed an indispensable part of urban culture and urban leisure activities, rural audiences were anything but enthusiastic. Führer also argues that American movies should not be regarded as 'counter propaganda' that undermined the ministrations of Joseph Goebbels. On the contrary, Hollywood films were not only remarkably compatible with National Socialist ideas about social integration in the 'national community', but were also held up as a model for the creation of a genuinely popular yet artistically valuable culture for the masses – masses who, for their part, may have 'read' American movies very differently from the way their producers or the Nazi authorities might have expected. Adopting a similar social-historical approach to post-war film, Thomas Lindenberger (Chapter 7) demonstrates that West and East German movies during the height of the Cold War both reflected and themselves contributed to the growing divide between the two societies. In the GDR, all interested parties (media users, producers and the SED as the monopolistic commissioner and censor of media products) were fixated on the West. Whether it served as the measure for good entertainment unspoiled by political indoctrination, as a source of aesthetic and technical innovation or as an ideological opponent and 'fifth column' within the regime's own sphere of domination, in the long run it was Western consumer and media culture from which the criteria for the success of the socialist project were ultimately derived. However, this fixation on the West was not reciprocated in the Federal Republic, which was characterized instead by an ever-decreasing interest in the East as German division became seemingly definitive over the years. As the cinema continued to lose ground to television in both Germanys, it was eventually on the television screen, and predominantly in documentary formats, that the reality of German division and the East–West confrontation was dealt with as far as audiovisual representation was concerned.

Despite its close technological relations to radio broadcasting, the field of TV history has been far less dominated by organizational studies than have writings about radio. The historical development of German TV programmes

can nowadays be regarded as a well-researched area, though much less has been written on the social effects of television as a new and particularly suggestive medium.[20] Tackling this question, Knut Hickethier (Chapter 8) presents West German television as a uniquely effective motor for social change since the early 1960s. As an agent of social transformation, television helps to shape the perception and expectations of the viewer to the requirements of society, thus contributing to a new socialization of the individual, and indeed one in which the world appears in 'real time' from a plurality of different perspectives. As Judith Keilbach and Markus Stauff show (Chapter 10), sports played a special role in these developments. Not only were most technical and aesthetic innovations introduced for the broadcasts of sports events, but also televised sport has generally served as a 'test case' for many legal and social issues surrounding television. In particular, the broadcasting of international soccer has been a forum for negotiating a sense of national identity, and also a battleground for competing visions of the role of television in society at large – the extent to which it is a public medium for the common good or a private enterprise in pursuit of maximizing profits. Looking eastward, Heather Gumbert (Chapter 9) surveys the development of television in the GDR as an instrument of both political propaganda and entertainment. Her essay corrects two common assumptions about GDR television. For one thing, the bulk of East German TV-viewers did not, despite the persistent and extremely widespread misapprehension to the contrary, tune predominantly into 'the West'. Rather, many GDR entertainment series were highly popular among East German viewers since they were regarded as a better reflection of their own lives. Second, West German television, in particular news stories about the East, was not generally perceived as any more 'truthful' or any less ideological than East German news coverage. Both these findings raise fundamental questions about media power in dictatorial systems (a question that is also tackled in Karl Christian Führer's chapter on Hollywood movies in the Third Reich).

Despite the predominance of the print media throughout the early part of the twentieth century, research on the history of the German press is surprisingly thin, largely due to the shortage of sources beyond the actual newspapers and magazines themselves. The destruction of many of the most important press archives in Allied bombing raids of the early 1940s is only partly to blame for this state of affairs, for sources pertaining to the post-war press are also remarkably sparse. In so far as such material exists at all, it is to a large extent controlled by private firms that show little interest in divulging the contents of their archives to historians. The resulting reliance on sources produced by the state has strongly influenced historical research, as has historians' natural interest in the many political upheavals in twentieth-century Germany. The overall result has been a tendency to focus on the 'political' history of the press, and in particular on a number of relatively well-worn themes: the empire of right-wing media magnate Alfred Hugenberg, Nazi control and manipulation of the press, and the emergence of the so-called 'licence press'

in the Western-occupied zones after the Second World War.[21] There are, however, also a smaller number of business histories, and more recently a handful of studies addressing the wider role of the press in society.[22] So although some aspects of the German press are therefore well known, other areas are nothing short of *terra incognita*. To cite merely the most glaring example, the history of the Springer Verlag, publishers of the *Bild-Zeitung* (by far the most important tabloid in Germany, and by the 1950s already one of the most widely circulated periodicals in Europe), is still largely unresearched, as are the bulk of illustrated magazines in post-war Germany.[23]

For a number of reasons, most scholarly interest in the history of the press has focused on the period before the Second World War. The half-century after 1890 witnessed a fundamental recasting of the print press in terms of both the character of the medium itself and its role in society at large. It was, simply put, over these decades that the press became a truly 'mass' medium. Gideon Reuveni (Chapter 12) considers the expansion of newspaper reading during this period within the twin contexts of the decline of the *Bildungsbürgertum* and the development of an increasingly consumer-oriented society. Newspapers and magazines carried more and more advertisements and also became financially dependent on them. This new synergy between advertising and newspapers not only contributed to the growing consumption of newspapers and the products and services they publicized, it also marketed consumption itself as a new lifestyle befitting a modern society. Reading became a form of 'consumption through the eyes'; leafing through the pages of a newspaper or an illustrated magazine became a kind of virtual *flânerie* not dissimilar from window-shopping, which played a significant role in transforming consumption from a purposeful activity to a purpose or end in its own right. Newspapers, Bernhard Fulda reminds us (Chapter 11), remained the most widely and intensively used mass medium during the first third of the twentieth century, in spite of the disproportionate amount of attention paid by both contemporaries and historians to radio and film. Focusing on the nexus of entertainment, sensationalism and politics in the Berlin tabloid press, Fulda emphasizes the socially and politically divisive role of these papers, especially during the Weimar years. Far from serving as a vehicle for a unifying 'mass culture', these tabloids – and even more clearly the 'traditional' broadsheets – were constituent elements of a highly conflict-ridden political landscape and represented deeply fragmented networks of communication. Photography and photojournalism were, as Habbo Knoch's chapter (13) shows, central to many of these developments, and implied a number of fundamental changes to the activity of 'reading', and how readers perceived the world. In conjunction with the rapid expansion of cinema in the early twentieth century, photography was a driving force behind the oft-cited visualization of culture in the spheres of entertainment and politics. By contrast, Patrick Major (Chapter 14) traces some of the reactions against the ongoing changes to reading and print culture in Germany through the

example of youth comics. At various points in the twentieth century, such youth literature was the object of far-reaching moral panic about the supposed 'Americanization' and 'brutalization' of young people, and prompted numerous attempts to create a more 'edifying' and 'German' version in the cause of cultural defence.

Further avenues of research in media history

As with all scholarly publications, this volume is conceived as part of an ongoing discussion. It therefore seems appropriate to close the introduction with a few remarks about certain themes and topics in media history that will hopefully be the subject of future research. In terms of specific 'gaps' in our knowledge of German media, arguably the most glaring is the history of the popular press, above all the proliferation of tabloids (not least the *Bild-Zeitung*) after 1945. Bernhard Fulda's chapter bears evidence to the rising scholarly interest in the popular press for earlier periods. It can only be hoped that similar research on post-war tabloids – which would be greatly facilitated by more open access to publishers' archives – will soon shed more light on this important chapter in media history.

On a more general level, there are also a number of wider themes that promise new insights and perspectives on media history, and on the history of twentieth-century Germany more generally. In the attempt to write media history as social history, it would be fruitful to pay more attention to the close interconnections between mass media and urban life, for the modern media of the twentieth (and, for that matter, the nineteenth) century were first and foremost urban phenomena. Large urban centres were – and for the most part still are – the site of media production and the home of most people who work in the media. In comparison to rural areas or small towns, the city is also characterized by the densest concentration, the broadest palette and the most up-to-date forms of media production. The newspaper stands in city railway stations, with their sprawling supply of local, national and international papers, can serve as a symbol of the close relationship between the modern media and the metropolis. In many ways the nature of life in the modern city – tempo, constant change, fleeting impressions – is identical with the essence of the media; much of what makes the big city what it is developed alongside and through the media. To this extent it makes sense to pursue the history of the media and changing public sphere as a part of urban history, and vice-versa.[24]

This seems all the more important in view of the fact that in the second half of the twentieth century the relationship between the media ensemble and urban life underwent significant change. The rise of television provides the most compelling evidence that modern mass media can also undermine urbanity. Television brought about a huge decrease in cinema attendance and the number of cinemas, which had constituted a central element of urban

culture until well into the 1950s. This had far-reaching consequences for the vitality of the city as urban space and focus for entertainment. Moreover, this development did not stop with the rise of television *per se*: the expansion of cable and satellite TV meant that even the remotest farmer could receive the same number of stations in the same quality as the city dweller. Thus the close connection between the mass media and the metropolis slowly began to erode during the second half of the twentieth century due to technological and economic changes. The disappearance of press quarters as distinct areas of the city, following the transfer of printing presses into the less expensive suburbs in the 1970s and 1980s, is another example of the same overall trend.

In addition to media history as urban history, a second promising theme of future research is the central role of the modern media in the production of 'image' – or, put differently, their role as both prerequisite and stimulant of the entire culture of branding and celebrity that has increasingly moulded cultural life in the twentieth century. It would, for instance, be worth investigating the character of media as brand articles, as products that function as brands in themselves and that compete with each other on these terms. As 'branding' became an increasingly important marketing strategy in nearly all branches of the economy, media, too, were increasingly conceived as commodities moulded by the same rules that shaped the production and selling of branded goods. Daily newspapers and magazines (especially popular illustrated magazines) quite obviously function as brand articles. The routinized and recurring act of purchase on which they survive is based on consumer identification and confidence that his or her quality and style expectations will be met. While the newspaper's or magazine's masthead serves as its logo, its recognizability is further enhanced by a consistent layout that structures the presentation of ever-changing content in a familiar form. Although it is at first glance less evident to regard radio and TV programmes, films and recordings as brand articles, they nonetheless share a number of characteristics that distinguish them from 'no-logo' goods. The large film and recording firms were in fact among the pioneers of creating a 'corporate identity' via a particular brand mark, whether MGM's roaring lion, the attentive dog of His Master's Voice/EMI or the ornate baroque and conspicuously yellow label of Deutsche Grammophon's classical music recordings. Radio and television stations also made extensive efforts to give themselves a distinctive profile. Even in the early years of German radio, which was essentially free from any competition, producers consciously endeavoured to create a distinct and consistent programme structure that in some ways represented a time-oriented parallel with a newspaper's characteristic two-dimensional layout, making particular broadcasts at particular times of day on particular days of the week. 'Jingles' and distinctive sounds marking breaks in the programme (*Pausenzeichen*) are further examples of such 'branding on air'. Much the same can be said for television stations – especially, of course, after the arrival of private broadcasters. Although there has been some interesting recent research on the multiple

connections between branding and media,[25] the question of how the media have historically tried to brand themselves as articles of consistent quality and character while at the same time constantly bringing their readers or listeners novel content promises to give new impulses to media history.

The obviously central role of the mass media in the rise of modern celebrity furnishes another set of questions for further research. This is, after all, a development of fundamental importance to both popular culture and politics in the twentieth century, and one that is integrally related both to wider processes of branding as well as to the ever-increasing interrelations between the different media discussed above. Despite a handful of works dealing with the phenomenon of 'stardom',[26] this tight nexus of marketing and media self-referentiality deserves more attention than it has received to date.[27] Once again, the rise of television is of great importance here as TV programmes in general became the most important public stage on which prominence and 'celebrity' could be gained, strengthened or weakened. Whether it is the sound-film crooner, the talk-show celebrity, or the front-rank politician supervising his own 'media-personality', we still know far too little about the creation, development and adaptation of strategies to use the media and media alliances as vehicles of celebrity 'image-making'.

As a concluding point, it is worth emphasizing that we must always keep a close eye on the audiences while pursuing these and other questions of media history. For despite the increasing saturation of modern life with the ever-more-sophisticated gadgets and messages of the mass media, audiences have time and again proved their ability to confound the press barons, movie moguls and TV producers vying for their attention. 'Image-makers' and entertainers operate on inherently unsteady terrain, as Chancellor Brüning's press officials would have plainly discovered had they come across the newspaper story that opened this introduction. Hamburg's young working-class moviegoers were, to say the least, totally unimpressed by Brüning's screen appearance in 1932. As their catcalls and laughter clearly demonstrate, both the media themselves and the messages they convey are an integral part of everyday life, and operate within a wider social context that is of crucial importance in shaping their reception and impact. As this volume seeks to show, approaching the media within their changing social context is the best way of understanding their immense importance while not overestimating their power over those who use them.

Notes

1 'Die kleinen Mittelständler nehmen alles kritikloser hin als die kleinen Proleten.' Erich Spiegel, 'Kinder im Kino', *Hamburger Anzeiger*, 23 Jan. 1932.

2 A. Schildt, 'Das Jahrhundert der Massenmedien: Ansichten zu einer künftigen Geschichte der Öffentlichkeit', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 27 (2001), pp. 177–206.

3 Due to the immensity of this literature, readers are simply advised here to consult the individual chapters in this volume. Some noteworthy titles are also cited further below in the section 'The book and its contents'.

4 For recent examples, see P. Alter (ed.), *Im Banne der Metropolen: Berlin und London in den zwanziger Jahren* (Göttingen, 1993); A. Kaes, M. Jay & E. Dimendberg (eds), *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (Berkeley, 1994); C. Haxthausen & H. Suhr (eds), *Berlin: Culture and Metropolis* (Minneapolis, 1990); T. Kniesche & S. Brockmann (eds), *Dancing on the Volcano: Essays on the Culture of the Weimar Republic* (Columbia, 1994); M. Nolan, *Visions of Modernity: American Business and the Modernization of Germany* (Oxford, 1994); K. von Ankum (ed.), *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture* (Berkeley, 1997). More wide-ranging is K. Maase, *Grenzenloses Vergnügen: Der Aufstieg der Massenkultur 1850–1970* (Frankfurt/Main, 1997).

5 See, for example, S. Hall (ed.), *Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies, 1972–1979* (London, 1986; reprinted London, 2004); S. Hall (ed.), *Representations: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (London, 1999); J. Fiske, *Understanding Popular Culture* (London, 1991); A. A. Berger (ed.), *Making Sense of Media: Key Texts in Media and Cultural Studies* (Malden MA, 2005). For contemporary Germany see esp. G. Schulze, *Die Erlebnisgesellschaft: Kultursoziologie der Gegenwart* (Frankfurt/Main, 1992); W. Peiser, *Die Fernsehgeneration: Eine empirische Untersuchung ihrer Mediennutzung und Medienbewertung* (Opladen, 1996); S. Kombüchen, *Von der Erlebnisgesellschaft zur Mediengesellschaft: Die Evolution der Kommunikation und ihre Folgen für den sozialen Wandel* (Münster, 1999); R. Weiss, *Fernsehen im Alltag: Zur Sozialpsychologie der Medienrezeption* (Wiesbaden, 2001).

6 For overviews of the literature, see esp. K. C. Führer, K. Hickethier & A. Schildt, 'Öffentlichkeit – Medien – Geschichte: Konzepte der modernen Öffentlichkeit und Zugänge zu ihrer Erforschung', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 41 (2001), pp. 1–38; J. Requate, 'Öffentlichkeit und Medien als Gegenstände historischer Analyse', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 25 (1999), pp. 5–32; A. Schildt, 'Von der Aufklärung zum Fernsehzeitalter: Neue Literatur zu Öffentlichkeit und Medien, *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 40 (2000), pp. 487–509; K. C. Führer, 'Neue Literatur zur Geschichte der modernen Massenmedien Film, Hörfunk und Fernsehen, *Neue Politische Literatur* 46 (2001), pp. 216–43; J. Wilke (ed.), *Massenmedien und Zeitgeschichte* (Konstanz, 1999).

7 See, for instance, D. J. K. Peukert, *The Weimar Republic: The Crisis of Classical Modernity* (Harmondsworth, 1991); R. Burns (ed.), *German Cultural Studies: An Introduction* (Oxford, 1995); H.-U. Wehler, *Deutsche Gesellschaftsgeschichte Bd. 4: Vom Beginn des Ersten Weltkriegs bis zur Gründung der beiden deutschen Staaten 1914–1949* (Munich, 2003).

8 For an introduction, see T. Mergel & T. Welskopp (eds), *Geschichte zwischen Kultur und Gesellschaft: Beiträge zur Theoriedebatte* (Munich, 1997).

9 See, generally, I. Ang, *Desperately Seeking the Audience* (London, 1991); S. Moores, *Interpreting Audiences: The Ethnography of Media Consumption* (London, 1993); J. Curran & M. Gurevitch (eds), *Mass Media and Society* (London, 1996); M. Charlton & S. Schneider (eds), *Rezeptionsforschung: Theorien und Untersuchungen zum Umgang mit Massenmedien* (Opladen, 1997); H. Holzer, *Medienkommunikation: Einführung in handlungs- und gesellschaftstheoretische Konzeptionen* (Opladen, 1994).

10 The most trenchant analysis to date remains the classic study by P. Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (London, 1984).

11 A. Kaes (ed.), *Kino-Debatte. Texte zum Verhältnis von Literatur und Film 1909–1929* (Tübingen, 1978), p. 12.

12 See, for example, the figures in M. Meyen, *Hauptsache Unterhaltung: Mediennutzung und Medienbewertung in Deutschland in den 50er Jahren* (Münster, 2001), pp. 155–7.

13 J. Garnacz, 'Hollywood in Germany: Die Rolle des amerikanischen Films in Deutschland: 1925–1990', in U. Jung (ed.), *Der deutsche Film: Aspekte seiner Geschichte von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart* (Trier, 1993), pp. 167–97. See also T. Saunders, *Hollywood in Berlin: American Cinema and Weimar Germany* (Berkeley, 1994), pp. 150 ff.

14 While German newspapers remain to this day largely local or at best regional in scope (the 'national' readerships of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* are relatively small), illustrated magazines, foremost among them the *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung*, have from the beginning served a national readership.

15 In the formulation by cultural critic B. Balazs, *Der sichtbare Mensch* (Halle, 1926), p. 27.

16 C. Jacobi, *50 Jahre Axel Springer Verlag 1946–1996* (Berlin, 1996), p. 88.

17 *Phonographische Zeitschrift* 32 (1931), p. 10.

18 K. Dussel, *Deutsche Rundfunkgeschichte: Eine Einführung* (Konstanz, 1999); K. Dussel, 'Deutsches Radio, deutsche Kultur: Hörfunkprogramme als Indikatoren kulturellen Wandels', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 41 (2001), pp. 119–44; K. Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies: Gender, German Radio, and the Public Sphere, 1923–1945* (Ann Arbor, 1996); K. C. Führer, 'A Medium of Modernity? Broadcasting in Weimar Germany, 1923–1932', *Journal of Modern History* 69 (1997), pp. 722–53; I. Marßolek & A. von Saldern (eds), *Radiozeiten: Herrschaft, Alltag, Gesellschaft (1924–1960)* (Potsdam, 1999); idem (eds), *Zuhören und Gehörtwerden*, 2 vols (Tübingen, 1998); I. Marßolek, 'Radio in Deutschland 1923–1960: Zur Sozialgeschichte eines Mediums', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 27 (2001), pp. 207–39; A. von Saldern, '*Volk* and *Heimat* Culture in Radio Broadcasting during the Period of Transition from Weimar to Nazi Germany', *Journal of Modern History* 76 (2004), pp. 312–46; P. Galle, *RIAS Berlin und Berliner Rundfunk 1943–1949: Die Entwicklung ihrer Profile in Programm, Personal und Organisation vor dem Hintergrund des Kalten Krieges* (Münster, 2003); S. Kursawe, *Vom Leitmedium zum Begleitmedium. Das Radioprogramm des Hessischen Rundfunks 1960–1980* (Cologne, 2004).

19 Compare as 'exceptions that prove the rule': C. Müller, *Frühe deutsche Kinematographie: Formale, wirtschaftliche und kulturelle Entwicklungen 1907–1912* (Stuttgart, 1994); H. Korte, *Der Spielfilm und das Ende der Weimarer Republik: Ein rezeptionshistorischer Versuch* (Göttingen, 1998); W. Mühl-Benninghaus, *Das Ringen um den Tonfilm: Strategien der Elektro- und der Filmindustrie in den 20er und 30er Jahren* (Düsseldorf, 1999); G. Stahr, *Volksgemeinschaft vor der Leinwand: Der nationalsozialistische Film und sein Publikum* (Berlin, 2001); U. Schwarz, *Wochenschau, westdeutsche Identität und Geschlecht in den fünfziger Jahren* (Frankfurt/Main, 2002). For an overview of the history of film as cinematic art, see, for example, W. Jacobsen, A. Kaes & H. H. Prinzler (eds), *Geschichte des deutschen Films* (Stuttgart, 1993); T. Elsaesser, *Das Weimarer Kino – aufgeklärt und doppelbödig* (Berlin, 1999); S. Hake, *German National Cinema* (London, 2002).

20 See esp. H. Kreuzer & C. W. Thomsen (eds), *Geschichte des Fernsehens in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 5 vols (Munich, 1993/94); K. Hickethier (with Mitarbeit von Peter Hoff), *Geschichte des deutschen Fernsehens* (Stuttgart, 1998).

21 K. Koszyk, *Deutsche Presse 1914–1945* (Berlin, 1972); H. Holzbach, *Das 'System Hugenberg': Die Organisation bürgerlicher Sammlungspolitik vor dem Aufstieg der NSDAP* (Stuttgart, 1981); K. Wernecke & P. Heller, *Der vergessene Führer: Alfred Hugenberg. Pressemacht und Nationalsozialismus* (Hamburg, 1982); N. Frei, *Nationalsozialistische Eroberung der Provinzpresse: Gleichschaltung, Selbstanpassung und Resistenz in Bayern* (Stuttgart, 1980); N. Frei & J. Schmitz, *Journalismus im Dritten Reich* (Munich,

1999); N. Frei, *Die Presse*, in W. Benz (ed.), *Die Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, vol. 4 (Frankfurt/Main, 1989), pp. 370–417; J. B. Hüffer, *Vom Lizenzpressesystem zur Wettbewerbspresse: Lizenzverleger und Altverleger im Rheinland und in Westfalen 1945–1953/54* (Munich, 1995). For a good, recent overview, see R. Stöber, *Deutsche Pressegeschichte: Einführung, Systematik, Glossar* (Konstanz, 2000); K. Dussel, *Deutsche Tagespresse im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Münster, 2004).

22 Most noteworthy: E. Kraus, *Die Familie Mosse: Deutsch-jüdisches Bürgertum im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1999); G. Meier, *Zwischen Milieu und Markt: Tageszeitungen in Ostwestfalen 1920–1970* (Paderborn, 1999); R. Stöber, *Die erfolgverführte Nation: Deutschlands öffentliche Stimmungen 1866 bis 1945* (Stuttgart, 1998); M. Meyen, *Leipzigs bürgerliche Presse in der Weimarer Republik: Wechselbeziehungen zwischen gesellschaftlichem Wandel und Zeitungsentwicklung* (Leipzig, 1996). For the nineteenth century see J. Requate, *Journalismus als Beruf: Entstehung und Entwicklung des Journalistenberufs im 19. Jahrhundert: Deutschland im internationalen Vergleich* (Göttingen, 1995).

23 For Springer, see G. Kruip, *Das 'Welt'-'Bild' des Axel Springer-Verlags: Journalismus zwischen westlichen Werten und deutschen Denktraditionen* (Munich, 1999); F. Kain, *Das Privatfernsehen, der Axel Springer Verlag und die deutsche Presse: Die medienpolitische Debatte in den sechziger Jahren* (Münster, 2003).

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25 See, for example, the stimulating study by R. Gries, *Produkte als Medien: Kulturgeschichte der Produktkommunikation in der Bundesrepublik und der DDR* (Leipzig, 2003).

26 W. Faulstich & H. Korte (eds), *Der Star – Geschichte, Rezeption, Bedeutung* (Munich, 1997); S. Lowry & H. Korte (eds), *Der Filmstar* (Stuttgart, 2000).

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Part One

Sound History: Recorded Music and Broadcasting in German Society

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2

Entertainment, Technology and Tradition: The Rise of Recorded Music from the Empire to the Third Reich

Corey Ross

'The truly musical, in modern, mechanical form, the German soul up to date.' Thus was the gramophone first introduced to Hans Castorp, hero of Thomas Mann's monumental 1924 novel *The Magic Mountain*. Listening intently to the 'many overtures, and single symphonic movements, played by famous orchestras' while sitting with folded hands in the tranquillity of his mountain sanatorium, Castorp is the epitome of the cultivated *aficionado*: 'what, finally, he felt, understood, and enjoyed … was the triumphant idealism of the music, of art, of the human spirit.'[1] Yet only two years later the gramophone features very differently in Mann's 1926 novella *Unordnung und frühes Leid*, where the young adults of even the most cultivated intellectual families succumb to 'the exotic sounds of the gramophone, played with robust needles to make its shimmies, foxtrots and one-steps resound all the more loudly … a monotonous Negro-amusement (*Neger-Amüsement*) dressed up with orchestral frills, drums, tinkling and finger-snapping.'[2] Here the gramophone is presented as an ambiguous object of youthful vigour and shallowness, earlier as a sublime instrument of cultural enrichment and spiritual profundity – and all in the work of (arguably) Germany's foremost author of the early twentieth century. Clearly, in terms of its cultural and social impact, the advent of recorded music was not a straightforward matter.

Nevertheless, the history of recorded sound in Germany has remained relatively uncharted territory. Its absence from historical research[3] is conspicuous in view of the rash of recent work on radio, sound film and popular dance music, all of which were integrally related to phonographic technology.[4] This chapter traces the rise of recorded music and above all its impact on social and cultural life in Germany over roughly the first third of the twentieth century, the period when the gramophone initially became a major feature on the cultural landscape. After briefly discussing the growth of the recording industry, it focuses on the distribution and popular reception of recorded music, its effects on existing cultural traditions in Germany, and finally considers its development under the Nazis.

Producers: The growth of the recording industry in Germany

Though it was not until the twentieth century that the medium of recorded sound was widely used, it was already a well-established technology by the end of the nineteenth century, replete with competing systems of recording and reproduction. Whereas Thomas Edison's 'phonograph', invented in 1877, conserved sound on etched metal cylinders, Emil Berliner's 'grammophone', first presented to the public in 1887, introduced the flat wax discs that eventually came to prevail. After founding his 'Berliner Grammophone Company' in Philadelphia in 1887 (only seven years after emigrating from Germany to the United States), Berliner soon established production facilities in Europe, first of all in his home town of Hanover. Other firms soon followed, and the production of records in Germany swelled from around 2.5 million in 1902 to 18 million by 1907. Production continued to rise until the First World War, and after the wartime slump rebounded dramatically in the 1920s; by 1929 Germany produced some 30 million records a year, around half of them for export.[5]

Recorded music had, in other words, quickly become big business. By 1907 there were already some 181 producers of records and players in Germany employing around 4,600 people (not including the various supply firms closely related to the industry). At the industry's inter-war peak in 1930, it was estimated that some 40,000 manual labourers and 7,000 white-collar workers were directly or indirectly employed in the records industry, making it approximately the same size as the shoe industry.[6]

The rapid growth during this period was not, however, linear or unbroken. The First World War confronted the recording industry with its first great crisis. Not only was the consumption of records deliberately curbed during the war through a new luxury tax, but production itself also came under threat from industrial re-tooling, the call-up of skilled workers and the severing of commercial links.[7] Overall, record production at the beginning of 1919 lay at only around 25 per cent of the pre-war level.

Yet in spite of the setbacks caused by the war, in some ways the years 1914–18 also witnessed the breakthrough of the gramophone in popular consciousness. Like the harmonica, it was treasured as little else by soldiers at the front, who often took great 'comfort in the "singing box" during the dull monotony' of trench life. On the home front, too, despite the stagnation of record production, 'the endless boredom that was punctuated only by occasional moments of agitation … nonetheless popularised the talking machine among much of the population.'[8] Demand vastly outstripped supply: 'What is available is sold; prices play almost no role at all.'[9]

After the War, the industry was therefore poised for a rapid recovery. By 1924 domestic sales once again reached pre-war levels in spite of inflation and decreased purchasing power. Indeed, lower purchasing power may actually have boosted the recording industry in so far as it presented an inexpensive alternative to the concert hall. The general economic upswing and significant

technological improvements during the later 1920s gave a massive boost to gramophone sales, which leapt from 196,000 in 1925 to 427,200 in 1929.[10] Above all, the introduction of electrical recording from 1926 signalled a breakthrough in both sound quality and compatibility with the new medium of radio. The advent of the 'combination' gramophone/radio set in the later 1920s made both media more accessible and convenient to use than before. Design changes – namely, hiding the technical innards and making them look like conventional pieces of furniture – were a clear expression of how these new media were gradually becoming a part of everyday life. Yet the swift upsurge of the 1920s was abruptly ended by the devastating downturn of the Depression. After peaking at around 30 million in 1929, record sales in Germany dropped dramatically over the early 1930s, reaching a low of only five million in 1935.[11] It was not until the post-war boom that the recording industry fully recovered from the trauma of the Great Slump.

Consumers: Technology, entertainment and social legitimation

If the recording industry itself has attracted little scholarly attention to date, its audiences have been all but ignored. Nonetheless, the rapid growth of record and gramophone usage raises a number of questions. Who purchased these items? Why did they purchase them, and how did this influence their use of leisure time? How was the rise of recorded sound perceived among different social groups?

In spite of the common perception of recorded sound as a quintessentially 'private' form of musical enjoyment, in the early years it was more often found in the sociable forum of pubs and inns, which constituted a large proportion of the retail market. 'By virtue of its versatility', said the *Phonographische Zeitschrift* in 1910, 'the talking machine appears to be predestined for the catering trade (*Gastwirtschaft*) as a means of entertainment.' Already by this time 'one can hardly find an inn without a talking machine or some other mechanical music contraption for entertaining the guests', even 'in the smallest and most far-flung villages.'[12]

Over the long term, however, the growth of the recording industry was primarily based on the expansion of private use. Quite obviously, recorded music was far less portable than books or newspapers – even after the introduction of portable gramophones in the 1920s, which long remained expensive and rare. From early on, this 'home-centredness' of recorded music had both its supporters and detractors. While it drew criticism from some quarters as a manifestation of modern social atomization, it met with outspoken approval among morality and temperance groups, who saw in it a relaxing and 'wholesome' alternative to the pub or fairground: 'it is capable of producing great enjoyment, and indeed in the place where it is least likely to exert any damaging side-effects: namely, in one's own home.'[13] Yet even the promise of moral improvement for the masses was unable to redeem the gramophone's image as a folly

for the tasteless among the *Bildungsbürgertum* (educated middle class). A single experience of a 'cheap pub-machine with a miserable pick-up and worn-out records' could make an enemy for life. Certainly many of the pre-war culture journals seemed to regard the gramophone 'as the most diabolical torture instrument of the twentieth century'.[14]

Such cultivated snobbery did not, however, keep the gramophone out of German bourgeois households. Indeed, it seems clear that the middle classes comprised the bulk of owners during this period. Costs alone put gramophone ownership well out of reach of most working-class households, especially before the War. Advertised prices for home-use phonographs in 1900 ranged from 15 to 50 Reichsmarks (RM) (the average industrial worker's weekly income lay just under 25 RM, which allowed for precious little disposable income), with cylinders costing around 75 Pfennig each; over the following years prices ranged from around 12 to 125 RM.[15] Although gramophones became less expensive in real terms by the 1920s, they still represented a significant outlay. In 1929 the simplest tabletop model cost at least 50 RM (more than the average industrial worker's weekly income of just under 39 RM), a reasonably sturdy model considerably more. Meanwhile, fancier cabinet models might cost as much as 500 RM, while the new combination radio–record apparatuses went for between 800 and well over 1,000 RM. Prices for records themselves varied considerably depending on one's tastes and expectations, ranging in the latter part of the 1920s from around 3.50 RM for 25 cm recordings of popular tunes to as much as 7.50 RM for classical symphony recordings.[16]

Though prices for musical recordings dropped rapidly during the Depression,[17] records continued to represent a significant expense for most Germans. In the later 1920s, monthly entertainment budgets for low-income households were on average around only one mark for the entire family. Among middle-earning workers this sum increased to only 2.50 RM, though better-off working-class households might have as much as 6 RM per month to spend on amusements. White-collar households and civil servants spent on average slightly over 50 per cent more on amusements, amounting to roughly 5.50 RM per month.[18] How much of this budget was spent specifically on records and gramophones is unclear from the statistics available, though subtracting the amounts spent on cinema and radio from the total figures left very little over. For what it is worth, a 1937 survey of 350 working-class households found that only 11 (3 per cent) spent anything at all on records or musical instruments of any kind – and this despite a significant rise in working-class expenditure on amusements over the 1930s.[19] If one compares record and gramophone prices with that of the average cinema ticket, which throughout most of the inter-war period cost around 0.75 RM,[20] it is easy to understand why. Despite its plebeian associations in the minds of the educated bourgeoisie, it is clear that the gramophone was more a middle-class than a working-class amusement.

In terms of its social distribution, recorded music was therefore not the 'mass medium' that contemporary enthusiasts and historical accounts have

sometimes taken it to be. The desire of left-wing and liberal intellectuals to 'democratize' music and make it accessible to the *Volk* led many to view recording technology rather over-optimistically as classless and egalitarian. As early as 1905, the *Phonographische Zeitschrift* was already celebrating its supposedly 'levelling' potential: 'thanks to this invention and its undreamt-of improvement in quality and reduction in price, […] the phonograph in its modern perfection can nowadays become "universal" music for the home […], easily accessible to everyone, even to the less well-off.'[21] But as Jost Hermand and Frank Trommler remarked long ago, 'The fact that this "*Volk*" possessed neither the same education nor the same financial basis as the bourgeoisie was usually overlooked.'[22]

Though generally ignored by intellectuals, these issues were very much on the minds of manufacturers keen to open up markets among other segments of the populace. In fact, phonograph and gramophone companies were among the pioneers of new marketing devices such as the 'introductory model' and instalment plans. As early as 1900 companies were deliberately selling cheap models near cost in order to hook consumers on the product itself and hopefully sell them a more expensive one later. As the *Phonographische Zeitschrift* remarked, the best way to open up the market was to sell inexpensive models 'even if they are primitive and do not remain flawless for long. After the initial cheap model there usually follows a second more expensive one, which never would have been purchased without having had the first one.'[23] As price sensitivity was the main problem, the perceived solution lay in a mixture of special offers and instalment plans. Credit purchasing in fact expanded so rapidly during the 1920s that it began to cause serious cash-flow problems for manufacturers and retailers by the end of the decade.[24]

Besides price, the other primary hindrance to the expansion of gramophone use was sound quality. In the early years this was so poor as to make recordings suitable only for showman attractions or small pubs, where 'more often than not the "concert" was such that musical people quickly decided to leave the locale.' Among the educated middle classes in particular, 'the talking machine was downright scorned as "tenement music" (*Hinterhaus-Musik*)'.[25] This derision was reinforced by the fact that classical music was, despite its dominance in recording repertoires before the war, particularly ill-suited to early recording technology, whose narrow 'band width' flattened the range of instruments and changes in tone that characterize symphony performance. Even more importantly, the short playing time (around three and a half to four minutes per side) of the 78 rpm discs that remained standard until the 1950s was equally unsuitable for classical works. The fact that they generally had to be accommodated on several discs not only meant that they were expensive to acquire, but also that their gramophonic performance was marred by constant (and inconvenient) interruptions.[26]

By contrast, the bulk of popular entertainment music was ideally suited to early recording technologies. Not only were most hit songs short, but also

'the modern dance rhythms – with their tonally bizarre instrumentation, the texture of the saxophone and the recitative of the refrain – resound from the trumpet without distortion or adulteration'.[27] While technological compatibility might partly explain the increasing dominance of entertainment music in record catalogues, especially after the War, it was by no means the primary reason for this shift. The fact that 'light entertainment' dominated long after electrical recording had made classical discs acceptable even to the discerning ears of the concert hall *Abonnent* reflects the simple fact that such music sold better. This gradual trend was undoubtedly accelerated by the wider 'dance craze' after the First World War, of which the recording industry was both a beneficiary and protagonist, eagerly meeting and further stimulating the demand for new 'hits' that could be played at home.[28]

Despite its increasing association with the rise of 'hit' music in the 1920s, many elite commentators welcomed the new technology of sound conservation, at least in so far as it promised more than just entertainment. Indeed, many left-of-centre reformists consciously sought to harness recorded sound for more 'elevated' purposes, enhancing the artistic potential of the medium and legitimating it in the eyes of the German cultural elite. Gramophone records, in addition to their role as 'beloved disseminators of current hits and street songs, a veritable source of popular mis-education', were also seen to have 'an *educational mission* alongside entertainment.'[29] The benefits they could bring to musical tuition, for instance, were a regular topic of discussion in the music press in the 1920s and early 1930s. Far from lowering musical standards, records presented, in the eyes of reformers, 'an unforgettable form of illustrative material for training the ear.' Some enthusiasts even claimed that 'the talking machine and the record have done more for the understanding of music than any other musical instrument in the world.'[30] Moreover, the pedagogical potential of the medium was by no means limited to music education: further applications ranged all the way from foreign language tuition to readings for the visually impaired to physical fitness regimes not at all unlike modern-day 'aerobics'.[31]

Such reformist efforts dovetailed with the interests of recording companies in two interrelated ways: first by legitimating the medium of recorded sound in the eyes of the educated middle classes, and secondly by supporting their efforts to penetrate this relatively demanding market. The industry was in fact closely involved in such reformist efforts, and nowhere was this more clearly manifested than in the first 'German Record Convention' of 1930, which was organized by the 'cultural department' (*Kulturabteilung*) of the firm Carl Lindström and focused on the 'problem of the record as a cultural and educational factor'.[32] Discussions about the wider cultural and educational potential of recorded sound – above all recorded music – featured regularly in Deutsche Grammophon's '*Die Stimme seines Herrn*', and from 1929–31 Carl Lindström's cultural department even produced a journal specially devoted to these matters.[33] By the later 1920s, most of the large firms had established dedicated

'cultural' and/or educational departments that organized special concerts and events specifically designed to woo the *Bildungsbürgertum*.[34]

Yet regardless of how much time and money was invested in such efforts, the goal of achieving cultural legitimation for recorded music and winning 'favour among the better sort of customers'[35] required first and foremost an expansion of the companies' repertoires. The problem was that this cost money. Recording firms were, for all of their seemingly high-minded 'cultural reform' activities, private businesses in pursuit of profit; hence the inclusion of many 'high-brow' recordings could only be justified either as a long-term sales strategy or, more plausibly, as a public relations exercise. As the *Phonographische Zeitschrift* remarked in 1930, many classical recordings functioned as loss leaders: 'Every record company has in its catalogue recordings that never cover their own costs and that are included only in order to ensure that the company is not perceived as a gang of un-artistic and uncultured philistines; the cultural department is a cruelly neglected scullion.'[36]

Though such recordings were 'produced only grudgingly and in limited numbers,'[37] they were not without success on the public relations front. One of the keys to elite acceptance was to achieve coverage in the 'respectable' press. Although the recording industry had by and large failed to do this before the First World War, by the latter part of the 1920s the situation had changed dramatically. As the *Reichsverband des deutschen Sprechmaschinenhandels* (Reich Association for the Phonographic Trade) noted with glee in 1928: 'Whereas the German newspapers merely used to carp and crack jokes on occasion about the screech-music of the talking machine, nowadays the German press engages itself with serious critiques of new recordings just as fully as it does for concerts and theatre.'[38] Though records still featured far less prominently than radio or film, it was generally agreed that they had finally become *pressefähig* (worthy of coverage).[39] Indeed, their 'press legitimation' was not merely confined to the mainstream dailies, but also included leading music journals such as *Die Musik*, which by the beginning of the 1930s had special sections on both 'radio' and 'mechanical music'.

Technology, tradition and the cultural impact of recorded sound

Clearly, by the end of the 1920s the medium of recorded sound had become an integral part of Germany's cultural landscape. It not only functioned as a purveyor of popular songs and dance music, but was also finding a place in the realm of 'elite' culture. Yet in spite of – or in a sense precisely because of – its increasing acceptance, many educated elites regarded this development with some concern. Although the aversion towards the 'croak-apparatus' (*Krächzapparat*) had been eroding since the end of the War,[40] in many eyes it still appeared as yet another threat to genuine *Kultur* ranged alongside other modern evils such as film, radio and the boulevard press. This feeling of ambivalence towards

recorded music was eloquently expressed by the journalist Paul Schlesinger, who, though clearly delighted with his first gramophone, nonetheless found it difficult to accept its social and cultural implications:

> A particular conception of what constitutes a respectable way of life lasts for only a limited number of decades – then one has had enough of it and buys a gramophone. One has his convictions, and has championed them for years; then he goes and blissfully does the opposite. None of what one has ever thought or said against the talking machine is retracted. It was a noble and splendid fight, and the defeat was literally a noisy one. […] One had no idea that this single fall of man was enough to open up a whole new world of sensations. […] It is perhaps possible to remain objective vis-à-vis this new world – but one cannot. Because the most terrible thing is the realization that, from this day forward, I belong to it as well.[41]

Purchasing a gramophone is portrayed here as a betrayal of one's values, and there is a certain pang of conscience about finally succumbing to the medium of recorded music, which is likened to a 'sweet poison', an addictive drug at once dangerous and irresistible.

As Schlesinger's comments suggest, elite aversion to the gramophone arose on a number of levels. As a primary reflection of the wider mechanization of music, it was held in either grave suspicion or outright contempt by the bulk of professional musicians for whom 'the word mechanization currently carries with it the same horror as the word machine did for many workmen one hundred years ago.'[42] Simply put, the ability to conserve sound over time rendered the act of performance less important. Such trepidation became particularly acute by 1930, as the growing crisis of the traditional concert hall and the advent of the sound film brought unemployment to thousands of trained musicians.[43]

At the same time, the gramophone was also seen to pose a direct threat to the bourgeois ideal of the cultivated lay musician. The practice of making music at home was (arguably) second only to reading in the bourgeois hierarchy of cultural virtues; even the *Phonographische Zeitschrift* regarded it as nothing less than 'an indispensable requisite of the German bourgeois household.' By eroding the idea that one must play music in order to appreciate it, the gramophone (and radio) was perceived by many as nothing less than 'the death of living music, especially music in the home'.[44]

Perhaps even more alarming to cultural conservatives was the central role of recorded sound in the 'internationalization' of music, and in particular the popularization of American jazz. Although enthusiastically embraced by much of the avant-garde and grudgingly accepted by many of the liberal-minded, jazz was contemptuously rejected by conservatives of all shades who regarded it as little more than primitive 'negro-music' and therefore quintessentially un-German.[45] The fact that jazz was closely associated with urban living by both supporters and opponents alike did nothing to reduce its culturally polarizing

impact. Whereas the former celebrated its rhythmic affinity with modern life, for the latter it was merely one of the more egregious outgrowths of modern 'asphalt culture'. In addition, as if the ability of records to conserve and transport jazz across the Atlantic was not bad enough, the efforts of major German recording companies to stimulate interest in the genre seemed nothing less than an act of treason against the German cultural heritage.

Given the conservative perception of America as the land of soulless commodification, shallowness and 'massification', the very 'Americanness' of jazz also resonated with another strand of criticism: namely, the commercial nature of the recording industry. At the most general level, by making the market the primary gauge of cultural 'success', the commercial orientation of the German entertainment industry at large – with the notable exception of radio – constituted a fundamental threat to the role of the educated middle classes as the principal arbiters of cultural value. Although this threat applied to the entire spectrum of 'commercial arts', it was, given the strong sense of national pride in the German musical legacy, a matter of particular concern with regard to recorded sound.[46] And although reformists continually sought to mitigate criticism of the gramophone as a one-sided purveyor of *Unkultur*, even they could not disguise the fact that recording firms were ultimately more interested in selling 'hits' for profit than in shoring up the cultural dominance of the embattled *Bildungsbürgertum*. After all, there was big money to be made by hits such as 'Yes, we have no bananas'/'Ausgerechnet Bananen', which by 1929 had sold three million copies.[47] Quite obviously, sales figures for even the most popular symphonies such as Beethoven's Ninth paled in comparison.

The problem in the eyes of cultural conservatives was not so much that hit songs were popular. Even the most tradition-minded critic agreed that popular 'hits' of some form had been around for centuries. The issue was rather where this popularity originated, and it was primarily the commercial nature of the modern 'hit' that caused offence. As the critic Herbert Connor put it, whereas popular songs had previously emerged from 'the people', in the mechanized and commodified twentieth century they had by and large become the 'product of a precise calculation'. Their texts and melodies were derived not from oral or musical tradition, but written by publishers and composers in such a way as to maximize royalties. Thus despite the common suggestion that modern dance hits somehow resonated with and compensated for the stress of the modern workplace, it was incorrect to ascribe this 'mass production of aural trash' to some currently prevailing taste, since it actually originated from purely commercial considerations. In summary,

> it was first in the modern metropolis, which has forfeited all communal ties, that the musical hit, by its very nature a product of the people, has become an object of cheap entertainment. The twentieth-century hit is not only devoid of any artistic value, but is also one of the primary causes of the ever-worsening depravity of taste among broad sections of the populace.[48]

Despite its manifold uses, the gramophone – as the primary vehicle of such 'aural trash', as a central conduit for the 'Americanization' of popular music, as an allegedly remorseless destroyer of live performance – was in many eyes guilty by association.

Yet for all the venerated cultural traditions potentially threatened by the rise of recorded sound, its effects were in practice much more ambivalent than such Cassandra-calls suggest. Overall, the relationship between recording technology and cultural traditions in Germany followed a pattern not at all dissimilar from that in Britain, where, as D. L. LeMahieu has shown, recorded sound did not so much destroy musical traditions as reconfigure them, and indeed often in rather unpredictable ways.[49] There were three primary aspects to this, relating to the transcendence of time, the transcendence of space, and the general mechanization of music.

There can, first of all, be little doubt that the ability of recorded sound to transcend time relativized the act of musical performance. Professional musicians and concert hall regulars were quite right to fear the impact it would have on the long-term viability of individual symphony orchestras, especially in view of dwindling subsidies throughout the 1920s. At the same time, it was thoroughly understandable that musicologists should also feel uneasy about the ability of recording technology to transform music as social occasion into a kind of consumer good 'that can be purchased as a pure aural substratum and inserted into the individual geography of everyday life at any desired location.'[50] Yet in the years before the dominance of studio recordings, the vast bulk of records were of live performances. It was fairly common to purchase recordings of performances that one attended oneself, almost as a memento of the occasion.[51] Moreover, even after the large firms established special recording studios, their recording sessions were regularly open – and indeed advertised – to the public.[52] The line between recording and live performance was therefore not so clear as one might assume. Nor, for that matter, was the line between music as 'consumer good' and social activity. Records were listened to not only by 'atomized' individuals in the privacy of their own homes, but were also the focal point of new forms of social interaction such as listening in groups, record clubs or of course dancing. As a young seamstress reported to a 1930 leisure-time survey, 'when the weather is nice and the daylight stays later in the evenings, we pull out our gramophone and play all the latest hits and dance to them; we have a big courtyard where we can romp to our heart's content'.[53]

In addition, the cultural implications of the 'timelessness' of recorded music appeared to differ somewhat according to musical genre. It is telling that sound conservation was by no means regarded by tradition-minded musicologists as singularly negative. How beneficial it would be – so it was remarked as early as 1900 – if recordings of Beethoven conducted by Hans von Bülow were available, or if listeners in 1950 could still hear Liszt playing his own music.[54] Beyond the classical canon, however, the effects looked somewhat different. As LeMahieu has pointed out, although recording technology in one sense

immortalized a popular tune, the ability to replay it as often as one wished actually tended to *shorten* the life span of a 'hit' by diminishing the intervals between hearing it. No longer having to wait very long to hear a beloved melody, the listening public quickly heard enough.[55] Indeed, it appears that this trend accelerated swiftly during the 1920s with the rapid expansion of radio and gramophone use. Whereas midday radio programmes in the mid-1920s often featured 'the hits of the season' (including songs over the past year or two), by the end of 1929 the Berlin broadcaster was playing only 'the newest hits of the month' on its midday programme.[56] From this point of view, the increasingly rapid turnover of hit songs was not just an industry ploy for stimulating demand, but was also rooted in the very usage of recorded sound within the wider cultural context.

Secondly, although the ability of recorded sound to transcend space made the music scene in one sense much more international, it also served to 'nationalize' popular tastes and to reaffirm the boundaries of national culture. At no point was this more clearly manifested than in August 1914, as recording firms and popular composers quickly made the shift to 'war production' in order to satisfy the exploding demand for patriotic songs. It was also in evidence during the Ruhr crisis of 1923, which witnessed a huge surge in demand (and supply) for '*Rheinlieder*'. The Wall Street crash in 1929 likewise triggered what one commentator has called a 'seismographic' shift in dance music, as German *Lieder*, military marches and waltzes increasingly supplanted jazz-inspired 'hits', which themselves became more distinctly *German* in theme around 1930: 'Das Schützenfest', 'Alt-Heidelberg', 'Einmal am Rhein'.[57] One should not, however, overemphasize this shift, for despite the polarizing contemporary disputes over jazz, it is important to note that waltzes and *Volkslieder* had always been the popular favourites in Germany in any event, and this in spite of (or rather because of) their complete lack of international appeal.[58]

Indeed, the affirmation of national cultural boundaries was reflected even where one might least expect it: namely, in the realm of jazz and dance tunes. For much of what counted as 'jazz' in Germany – even by such famous names as the Weintraub Syncopators, Marek Weber and Dajos Bela – had little to do with the genuine American article.[59] As the '*Allgemeine Deutsche Tanzlehrer-Zeitung*' explained in 1925, 'What is nowadays played as jazz has nothing to do with negro music. It is, in reality, nothing more than syncopated music, and sometimes nothing more than a somewhat rhythmically wilful manner of playing the percussion instruments.'[60] By the time the Nazis took power, Siegfried Scheffler, the entertainment-music guru of the Nazi era, could gleefully assert that jazz

> has nowadays become more modest, indeed it has had to make certain concessions simply in order to survive. The fox trot, slow fox and rumba have not been able to conquer the waltz. Out of the sultriness of jazz we can hear the emergence of new strains on the violin.[61]

It was, indeed, the previous 'whitening' of jazz that made it tolerable at all to Nazi cultural authorities.

Thirdly, although recorded sound undoubtedly constituted a quantum leap in the mechanization of music, it also, paradoxically, served to boost live performance in a number of ways. Far from sounding the death-knell of the dance locale and '*Tingel-Tangel*' (the German equivalent of the English music hall), the rise of recording technology positively enlivened them by stimulating the demand for hit songs and promoting the wider dance craze. Although records could successfully disseminate and popularize 'hit' tunes, they were singularly ill-suited to public performance before the advent of electrical recording. The technological sticking-point was volume; early phonographs and gramophones simply could not achieve the decibels necessary for a dance locale. In other words, because the phonograph served to stimulate demand for dance music *without* being able to satisfy it in a public setting, the overall effect was to boost live music. At the end of the 1920s there were still armies of musicians and singers employed in Germany's dance halls: 21,000 in Berlin, 19,000 in Hamburg, 15,850 in Hanover, 11,000 in Leipzig and 10,800 in Dresden.[62]

Although this constellation began to change in the mid- and late-1920s with the advent of electrical recording and the mains plug-in set (which first introduced electrical amplification as we know it today and thus presented publicans with a plausible alternative to an expensive orchestra),[63] the cost-saving potential of this new technology could hardly outweigh the popular appeal of a live band. As a consequence, the live music scene in Germany remained vigorous throughout the 1930s and into the War. There was no reason to assume at the time, as the organizers of the German Records Convention pointed out in 1930, that the gramophone would kill off live music any more than previous mechanical devices had done, whether the medieval *Glockenspiel*, the orchestrion, the organ or the mechanical piano.[64]

Much the same can be said for the impact of the gramophone on music-making in the home. Despite continual complaints about its supposed displacement by records, it seems that *Hausmusik* was actually becoming more, not less, popular during the Weimar Republic – as reflected not least in the founding of over a dozen special periodicals from 1918 to 1932.[65] Though the efforts of musicologists to encourage lay music-making may have played a role in this, it nonetheless demonstrates quite clearly that mechanical music presented a far smaller threat to *Hausmusik* than was often assumed. It was widely acknowledged, at least by all but the most irretrievable pessimists, that the desire to hear music (whether recorded or otherwise) or to play it oneself were quite different urges. Indeed, records arguably *aided* the revival of *Hausmusik* after the First World War in the form of special accompaniment ('*Spiel mit*') recordings of duets or quartets minus one instrument. In other words, *Hausmusik* and recorded sound were not only compatible but (at least to some extent) mutually beneficial.[66] Moreover, apart from the sheer quantity of music played in the home, many music critics also welcomed recorded

sound as a vast improvement in quality over the 'futile and bungling amateurism' prevalent in most households. As one critic put it rather pointedly: 'the phonograph has performed greater services to *Hausmusik* than all of the piano lessons in the world.'[67] However hyperbolic such assertions may have been, it is clear that the relationship between the gramophone and musical traditions was – and was perceived to be by many contemporaries – not merely one of destruction and displacement, but of recasting and transfiguration, in some respects even rejuvenation.

Entertainment and ideology in the Third Reich

To sum up so far, the role of recorded sound in German social and cultural life over the first third of the twentieth century was by no means straightforward, predictable or controllable. Despite common assumptions about its supposedly 'massifying' and destructive effects, closer inspection shows that its impact on musical traditions, patterns of social distinction and taste were highly ambivalent, and depended crucially on the precise nature of the technology, its changing relationship with other media, its variegated social uses and the wider social and cultural context in which it was embedded.

In some ways, it seems that the National Socialist leadership recognized this. Unlike the regime's treatment of film, press and radio, efforts to 'co-ordinate' the recording industry were remarkably tentative and half-hearted throughout the 1930s. Though nominally under the supervision of the Reich Chamber of Culture, it was long handled with a relatively light touch. The formal 'co-ordination' of the *Reichsverband des Deutschen Phono- und Radio-Handels* in April 1933 had little practical effect on the recording industry, and subsequent plans to subsume it into the 'musical instrument branch' came to nothing. The establishment of the Reich Musical Inspection Office (*Reichsmusikprüfstelle*) and the ban on 'non-Aryan' musicians in late 1937 represented the first attempt by the state to exercise any meaningful control.[68]

The reasons for this seem to lie in both commercial calculations and the specific character of the medium of recorded sound. The very nature of the technology made controlling its uses far more difficult than in the case of radio or film. People could largely listen to what they wanted when they wanted to, and this lack of any sense of 'live broadcast' – quite apart from the fact that far fewer people owned gramophones than radios – severely restricted the propaganda value of the medium and the ability to enlist it into the wider choreography of the Nazi regime.[69] At the same time, the ambit of the recording industry was also far more international than that of radio or even film, which had been somewhat 'de-internationalized' with the advent of the talkie. It was thus difficult to control in accordance with Nazi cultural policies without losing production firms, markets and German jobs. Goebbels and the newly-founded Propaganda Ministry generally agreed with the recording industry that censorship should not be too detrimental to business.[70] Although a number of

hard-line Nazi publications like *Das kulturpolitische Archiv* and *Das Schwarze Korps* argued for a purge of Jewish and other 'undesirable' musicians from the manufacturers' repertoires, even this was largely couched in the vaguely utilitarian terms of 'tactfulness', and in any event had little impact before the War. In view of the crisis gripping the recording industry during the Depression years, it was, in the words of the *Phonographische Zeitschrift*, inconceivable 'simply to throw away the – let's say it for the sake of simplicity – "Jewish" records since they represented very significant capital investments, namely in the form of royalties'.[71] And on a purely practical level, Nazi authorities found it no easier than the recording firms to define 'Jewish' records, since many musicians had been labelled by right-wing critics as 'Jewish' simply because they played modern music.[72]

In the end, the National Socialist regime largely catered to popular tastes in the realm of recorded music, arguably even more so than with film and radio. In spite of the Nazis' rhetorical attacks on musical 'asphalt culture' and their persecution of modern composers such as Alban Berg, Paul Hindemith, Arnold Schönberg and Kurt Weill,[73] the commercial imperative that so irritated conservative critics during the Weimar era remained paramount throughout the 1930s, and continued to mould policy towards the recording industry even during the War. Jazz – or at least what passed for it – in particular remained good business in spite of all the 'Germanization' rhetoric. Dance orchestras like those of Heinz Wehner, Kurt Widmann or Peter Kreuder sold American swing-style records well into the 1940s. Even after the domestic ban on American records after Pearl Harbour, Carl Lindström still sold its 'Odeon Swing Music-Series' (based on original masters of nearly all well-known US jazz ensembles) throughout occupied Europe.[74] One should not, of course, misconstrue such actions by the recording companies as a principled or moral stance against National Socialism. For the most part they involved an unsentimental business decision; while profitable jazz and 'Jewish' recordings were vigorously defended, Jewish colleagues in the recording firms were by and large given little protection, and records of Nazi marching songs also swelled the catalogues of most firms from spring 1933 onwards.[75] Yet it was nonetheless a supreme paradox that, as Peter Wicke has put it, 'from about 1941 onwards it was fascist Germany of all places that supplied the rest of Europe with original American jazz.'[76]

It would thus seem that Pamela Potter's conclusions about the role of musicology in the Third Reich are equally applicable to the sphere of recorded music: '… giving in to the forces of technology and popular entertainment had gained momentum in the Weimar Republic and persisted after 1933. In the end, Nazi cultural administrators did more than their predecessors to appease the entire spectrum of the music community, from the orchestra musician to the Louis Armstrong fan.'[77] Whether this relative catholicity was a matter of accident or design is difficult to say. While the continued availability of popular 'jazz' could, on the one hand, be interpreted as a grudging concession to

popular tastes that diluted the regime's core values in everyday life, on the other hand it could represent a deliberate means of shoring up the regime by creating a veneer of 'normality'. Both interpretations have their merits; it is a question that defies any clear-cut answer. But nonetheless, the very ambiguity surrounding this issue is in itself revealing. For it not only highlights the remarkable durability – even expansion – of a consumer-oriented entertainment market under National Socialism, but also clearly shows that the social and cultural impact of recorded sound remained ambivalent and unpredictable, even under this most 'totalizing' political system.

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Notes

1 T. Mann, *The Magic Mountain*, trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter (London, 1979), pp. 637, 640, 645.

2 Reprinted in M. Reich-Ranicki (ed.), *Gesichtete Zeit. Deutsche Geschichten 1918–1933* (Munich, 1986), p. 168. Author's translation.

3 The handful of studies we have are mostly antiquarian or focused narrowly on technological innovations: C. Riess, *Knaurs Weltgeschichte der Schallplatte* (Zurich, 1966); W. Haas, *Das Jahrhundert der Schallplatte: Eine Geschichte der Phonographie* (Bielefeldt, 1977); H. Jüttemann, *Phonographen und Grammophone* (Herten, 1993); F. Kittler, *Grammophon, Film, Typewriter* (Berlin, 1986). A recent history of the Deutsche Grammophon company in the Third Reich has only partially redressed this gap: S. Fetthauer, *Deutsche Grammophon: Geschichte eines Schallplattenunternehmens im 'Dritten Reich'* (Hamburg, 2000). Much more narrowly focused is R. May, 'Die Schallplatte als "Kult"-mittel', in *Mitteilungen aus der kulturwissenschaftlichen Forschung* 15 (1992), pp. 182–225.

4 On the dance craze see C. Schär, *Der Schlager und seine Tänze im Deutschland der 20er Jahre: Sozialgeschichtliche Aspekte zum Wandel in der Musik- und Tanzkultur während der Weimarer Republik* (Zurich, 1991); K. Wolffram, *Tanzdielen und Vergnügungspaläste: Berliner Nachtleben in den dreissiger und vierziger Jahren* (Berlin, 1992). On popular music see P. Wicke, *Von Mozart zu Madonna: Eine Kulturgeschichte der Popmusik* (Leipzig, 1998), pp. 98–9; S. Schutte (ed.), *Ich will aber gerade vom Leben singen … Über populäre Musik vom ausgehenden 19. Jahrhundert bis zum Ende der Weimarer Republik* (Reinbek, 1987); S. Giesbrecht-Schutte, 'Zum Stand der Unterhaltungsmusik um 1900', in W. Kaschuba & K. Maase (eds), *Schund und Schönheit: Populäre Kultur um 1900* (Cologne, 2001), pp. 114–60; F. Ritzel, 'Synkopen-Tänze: Über Importe populärer Musik aus Amerika in der Zeit vor dem Ersten Weltkrieg', in Kaschuba & Maase, *Schund*, pp. 161–83; H. Schröder, *Tanz- und Unterhaltungsmusik in Deutschland 1918–1933* (Bonn, 1990).

5 K. Blaukopf, *Massenmedium Schallplatte: Die Stellung des Tonträgers in der Kultursoziologie und Kulturstatistik* (Wiesbaden, 1977), p. 26.

6 W. Leubuscher, 'Normalisierung in der Sprechmaschinenindustrie', *Phonographische Zeitschrift* (hereafter *PZ*) 31 (1930), p. 448. Figures from Rolf Krebs' dissertation *Die phonographische Industrie in Deutschland unter besonderer Berücksichtigung ihres Exports* (Greifswald, 1925), p. 40; G. Braune, *Der Einfluß von Schallplatte und Rundfunk auf die deutsche Musikinstrumentenindustrie*, Diss. (Nuremberg, 1934), p. 32.
7 Production shrank not least due to the shortages of shellac for records (supplied from India) and of fine wood, metals and glue for gramophones: *PZ* 18 (1917), no. 1; *PZ* 19 (1918), no. 9; Krebs, *Industrie*, pp. 48–9.
8 This and the preceding quote cited after D. Bassermann, 'Schallplatte und Musik-Kritik', in Reichsverband des Deutschen Sprechmaschinenhandels (RDS), *Jahrbuch für den deutschen Sprechmaschinenhandel 1928* (Berlin, 1928), p. 33.
9 *PZ* 18 (1917), no. 3, p. 20.
10 Blaukopf, *Massenmedium*, p. 16.
11 Fetthauer, *Deutsche Grammophon*, p. 19; Blaukopf, *Massenmedium*, p. 26.
12 'Der Sprechautomat', *PZ* 11 (1910), p. 937; 'Die drohende Lustbarkeitssteuer in Berlin', *PZ* 11 (1910), p. 885.
13 'Ein Phonograph in jedem Haus', *PZ* 2 (1901), p. 124.
14 M. Chop, 'Das Grosse im Lichte zeitgenössicher Kritik', *PZ* 11 (1910), pp. 867–70.
15 *PZ* 1 (1900), p. 78. See also *PZ* 2 (1901), p. 210. Wage figure calculated from Gerhard Bry, *Wages in Germany, 1871–1945* (Princeton, 1960), pp. 58, 71.
16 Prices taken from *'Die Stimme seines Herrn': Illustrierte Monatsschrift für Musikfreunde* (hereafter *Die Stimme*) 13 (1928), pp. 244–5; *PZ* 31 (1930), pp. 40, 42. Wage figure from Bry, *Wages*, p. 58.
17 By the early 1930s, classical and dance orchestral records sold for around 2.80 RM and simple dance music or cheap sound film hits cost as little as 1.50 RM in 1932. Prices from *Die Stimme* 17 (1932), pp. 1–4 and pp. 105–8; *Die Stimme* 18 (1933), p. 145.
18 Statistisches Reichsamt, *Die Lebenshaltung von 2000 Arbeiter-, Angestellten- und Beamtenhaushaltungen: Erhebungen von Wirtschaftsrechnungen im Deutschen Reich vom Jahre 1927/28* (Berlin, 1932), p. 57.
19 Arbeitswissenschaftliches Institut der Deutschen Arbeitsfront, 'Erhebung von Wirtschaftsrechnungen für das Jahr 1937', in Statistisches Reichsamt, *Jahrbuch 1938* (Berlin, 1938), here quoted after the reprint: M. Hepp & K. H. Roth (eds), *Sozialstrategien der Deutschen Arbeitsfront* (Munich, 1986), vol. 3/2, pp. 330–58, here p. 347.
20 A. Jason, *Handbuch des Films 1935/36* (Berlin, 1936), p. 146.
21 *PZ* 6 (1905), p. 720.
22 J. Hermand & F. Trommler, *Die Kultur der Weimarer Republik* (Munich, 1978), p. 323.
23 'Billige Phonographen', *PZ* 1 (1900), p. 25.
24 See, for instance, 'Phonographische Leihbibliotheken', *PZ* 2 (1901), p. 182; 'Billige Platten', *PZ* 6 (1905), p. 283; *PZ* 30 (1929), p. 1124.
25 Quotes from M. Randewig, 'Radio, Wirt und Gäste', *Deutsche Hotel-Nachrichten* 32 (1928), no. 83; H. Wünsch, 'Die Lage der deutschen phonographischen Industrie', in RDS, *Jahrbuch*, p. 11.
26 In 1907, 63 per cent of recordings were of opera, chamber music and symphonies: Wicke, *Mozart*, p. 98. The launch of the long-play record (14 minutes per side) in 1931 did little to solve this problem in the short or medium term as the players for such records remained unaffordable to all but most well-off: Riess, *Weltgeschichte*, p. 243.
27 E. Jolowicz, *Der Rundfunk: Eine psychologische Untersuchung* (Berlin, 1932), p. 14.

28 Schär, *Schlager*, pp. 43–5; L. Abrams, *Workers' Culture in Imperial Germany: Leisure and Recreation in the Rhineland and Westphalia* (London, 1992), pp. 105, 107–8; Wolffram, *Tanzdielen*, pp. 20, 22.
29 Quotes from K. Sonnemann, 'Der erste deutsche Schallplattentag in Mannheim', *PZ* 31 (1930), p. 1730; L. Koch, 'Schallplattenindustrie, Staat und Volksbildung', *Die Musik* 22 (1930), p. 518 (italics in original).
30 E. Ackerknecht, *Bildungspflege und Schallplatte* (Stettin, 1930), p. 2; 'Musik im eigenen Heim', *Die Stimme* 13 (1928), p. 163.
31 See 'Sprachunterricht durchs Grammophon', *PZ* 25 (1924), p. 898. By 1924, there were already at least two exercise products on the market: Deutsche Grammophon's three-record set 'Turne Dich gesund' and Beka-Records' 'Die deutsche Turnplatte', complete with fold-out illustrations to help people learn the movements: *PZ* 25 (1924) p. 708.
32 Sonnemann, 'Der erste deutsche Schallplattentag', pp. 1730–1.
33 The journal was entitled *Kultur und Schallplatte: Mitteilungen der Carl Lindström Kultur-Abteilung Berlin* (1929–31).
34 'Sprechmaschinen-Konzerte', *PZ* 6 (1905), p. 873; *PZ* 24 (1923), p. 524; 'Künstler – Schallplatte – Publikum', *PZ* 36 (1935), p. 512.
35 Wünsch, 'Die Lage', p. 11.
36 *PZ* 31 (1930), p. 160.
37 Ibid.
38 Wünsch, 'Die Lage', p. 11.
39 Bassermann, 'Schallplatte und Musik-Kritik', pp. 33–6, esp. p. 33.
40 See J. Wernicke, 'Erfahrungen eines Sprechmaschinenbesitzers', *PZ* 25 (1924), pp. 919–20.
41 Sling [Paul Schlesinger], 'Die Tonkneipe' (Dec. 1924), reprinted in Sling, *Die Nase der Sphinx oder: Wie wir Berliner so sind: Feuilletons aus den Jahren 1921 bis 1925* (Berlin, 1987), pp. 182–3.
42 F. Warschauer, 'Musik im Rundfunk', in *Musikblätter des Anbruch* 8 (1926), Sonderheft 'Musik und Maschine' (Oct.–Nov. 1926), p. 374.
43 W. Winnig, 'Kinomusik-Tonfilm', *Reichsfilmblatt* 8 (1930), no. 26, p. 3. See also W. Mühl-Benninghaus, *Das Ringen um den Tonfilm: Strategien der Elektro- und der Filmindustrie in den 20er und 30er Jahren* (Düsseldorf, 1999), pp. 52–3; K. C. Führer, 'German Cultural Life and the Crisis of National Identity during the Depression, 1929–1933', *German Studies Review* 24 (2001), pp. 461–86, esp. p. 468.
44 Quotes from 'Rundfunk, Schallplatte und individuelle Musik', *PZ* 34 (1933), p. 87. For the common accusation that the gramophone was killing off *Hausmusik*, see 'Schallplatte und Hausmusik', *PZ* 34 (1933), p. 156.
45 M. H. Kater, *Different Drummers: Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany* (New York, 1992), esp. pp. 3–28.
46 See generally P. Potter, *Most German of the Arts: Musicology and Society from the Weimar Republic to the End of Hitler's Reich* (New Haven, 1998).
47 Schröder, *Tanz- und Unterhaltungsmusik*, p. 317.
48 H. Connor, 'Haben Schlager künstlerischen Wert?', *Die Musik* 24 (1932), pp. 750–1. See also F. Kiesler, 'Probleme, Fehler und Geheimnisse in der Werbung für die Schallplatte', *Die deutsche Werbung* 29 (1936), pp. 32–5.
49 D. L. LeMahieu, *A Culture for Democracy: Mass Communication and the Cultivated Mind in Britain between the Wars* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 88–90, on which the following paragraphs also draw.

50 Wicke, *Mozart*, p. 99.
51 Ibid.
52 'Künstler – Schallplatte – Publikum', *PZ* 36 (1935), p. 512.
53 R. Dinse, *Das Freizeitleben der Großstadtjugend: 5000 Jungen und Mädchen berichten* (Eberswalde, 1932), p. 32.
54 'Die Phonographie im Dienste der Musikpädagogik und Musikwissenschaft', *PZ* 1 (1900), pp. 33–5.
55 LeMahieu, *Culture*, p. 89.
56 L. Stoffels, 'Rundfunk und die Kultur der Gegenwart', in: J.-F. Leonhard (ed.), *Programmgeschichte des Hörfunks in der Weimarer Republik*, 2 vols (Munich, 1997), vol. 2, p. 988.
57 See 'Die Geschäftsstockung', *PZ* 15 (1914), p. 621. Quote from F. Ritzel, '"Hätte der Kaiser Jazz getanzt…". US-Tanzmusik in Deutschland vor und nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg', in Schutte, *Leben*, pp. 265–93, here p. 290. See Ritzel also on popular composers (esp. p. 278). See also *PZ* 24 (1923), p. 532.
58 See Koch, 'Schallplattenindustrie, Staat und Volksbildung', esp. p. 516. See also Mühl-Benninghaus, *Ringen*, p. 274.
59 Kater, *Drummers*, pp. 3–28.
60 Schär, *Schlager*, p. 41.
61 S. Scheffler, *Melodie der Welle* (Berlin, 1933), p. 61, cited after Ritzel, '"Hätte der Kaiser Jazz getanzt"', p. 291.
62 *Die Stimme* 14 (1929), p. 201, cited after Schär, *Schlager*, p. 49. On the dance craze, see ibid., pp. 43ff; Wicke, *Mozart*, pp. 87–8. On the problems of public performance see 'Die Sprechmaschine als Tanzmusik', *PZ* 6 (1905), p. 23.
63 See M. Randewig, 'Radio, Wirt und Gäste', and 'Funkausstellung 1929 und Gaststättenwesen', both in *Deutsche Hotel-Nachrichten* 33 (1929), no. 73. See also R. Lothar, 'Die Phonokunst 1925/26', in R. Lothar & A. Ihring (eds), *Radio-Almanach 1926. Teil 2: Phonotechnik und Phonokunst* (Berlin, 1926), pp. 9–14.
64 Sonnemann, 'Der erste deutsche Schallplattentag', p. 1730.
65 Potter, *Most German*, p. 6, also pp. 42–4.
66 See, for instance, Braune, *Einfluß*, pp. 111–16. On *Hausmusik* see: 'Neue Abnehmerkreise für Schallplatten', *PZ* 34 (1933), p. 281; 'Die Schallplatte als Förderin der Hausmusik', *Die Stimme* 19 (1934), pp. 136–7; 'Hausmusik und Schallplatte', *Die Stimme* 20 (1935), pp. 117–18. Record retailers found, much to their surprise, that the campaign 'Foster German *Hausmusik*' boosted rather than hindered record sales in the early 1930s. See esp. *PZ* 35 (1934) p. 4. See also: 'Zum Tag der Hausmusik', *PZ* 35 (1934), pp. 543–4; 'Die Lehren des Tages der Hausmusik', *PZ* 36 (1935), pp. 484–6.
67 H. H. Stuckenschmidt, 'Erziehung durch Sprechapparate', *Musikblätter des Anbruch* 8 (1926); Sonderheft 'Musik und Maschine' (Oct.–Nov. 1926), p. 370; the preceding quote is from E. Humperdinck, 'Die Zukunft der mechanischen Musik' (repr. from 'Kunstwart'), *PZ* 6 (1905), pp. 873–6, here p. 876.
68 'Gleichschaltung im Reichsverband des Deutschen Phono- und Radio-Handels E.V.', *PZ* 34 (1933), p. 179; Fetthauer, *Deutsche Grammophon*, pp. 26–9.
69 Fetthauer, *Deutsche Grammophon*, pp. 43–4.
70 Of the four biggest recording firms in Germany, two were largely in foreign hands: whereas Deutsche Grammophon and Telefunken were German-owned, Electrola and Carl Lindström were both German subsidiaries of UK-based companies. See the remarkably forthright industry statement published in *PZ* 34 (1933), p. 126.
71 *PZ* 39 (1938) p. 4, in response to the 'Anordnung des Reichsministers für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda betreffend jüdische Musik und Schallplatten', 17 Dec. 1937, reprinted in *PZ* 39 (1938), pp. 2–3.

72 'Wie steht es mit der Ausmerzung der "jüdischen" Schallplatten?', *PZ* 39 (1938) pp. 69–70. See also E. Levi, *Music in the Third Reich* (Basingstoke, 1994), p. 141.
73 See A. Dümling, P. Girth & P. Schimmelpfennig (eds), *Entartete Musik. Dokumentation und Kommentar zur Düsseldorfer Ausstellung von 1938*, 3rd edn (Düsseldorf, 1993). See also M. H. Kater, *The Twisted Muse: Musicians and their Music in the Third Reich* (Oxford, 1997); Fetthauer, *Deutsche Grammophon*, pp. 36–8.
74 P. Wicke, 'Das Ende: Populäre Musik im faschistischen Deutschland', in Schutte, *Leben*, pp. 418–29, here pp. 422–3.
75 Fetthauer, *Deutsche Grammophon*, p. 33.
76 Wicke, 'Das Ende', p. 423.
77 Potter, *Most German*, p. 29.

3

'Underground': Counter-Culture and the Record Industry in the 1960s

Detlef Siegfried

In the late 1950s, as the working classes in Western societies grew more prosperous and were becoming spiritually incorporated into bourgeois life, an incipient new 'counterculture' was confined for the most part to small, socially mixed and predominately youth-based circles. Correspondingly, the European and American 'New Left' regarded this younger generation, and especially young intellectuals, as a revolutionary element.[1] Riding on the rising tide of an economic boom, both the consumer-goods industry and the mass media ensured that new cultural elements, especially those emerging from these younger groups, would become ever more rapidly incorporated into mass culture. On the one hand, impulses from the cultural margins were being picked up by existing corporations of the culture industry (*Kulturindustrie*),[2] especially those in the record and magazine businesses (public service radio and television followed much more slowly). Yet on the other hand, the counterculture was also producing its own media to disseminate and put into practice the ideas of an alternative lifestyle, thus bypassing existing cultural and commercial institutions.

Throughout this process material and intellectual interests often intersected, inextricably weaving together old and new media. In West Germany, for example, a commercial concert agency such as Lippmann + Rau (which thought of itself as 'progressive') served a significant portion of the market for countercultural events; a professional publisher like Jörg Schröder produced corresponding literature through März Verlag; and magazines such as *Konkret* and *Underground* were commercially successful as organs of the 'counterculture'.

The 1950s, 1960s and 1970s saw the development of numerically significant youth subcultures that broadly transcended class boundaries.[3] This time period also witnessed the emergence of a mechanism that has since become pervasive: subcultural and countercultural tendencies infiltrate the wider culture and become popularized, but in the process begin to lose their characterization as 'counterculture'. In this respect, counterculture and the culture industry should not be seen as opposites, but rather as interdependent components of modern mass cultures whose mutual interplay produces constant

change. During this time frame, countercultures were primarily associated with the Left; therefore, it was leftist groups who confronted this complex situation, which was to become an important part of the debate about what they stood for.

During the 1960s, youth sociologists became interested in how far this counterculture was truly dissociating itself from the social majority, or how far it was merely a subculture (*Teilkultur*) which remained integrated within society, especially through the dissemination possibilities of the culture industry. The dominant interpretation at the time was that of Theodor W. Adorno, who saw no escape from the culture industry for the mass of the populace, let alone any form of emancipation through it. Although there may have been some empirical indices for this picture of an overall conformist youth, Adorno's generalizing arguments nonetheless failed to grasp the essence of what was happening. In fact, the culture industry furnished materials and ideas that were selectively appropriated by young people, who used them for their own production of styles. The West German educator and psychologist Helmut Kentler was quite right when he saw youths' 'private circles and personal movements' as the decisive motivator of cultural renewal. But in order for them to be 'socially significant', they would need to 'remain underground for long stretches, and in any event [had to] grope forward along paths other than the prescribed routes'.[4] In an economically, politically and culturally standardized society, individualism was only possible in the form of an 'outsiderness' which was to be practised primarily in the private sphere. Therefore, Kentler defined subcultures as 'counter-societies' and 'underground societies'.[5]

Recent research, however, suggests that the culture industry played a much more important and positive role in the 1960s transformation of culture and values than is commonly recognized, especially by supporters of the Frankfurt School.[6] This chapter examines the interrelationship between countercultural innovations and the culture industry, focusing on the West German record market. Vinyl records became especially important in the media context of the 1960s because they made it possible for an increasing number of young people to listen to music which they had chosen for themselves, independent of state radio and television which rarely broadcasted rock 'n' roll, beat and psychedelic music. As a medium that could be individually deployed, records became 'cultural capital' with which young people could very precisely define themselves and their values. My thesis is that recording companies, as part of the culture industry, enhanced the 1960s radicalization dynamic by adopting and disseminating the impulses of musical 'outsider-innovators'. This only worked because (and only as long as) the companies continued to change themselves and, forced by international pressures and consumer expectations, adapted to new conditions of production and consumption. The most important mediators in this process were young industry managers who often came out of the music scene themselves, and

who saw themselves partly as exponents of counterculture. In turn, they were the ones most exposed to criticism from the counterculture itself.

'Underground': The invention of a brand

Until the mid-1960s, the term 'underground' in Germany was largely associated with radical left-wing movements. However, many members of the jazz and beat scenes of the 1950s and early 1960s located themselves on the social margins because their musical tastes deviated from majority standards. In this regard, they were seen by many as musical 'underworld products' (*Unterweltsprodukte*).[7] With this metaphor, the image of deviation was shifted from the political to the cultural sphere. Indeed, a political movement emerged within certain subcultural scenes – particularly, but not only, in Germany – which modelled itself on the American 'underground' style. As late as the summer of 1967, there was not much of an 'underground' culture to be found in Germany, but that changed in the second half of the year, when student protests soared.[8] The commercial potential of this outsider style was already recognized in the autumn of 1967 when the publisher of the leftist satirical magazine *Pardon* registered the trademark for a new magazine project called *Underground*.[9] Other indicators also show that 'underground', as the descriptor of a fashionable and politically coloured style, was readily marketable from the end of 1967. This process of appropriation and popularization by the culture industry provoked an immediate reaction which was inflamed by the political dynamics of the summer of 1967, lending a stronger political accent to existing subcultures. In the autumn of 1967, the self-proclaimed 'German *Provo* newspaper' *Peng* was already announcing that 'the hippies are dead – the revolution lives.'[10]

As the student movement developed in 1967–68, earlier labels for subcultural scenes (such as 'Beatniks', 'Gammler' or 'Provos' – deadbeats or provocateurs) became subsumed by the suggestive collective term 'underground', which initially encompassed youth cultural practices such as beat and psychedelic music as well as drug consumption, but then came to encompass alternative lifestyles and radical leftist politics in general. As the precarious coalition of these diffuse subcultures broke up into their various components in 1969 and 1970, the term 'underground' became generally associated with the beat and drug subcultures, disaffiliated from the politically motivated section. The use of 'Underground' as the name of a commercial magazine was a signal that, as early as 1968, this term was already losing the distinguishing function it was supposed to have for outsiders. Afterwards, it was used with caution, if at all. To make it clear that for those involved it was not about some commercial fad, but rather an alternative societal concept, a major figure in the West German cultural revolution, Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser, made a pointed declaration with his 1969 book title: *Underground? Pop? Nein! Gegenkultur!* ('Underground? Pop? No! Counterculture!').[11]

The terms 'counterculture' and 'counter-society' (*Gegenkultur* and *Gegengesellschaft*) retained their currency for a long time and are used even today. Beyond incorporating the political element, they signalled both a distancing from superficial commercialization and a refusal to become integrated within the wider culture. It implied that with one's own media, publishers, clubs, pubs and a variety of small businesses, as well as communal living and self-organized *Kinderläden* (daycare), one could build the framework for an independent cultural sphere which saw itself in opposition to the dominant culture and which also aspired to overcome it.[12] A better life was not to be postponed until the future, but rather to be realized in the present. The primary difference between 'counterculture' and 'subculture' movements was that the former saw itself as a fundamentally distinct societal alternative, while the later made no such general claim: to take an interest in subcultural activities could well be confined to one's leisure-time.

The movement which would later be consolidated under the label 'counterculture' was still known as 'underground' when it made its breakthrough in 1968. It was this year that saw the convergence of a number of cultural currents which had been developing simultaneously in various areas since the summer of 1967, setting the stage for radical change.

'Pop revolution from the underground' in Germany

The music industry reacted quickly to the impetus of the American hippies. In August 1967, the American-based staff of *Der Musikmarkt* (the most important magazine of the West German recording industry) declared that 'flower power' would be all the rage that very autumn. Immediately thereafter, Bernhard Mikulski (business manager for CBS Deutschland) flew straight to the USA in order to sign up the then rising star Scott McKenzie for a tour of West Germany which was meant to drive up record sales.[13] German record companies co-operated with the founders of a German underground magazine, delivering press materials and free records.[14] In the USA, the Monterey Festival, which had taken place two months earlier, initiated a run of Janis Joplin, Jefferson Airplane and The Grateful Dead with major American labels such as Columbia, RCA and Warner Brothers. In the following year (1968), Metronome, Liberty and CBS were the first three companies to supply the West German market with music under the brand of 'underground'. In 1968, Metronome alone released 55 'psychedelic long-play records' from groups such as The Doors, Vanilla Fudge, and The Incredible String Band, making underground music 'overnight … into a business'.[15]

Metronome had long cultivated the youth sector: they had already introduced Little Richard as well as jazz artists from Acker Bilk to Miles Davis in the early 1960s, they carried the latest LP records from the greatly expanded magazine *Pardon*, and in 1967 they launched soul music on the West German market. In the autumn of 1968, German CBS (headquartered in Frankfurt)

popularized the new fashion with a low-priced sampler on coloured vinyl called *That's Underground*. The established record companies soon followed by flooding the market with products under this label in 1969 and 1970.[16] Successful groups such as Canned Heat, Blood, Sweat and Tears, Cream, Pink Floyd, Ten Years After and Jimi Hendrix were introduced to the market as 'underground', or else incorporated after the fact. Following very quickly on performances in New York and London, the hippie musical *Hair* had its German premiere as early as 1968 in Munich; this showed how this new kind of youth culture was being accepted in West Germany far beyond the circles of its actual protagonists.[17] In the same month, *Der Musikmarkt* announced to West German record dealers: 'The underground has established itself.'[18] The record companies studied the American scene exhaustively, in order to keep up with new developments and to supply the German market with all the latest music as quickly as possible.

However, the political aspects associated with the term 'underground' certainly did not escape them. While jazz and (at the beginning) beat music were often loosely associated with the political ideals of civility, liberalism and cosmopolitanism, 'underground' music had a more decidedly political flavour – at least in the interpretations of many of its defenders and followers. 'Underground' was the first brand name under which at least part of the record industry understood the music itself as an expression of an alternative lifestyle concept (and thereby as a carrier of political statements), and deliberately tried to position it as such on the market. In marketing the 'underground' brand, the idea of 'revolution' was aggressively mobilized, especially by CBS, as it was believed (not without reason) that the target audience considered it admirable and modern. After 1967, it was precisely this unusually strong and politically loaded confrontation between lifestyles which offered the best guarantee for good sales, because it differentiated the market. After a three-week tour of the centres of the American scene, Ingo Seiff (publicity manager of German CBS) reported to his colleagues:

> In this anti-idyll of unimaginable proportions, the record industry can flourish like never before. Some people want to preserve their status because they fear the future, while others want to change the world because the present is too cynical for them. But each person is purchasing music towards these goals. Simply put, this a great opportunity for the record business. And it will be exploited, without a doubt.[19]

German bands were also being marketed with the 'underground' label: for example, the polit-rock band Ihre Kinder starting in 1968 (first under Philips and then under Polydor), as well as the band Amon Düül starting in 1969 (under Metronome), which performed with surrealistic improvisations. However, they were often discovered at countercultural events – among the most noteworthy the Internationale Essener Songtage (International Song Festival of

Essen) of September 1968, which was the first big pop festival on European soil. Working with established record companies was vehemently criticized in oppositional subcultures, because leaving the countercultural scene was believed to entail the loss of revolutionary power. Kurt Nane Jürgensen remarked soberly in 1970:

> The underground has become a fad, a business for rich corporations to make them even richer. […] Let's make it clear that as soon as a group signs a record contract, it no longer belongs to the underground; it is then doing business with youth, a business which gives the youth music suggesting that advertising is progressive and non-conformist towards the system. Just as 'beat' music was (I'd almost have to say) degraded to a business, so have opportunistic corporations figured out how to exploit the underground music movement to their own ends. […] After having once adapted themselves to the rules and standards of business and the striving for success, all movements must end in capitulation.[20]

In 1970 there emerged a number of independent labels for the politically engaged German-language sector of pop music, to which bands like Ihre Kinder and Amon Düül then switched. The initiative was first taken up by Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser, who together with Berlin music producer Peter Meisel founded an independent record company called Ohr. In association with the Metronome distribution network, they began by presenting five German rock bands which represented a broad musical spectrum but which each had political and anti-commercial positions; among them were Tangerine Dream, one of the most well-known German 'psychedelic' bands, as well as Floh de Cologne, who were (according to their self-advertisement) the 'hardest polit-rock group'.[21] In 1971, Kaiser and Meisel founded a second label called Pilz, and the commercial success of these two labels finally encouraged the larger record companies also to start their own German rock labels in 1972, such as Brain (Metronome) and Zebra (Deutsche Grammophon). After that, the market for German rock boomed in Great Britain and the USA as well, although the political element was hardly there any more. The Pläne label produced and distributed decidedly political records, having contracts with (among others) singer-songwriter Dieter Süverkrüp and German rock bands Lokomotive Kreuzberg and Franz K.

'Outsider innovators' in the booming youth market

The record industry flourished in the second half of the 1960s, primarily due to the massive boom in English-language pop music, which also had a synergistic effect on the German-language market. It especially opened up the youth sector, which until the end of the 1950s had hardly existed.[22] It was a few years before the industry recognized the new opportunities, and there

was even considerable resistance at first, which delayed the industry's response to the growing youth market. Despite the increased prosperity of West German citizens after a post-war boom at the end of the 1950s, and despite the development and spread of the new youth cultures, the West German recording industry was registering low growth rates, and around the end of the decade even suffered a sales slump. Domestic sales of pre-recorded music sank from 52.5 million units in 1958 to 42.3 million in 1963, and did not recover until 1964 when English-language music (led by The Beatles) first appeared in the hit parades. This triggered an upturn in sales (driven by The Rolling Stones, The Byrds, and The Supremes, among others), which took full effect in 1965 with a total sales figure of 49.2 million records and a growth rate of 14.4 per cent.[23] It was only now that the record industry could really profit from the increased material prosperity that had allowed young consumers to outfit themselves with records and record players. After the short-term economic stagnation of 1966–67, which also affected the record industry, the market for popular music received its second big sales push, and not only from the new youth genres labelled 'underground', 'psychedelic' and 'soul', but also from the sales success of sentimental *Schlager* (German pop music) and more traditional dancing music. The industry experienced an extraordinary year in 1968, as domestic unit sales achieved a growth rate of 20 per cent – a large part of this can be attributed to the exceptionally high growth rate in the category of 30 cm long-play records, a new format in marketing popular music, of which 25.4 million were sold, corresponding to an increase of 47.4 per cent.[24] Record sales jumped by another 23.8 per cent in 1971, before flattening out in the following two years to a level that had not been known for many years.[25]

Record manufacturers marketed both their own and other labels (including foreign ones), which were produced completely in-house, or, increasingly, with external producers. The industry became highly diversified during the expansion period of the 1960s and early 1970s, not least due to the participation of American companies on the German market. Among the 'eight big record companies in West Germany' at the start of the 1970s,[26] it was especially the three foreign upstarts – Metronome, the German branch (established in 1963) of US market leader CBS, and the daughter company (established 1967) of Liberty Records – which competed against the giants (Deutsche Grammophon, Electrola, Teldec and Philips) by devoting themselves in particular to the English-language youth sector and being ready to experiment. Although the established German companies were also working this market, they were somewhat more hesitant and not as open to foreign ideas. Although the newcomers also required German titles, their young teams, flatter hierarchies, international perspectives and (at CBS and Liberty) connection to American-dominated corporate structures predestined them to being innovators in the emerging youth market. The courage to experiment paid off by 1967, when the 'underground' was booming on the German market. The market shift

from the early 1960s to the early 1970s can be clearly seen in the diversification of the industry by outsiders: in this time period, the market share of the four German giants sank from 81 to 62 per cent.[27]

However, these figures also suggest the potential for innovation by the established companies, not least by the industry leader Deutsche Grammophon, which negotiated the cultural transformation with only the slightest of wounds. Philips, too, was remarkably innovative on the youth market of the early 1960s. In 1961 the German branch of the Dutch corporation introduced the first record series to be published by a magazine (in this case, the forward-thinking youth magazine *Twen*). This model of a synergistic multimedia alliance to increase sales later inspired even more conventional magazines like *Hör zu* (starting in 1963), *Stern* (starting in 1965), *Burda* and *Neue Revue* (both starting in 1966), each with different collaborative partners.[28] The series from Philips and *Twen* covered a broad spectrum that was very representative of the tastes of well-educated middle-class youth: Duke Ellington's version of the Nutcracker Suite, French *chanson*, folk music, Wolf Biermann, jazz and beat. The year 1969 became the most successful year of the *Twen* series, with 120,000 LP records sold. In the same year, an 'underground' sampler was produced (largely in collaboration with Metronome and Liberty, among others), as well as records from Canned Heat, Iron Butterfly, and James Brown – but also German-language *Schlager*.[29] In 1970, the Woodstock album was released under the *Twen* label (among others), as well as the singer-songwriter Franz Josef Degenhardt and the sayings of Mao Tse-tung. The magazine distinguished itself with the concept of connecting its target audience with attractive outsiders of the musical scene who had previously had hardly any exposure. According to its editors, *Twen* wanted to 'present to listeners not the mass idols, but rather artists, orchestras, bands and musicians who have not yet appeared on German discs.'[30] Philips worked here as a powerful partner in launching a product, but beyond the intellectual market, the company also distinguished itself particularly well in the popular market by introducing in 1963 the Star-Club label, a groundbreaker in the German beat sector.

This suggests that market expansion took place through both diversification and the cultivation of sub-markets. Part of the consumer goods industry (not without some internal resistance) was targeting its products to young consumers as a group. To this end, *Der Musikmarkt* published interviews with teenagers in 1959 as a means to discover and communicate their wishes, and in 1961 the industry newsletter *Funkfachhändler* recommended that West German retailers read teen magazines and watch teen movies to help in the selection of their music stock: 'To get a feel for the market, one can certainly put up with an Elvis Presley or Peter Kraus [a young German actor and pop singer].'[31]

Diversification and specialization also opened up other sub-markets, in which not only age group, but also attributes of social differentiation (such as gender, origin and education) were equally important. These kinds of attributes

had a significant effect on individual style elements (such as taste and habits) which played an increasingly important role in the building of prestige among youth during the course of the economic boom. It can be seen that in the 1960s, refinements in taste and innovations in mass culture came frequently from outsiders, who, in interaction with the culture industry, were a driving force for change. At the end of the 1960s, an author who studied the mechanisms of style-building in relationship to the consumer goods industry highlighted the importance of such marginal groups as 'strategic staging posts' in the dissemination of new style directions; she called them 'outsider innovators'.[32] This referred to individuals who were perceived as nonconformist due to aesthetically unusual practices, and who were also sometimes ostracized by social sanctions, but who were innovative in being the first to present new styles and creating experimental test situations. They were primarily influential in urban contexts due to their immediate presence, but also partly due to their own media and the interest of the mass media. In this way, 'outsider innovators' could become 'model innovators' and 'style-setters'.

There was a particular section of the culture industry which took it upon itself to make space for such outsider styles. Due to economic constraints, it did not necessarily devote itself to one specific style, but more often to a variety of smaller audience segments that were otherwise not being catered to. Styles were often presented first on a trial basis; some resonated well, others did not. A very early example of the kind of institution which concentrated at first on marginal areas and then later found commercial success through mass response is the concert promotion agency Lippmann + Rau. They were representative of those small groups of media professionals and music business managers who served the 'outsider innovators' in the sense that, from the beginning, they committed themselves to quality, innovation and filling a gap in the market while, with an eye towards commercial viability, always testing the borders of cultural acceptability. Fritz Rau described the risky, but in the long term successful recipe of the agency as 'the instinctive assessment of what is just barely feasible'.[33] This concept was certainly not about producing cheaply and quickly, but rather about offering a unique inventory; the ethical values important to the agency's various target groups also played a role. The more innovative corporations in the record business, such as Metronome, CBS and Liberty, also distinguished themselves by departing from the mainstream and expressly avoiding standardized low-brow productions (*Lieschen-Müller Produktionen*), as described by CBS Business Manager Rudolf Wolpert.[34]

The young managers

Rudolf Wolpert was part of the new generation that gained a foothold in the record industry during the 1960s, and who ensured that beat, underground, folk and protest songs were produced and commercially marketed. Initially,

they faced strong resistance because the industry saw only German entertainment music as a secure business, and the market for popular music was seen as an expressly national territory that had to be defended against foreign invaders. At the same time, however, they also wanted to do business overseas. According to the most important magazine of the industry, among the 'most noble duties of the German recording industry is to support German classical and popular contemporary music and to make it known around the world'.[35] The most important export markets for German *Schlager* were, after Austria and Switzerland, Scandinavia, the Benelux countries and South America; the US market showed almost no interest at all.[36] On the other hand, musical imports from the USA and Great Britain, but also from France and Italy, were threatening German composers and songwriters. Due to the falling sales numbers of the 1950s, the majority of the industry was convinced that certain record producers were deluded in pinning their hopes on the 'rock-crazy kids of the economic miracle' (*verrockten Wirtschaftswunderkinder*). They put their faith in adult consumers, and in quality instead of quantity: there should be an end to the 'step-motherly treatment' of 'citizens with refined taste', who for want of quality products in German were increasingly turning to foreign-language popular music.[37] Representing the old guard of *Schlager* producers was the Munich composer and music publisher Ralph Maria Siegel Sr (born in 1911), who had acquired fame in the 1930s and 1940s; he was especially vehement in raising the flag of German *Schlager*. He regarded the teenager market as an American-dominated 'romping place for dilettantes' (*Tummelplatz für Dilettanten*), which could only be combated with the traditional concept of German 'high performance' (*Leistung*). According to Siegel, who in his time had charmed a million hearts, westernized mass thinking had to be confronted with quality German workmanship.[38] With this strategy, the crisis of the recording industry was to be overcome by returning to German values, cultivating the adult market and creating non-age-specific products.

It was only in 1965 – when the international success of The Beatles spilled over into the Federal Republic, and when the first German record series for rock and beat music emerged under the Star-Club label – that industry executives finally opened their eyes, though without completely giving up the fight for national preference. On the contrary: the late 1960s saw a further intensification in the battle for the German language, as the share of German-authored *Schlager* on the hit charts of 1967 sank below 25 per cent.[39] In the early 1970s a critic of the scene condemned (not without reason) the management of the German music industry for being 'ruled by old people who earned their spurs and their houses in Switzerland during the time of the Ufa [film studio], who drag around a few cute film scores and pre-war hits as their seal of approval, and who stick tight and unmovable to their seats'.[40] In those years, which witnessed widespread criticism of commercialization, other contemporaries also saw record companies as incarnations of culturally suspect corporations which operated under purely commercial criteria. The sociologist

Erwin K. Scheuch, for example, labelled them representatives of 'robber baron capitalism'.[41] These dominant tendencies were, however, not only being challenged by the tender shoots of a lively and partially self-organized *Deutschrock* scene, but also by the previous development of a vigorous branch within the record industry that was young and close to the beat and underground music scene. This did not necessarily mean that the generational power relationships in the industry had shifted,[42] but it did suggest that the old guard was coming under considerable pressure.

In the consumer industry, the rise of young organizational talents was most conspicuous where young people were founding beat bands, clubs, magazines, fashion businesses and record stores for the new youth market – partly as a kind of hobby and partly as an attempt to earn money. However, these 'Jeune Cadres' (as literary scholar Kristin Ross called this type when she came across them in France) had it especially hard in those areas where the long-established companies of the culture industry were having to adjust themselves to a young clientele.[43] Therefore, young business leaders – almost exclusively male – got their big breaks in the record industry from those companies that were newcomers to the German scene.

Here, there were no venerable traditional structures, no inherited cultural ballast; here, it was about developing new markets. It was also for this reason that companies were prepared to put the responsibilities of producing and publishing on the shoulders of young managers, some of whom were not yet 25 years old. 'Lots of young people, lots of enthusiasm, lots of verve' is how the early Philips manager Siegfried E. Loch described his impressions of internal relations within the American record industry.[44] In the Federal Republic, some young recording managers came out of the established record companies, others found careers in new companies, while yet others came from the international music business. Not only did they pioneer a segment for pop music in the West German record market, they also cultivated more casual relations with musicians, media representatives and customers, operated in an international frame of reference, introduced new corporate structures (such as a flatter hierarchy) and tried out novel management methods.[45] For these young managers, 'underground' bands were not objects, but rather allies in the struggle against the inherited structures of the music business. Until then, 'stars' simply performed the lyrics and compositions of others, be it on stage or in the studio. Their freedom of choice in musical and artistic matters was usually very low or essentially non-existent. In this traditional division of labour, the manager had a completely different position than in the context of the rock scene of the late 1960s, where musicians (or bands) functioned simultaneously as lyricists, composers and performers and saw themselves as autonomous artists.[46] The creativity of these artists could only be encouraged by allowing them the greatest possible autonomy in the production process. The best understanding for this new type of musician came from younger managers, who had close contact with the music scene or were even active musicians themselves.

Siegfried E. Loch was one of the foremost representatives of this new type of manager. He came out of the jazz scene and gave musical outsiders a chance in the German pop business. In the early 1970s, he became one of the most influential figures in the German and international recording industries. The major magazine of the industry first took note of the young man in July 1967, when at the age of 26 he became founding Director of Liberty Deutschland, the second American record company (after CBS) to become active in the European market. Loch became prominent as 'Germany's youngest record boss'. He was not only young, but also wore long hair, came across as eloquent and intelligent, and was genuinely enthusiastic about jazz, rock 'n' roll and underground, thus appearing in the media as an attractive foil to the image of most other executives in the industry. Loch knew how to play his cards and showed remarkable self-confidence when he issued a challenge to German recording traditions: 'I'm going to punch out the tearjerker! I'm going to turn the German music industry upside down.'[47] This tone was new and media-savvy, but was more than just empty self-promotion, for Loch had already accomplished much in his younger years. He was born in 1940 and moved at the age of 12 from the GDR to Hanover, where from 1956 to 1960 he was a drummer in a jazz band, while at the same time training as an industrial salesman at Blaupunkt Electronics.[48] In 1960, the Electrola record company brought him to Cologne to work as a buyer for their import department, and in 1963 (at the age of 22) he moved to Hamburg to take over the jazz section of the newly founded company Philips Ton (Philips Sound). In the same year, this new section chief defied every jazz orthodoxy by picking up on (against some departmental resistance) the momentum of blues and rock 'n' roll, which had emerged outside the media and established jazz clubs. His most innovative projects were the Star-Club label and the documentation of the American Folk Blues Festivals organized by Lippmann + Rau. It was in the young Siegfried Loch that important members of still-marginalized music styles first found a 'partner in the record industry' in the year 1963.[49]

Although not a university graduate, Loch was something of an intellectual in the record business: he was not only interested in jazz and visual art, but also read sociological and psychological literature. As the business manager of Liberty, he represented a management concept that remained true to the scene. He put together a young team (the average age was 26 years) which he led with resolve, but also with a management style that allowed discussion. Most of all, he put into perspective the purely commercial prerogatives of the music commodity by taking seriously the priorities assumed by the artists and listeners: rebellion, authenticity and credibility. He took it upon himself to 'earn honest money with a cultural asset', and wanted to support the 'genuinely new type of artist in Germany' and 'be creative for creative people'.[50] This allied him with many other innovators in the scene like Kaiser and Lippmann + Rau. The desire to promote something of personal interest, to help people who were on the same wavelength and who deserved to be known,

differentiated them from the many business people who treated music as just a commodity like any other. In describing this spiritual kinship, Rau said:

> For us, Siggi Loch was an important encounter, because he was thinking exactly the same as us. He too was using his role as a producer to give optimal exposure to unusual talents. […] He didn't want record-buyers to be conned into purchasing superficial mass-produced goods with titillating presentation, but rather that they become acquainted with a real talent. But he, like us, couldn't afford to lose sight of the commercial perspective. Because anywhere you go, the losses, which always come up when you take a risk, must be paid for dearly.[51]

Loch would never have been successful if he had not mastered the balancing act between ethics and profitability. He described his own leadership style as ambivalent: 'I try not to be an authoritarian boss, but nonetheless believe in enlightened dictatorship as a way of achieving true democracy.'[52] Gerd Augustin, the early moderator of *Beat-Club* who occasionally worked with Loch, even spoke of an 'almost militaristic manner', but was impressed by precisely the same characteristic, for it 'combined German discipline with tactful sensitivity.'[53]

The surges in the popularity of English-language pop music promoted by the likes of Loch stood in stark contrast to the preference for German *Schlager* displayed by most German record manufacturers and radio stations.[54] Although they were still trying in 1969 to relegate soul and psychedelic music to special programmes, pressure was gradually building against this continuing preference for *Schlager* expressed by the dominant part of the recording industry, especially after 1970 when 'superbands' like Led Zeppelin and Deep Purple began achieving huge commercial success. In the power struggle over the legitimacy of minority tastes, a strong push was made by a few of the younger managers in the music industry, who had started as outsiders and had put into the hands of young West German 'outsider innovators' records which would also prove to be attractive for larger groups too. Even when the bulk of the industry was serving a mass trend which was being rejected by the youth culture, commercialization as an economic process of reproduction was nonetheless ensuring that, besides a popular music sector characterized by fun and suitability for dancing, more elaborate musical forms distinguished by sophisticated lyrics and instrumental virtuosity (which had until then been reserved for a privileged class) were now being made widely available to a larger audience. Not everyone profited equally from the broader dissemination of more sophisticated music, but it did work hand in hand with educational reforms and increased material prosperity to give many young people the opportunity to escape their original social environments through the appropriation of new styles, values and new 'cultural capital'.

Conclusion

In the 'Golden Age' (Eric Hobsbawm) of the 1950s to 1970s, 'countercultures' were socially comprehensive and chronologically variable phenomena, of which some elements reached large masses of people. As subcultures, they contributed to changes in mainstream society, but without completely revolutionizing it. For many protagonists of these subcultures, it was not at all about revolutionizing in any event, but rather about establishing personal free spaces within a given social environment, and about independent media, self-managed youth centres, squatted houses and self-managed businesses. Yet these new milieus did not develop in isolation from the rest of society. Indeed, a significant motor for the constant renovation of the 'counterculture' was its interaction with the existing culture industry. The recording industry and music publishers picked up on impulses which had emerged in these subcultural and countercultural niches, and radio and television stations reluctantly followed suit. In this process, protagonists such as Rolf-Ulrich Kaiser and Siegfried E. Loch acted as interpersonal connectors who were, due to their links to the scene, already taking up a decisive role as mediators at a very young age. This rejuvenation of recording industry personnel ensured that innovations from the various scenes of the 1960s would be rapidly commercialized. At the same time, their priority was to produce good-quality products and to maintain the particular norms of conduct which were important to countercultural groups. The rapid cultural change of the 1960s and 1970s depended upon the agents of the culture industry tracking down and marketing the latest trends.

It was precisely those radical implementations of the 'counterculture' that were of decisive cultural significance here, when the managers of the media industry promoted music and lyrics which were just barely acceptable to each specific target audience. Since much seemed possible in the early 1970s, many managers were prepared to undertake very bold experimentation. Negative audience reactions, such as those received by The Who and Jimi Hendrix after their German television appearances, marked very precisely the boundaries between the subculture and what the social majority would accept. In these media experiments, the former subculture of the 'underground' stepped out of its niche existence and (at least among certain generational groups) developed into a dominant style.

Acknowledgement

This chapter has been translated from the German by Wayne Yung.

Notes

1 G. Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968* (Boston 1987); W. L. O'Neill, *The New Left: A History* (Wheeling, 2001).

2 See H. Steinert, *Kulturindustrie* (Münster, 1998). Unlike Theodor W. Adorno, I use the term only descriptively, not judgmentally.
3 See, for definitions of terms, W. Hollstein, *Der Untergrund: Zur Soziologie jugendlicher Protestbewegungen* (Neuwied, 1969), p. 156 ff.; S. von Dirke, *'All the Power to the Imagination!' The West German Counterculture from the Student Movement to the Greens* (Lincoln, 1997), p. 2 ff.
4 This and the following quote in H. Kentler, '"Subkulturen" von Jugendlichen', *Deutsche Jugend* 12 (1964), pp. 403–12, here pp. 409–10.
5 For the transformation of subculture in the early 1960s into underground and counterculture towards the start of the 1970s, see the contemporary study by D. Baacke, *Jugend und Subkultur* (Munich, 1972).
6 See for example T. Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (Chicago, 1997); J. Green, *All Dressed Up: The Sixties and the Counterculture* (London, 1998). For the American record industry see D. Cavallo, *A Fiction of the Past: The Sixties in American History* (New York, 1999).
7 This term was used by Uschi Nerke, the host of the popular television show *Beat Club* in its founding year. See script of *Beat-Club* 3, Radio Bremen, December 1965. See in general also U. G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley, 2000).
8 R.-U. Kaiser (ed.), *Protestfibel: Formen einer neuen Kultur* (Bern, 1968), p. 7.
9 *Song* 3 (1968), no. 8, p. 8.
10 Cited after P. Schütt, *Literarisierung des Straßenbildes*, in Kaiser, *Protestfibel*, pp. 113–27, here p. 123.
11 Baacke wrote in 1970 that the term 'underground' had been 'long ruined, it's no longer used by anybody in the know'. D. Baacke, 'Untergrund: Einblick und Ausblick', *Merkur* 24 (1970), pp. 526–41, here p. 526.
12 See also D. Siegfried, '"Einstürzende Neubauten": Wohngemeinschaften, Jugendzentren und private Präferenzen kommunistischer "Kader" als Formen jugendlicher Subkultur', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 44 (2004), pp. 39–66.
13 *Der Musikmarkt* 9 (1967), no. 10, p. 30.
14 *Underground* editor (Kaiser) to 'beloved undergroundlings', 30 Aug. 1967, Deutsches Kabarett-Archiv, LM/C/30.
15 *Der Musikmarkt* 11 (1969), no. 1, p. 14. See also *Musik-Informationen* 10 (1968), no. 9, p. 42.
16 An overview can be found in *Der Musikmarkt* 11 (1969) no. 11/2, p. 67.
17 The West Berlin *Zentralrat der umherschweifenden Haschrebellen* (central committee of vagabond hash rebels) protested against the apparent appropriation of alternative culture and demanded the 'handing over of the "beautiful balloons" to the true subculture'. *Agit 883* no. 35 (9 Oct. 1969).
18 *Der Musikmarkt* 10 (1968), no. 10, p. 61.
19 *Der Musikmarkt* 11 (1969), no. 11/2, p. 67.
20 *Factum* no. 5 (Sept. 1970), unpaginated.
21 *Musik-Informationen* 12 (1970), no. 12, p. 10.
22 For the development of the record industry in the USA and Great Britain see R. S. Denisoff, *Solid Gold: The Popular Record Industry* (New Brunswick, 1975), p. 92 ff.; S. Chapple & R. Garofalo, *Wem gehört die Rockmusik? Geschichte und Politik der Musikindustrie* (Reinbek, 1980); M. Cable, *The Pop Industry Inside Out* (London, 1977); S. Frith, *The Sociology of Rock* (London, 1978). For West Germany see K. Blaukopf, *Massenmedium Schallplatte: Die Stellung des Tonträgers in der Kultursoziologie und Kulturstatistik* (Wiesbaden, 1977); W. Zeppenfeld, *Tonträger in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Anatomie eines medialen Massenmarkts* (Bochum,

1978). See also P. Wicke, 'Music, Dissidence, Revolution, and Commerce: Youth Culture Between Mainstream and Subculture', in A. Schildt & D. Siegfried (eds), *Between Marx and Coca Cola: Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies* (New York, 2006), pp. 109–26.

23 See production and sales figures up to 1958 in *Der Musikmarkt* 1 (1959), no.3, p. 9. Since 1962 there have been annual industry reports from the *Bundesverband der Phonographischen Wirtschaft* (Federal Association of the Phonographic Industry).

24 Bundesverband der Phonographischen Wirtschaft, Industry Report for the Year 1968, 1 Mar. 1969, Hamburger Weltwirtschaftsarchiv, Pressearchiv. The exact percentage shares for soul and underground titles cannot be extracted.

25 *Der Musikmarkt* 14 (1972), no. 6, p. 4.

26 *Publik* 4 (1971), no. 14.

27 *Die Welt*, 6 June 1961; *Die Welt*, 12 June 1963; W. Mezger, *Schlager: Versuch einer Gesamtdarstellung unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Musikmarktes der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Tübingen, 1975), p. 62.

28 See as an overview: *Der Musikmarkt* 11 (1969), no. 7, pp. 1–2; *Der Musikmarkt* 14 (1972), no. 7, p. 16 ff.

29 *Twen* 3 (1961), no. 4, p. 74 ff.; *Twen* 9 (1967), no. 5, unpaginated; *Twen* 11 (1969), no. 6, p. 24 ff. and no. 12, p. 148; *Twen* 12 (1970), no. 4, pp. 123 ff. and no. 6, p. 34 and p. 147.

30 *Twen* 9 (1967), no. 5, unpaginated.

31 *Der Musikmarkt* 1 (1959), no. 1, p. 26; *Funkfachhändler* 13 (1961), p. 280.

32 U. Hansen, *Stilbildung als absatzwirtschaftliches Problem der Konsumgüterindustrie* (Berlin, 1969), p. 110 ff.

33 K. Brigl & S. Schmidt-Joos, *Fritz Rau, Buchhalter der Träume* (Berlin, 1985), p. 151.

34 *Der Musikmarkt* 11 (1969) no. 11/2, p. 8.

35 *Der Musikmarkt* 1 (1959), no. 1, p. 26.

36 *Handelsblatt*, 31 Jan. 1959.

37 *Der Musikmarkt* 1 (1959), no 5, pp. 12–3; *Der Musikmarkt* 2 (1960), no. 1, p. 27.

38 *Der Musikmarkt* 1 (1959/60), no. 6/1, p. 15.

39 That is, in any case, according to the fastidiously maintained hit charts of the leading industry periodicals, which did not serve as a means of cultural orientation (like the *Bravo* hit parade) but documented exact sales figures. *Der Musikmarkt* 9 (1967), no. 12, p. 1. In 1968 and 1969, this share increased again.

40 *Blickpunkt. Die junge Zeitschrift* 21 (1971/72), Dec./Jan., p. 6.

41 *Musik-Informationen* 15 (1973), no. 5, p. 4.

42 *Der Musikmarkt* 16 (1974), no. 11, p. 10.

43 K. Ross, *Fast Cars, Clean Bodies: Decolonization and the Reordering of French Culture* (Cambridge, MA, 1995).

44 *Der Musikmarkt* 9 (1967), no. 7, p. 4. This was described at the same time in S. Schmidt-Joos, 'Beat-Kultur: Die Generation des "Involvement"', *Der Monat* 19 (1967), no. 11, pp. 59–66.

45 This was said of (for example) Peter Meisel, the 30-year-old son of the operetta composer Will Meisel, who made himself independent in the mid-1960s by founding his own record company, researched the latest trends in New York and specialized in 'teenager music'. *Vorwärts*, 19 Jan. 1966.

46 See Cavallo, *Fiction*, p. 145 ff.

47 *Der Musikmarkt* 9 (1967), no. 7, p. 4.

48 G. Augustin, *Die Beat-Jahre. Musik in Deutschland – die sechziger Jahre* (Munich, 1987), pp. 170–1.

49 Brigl & Schmidt-Joos, *Fritz Rau*, p. 142.

50 These are Loch's own words in an interview in *Der Musikmarkt* 12 (1972), no. 20, p. 1. See also *Musik-Informationen* 14 (1974), no. 9, p. 12.
51 Brigl & Schmidt-Joos, *Fritz Rau*, p. 143. On the transformed type of music industry managers, see also Cable, *Pop Industry*, p. 73 ff.; Cavallo, *Fiction*, pp. 162–3; Chapple & Garofalo, *Rock-Musik*, p. 150 ff.
52 *Der Musikmarkt* 12 (1972), no. 20, p. 1.
53 Augustin, *Beat-Jahre*, p. 170.
54 On entertainment radio see K. Dussel, 'The Triumph of English-Language Pop Music: West German Radio Programming', in Schildt & Siegfried, *Marx*, pp. 127–48.

4

The Invention of a Listening Public: Radio and its Audiences

Kate Lacey

> The public was not waiting for radio; the radio was waiting for its public.
>
> Brecht, 1932

Public radio was launched in Germany on 29 October 1923 with a programme of live and recorded classical music broadcast from the attic of the Vox record company building in Berlin's Potsdamer Straße. Such a statement, reproduced in any number of the histories of German broadcasting, seems a simple enough reiteration of historical fact, and could easily be followed by a standard account of the apparently inevitable development of radio as a medium of mass communication that quickly became an indispensable feature of both public and private life. It is possible to recount how, from an initial 467 listeners registered in the first three months (and many more *Schwarzhörer*), the audience rose steadily to over a million within two years, and to a quarter of the population by the end of the decade. This was an audience that was primarily located in private homes, listening to a mixed schedule of information, education and entertainment from a series of regional and then national stations.

This familiar historical narrative, however, does not tell the whole story. It tends to privilege the institutional histories of broadcasters and audiences and in the process tends to give the impression that the idea of broadcasting was self-evident from the outset and not at all a precarious enterprise. More importantly, such a narrative also tends to take the notion of a public radio – and therefore a radio public – to be a category that emerged fully formed alongside, or even in advance of, the technology itself. While there is, of course, no doubt that the application of radio technology as a broadcast medium hugely extended and modified the levels and modes of participation in the public sphere, this is neither a simple nor a straightforward history. First and foremost, the construction of an audience is not necessarily the same thing as the construction of a public. The aim of this chapter is to

sketch out some of the ways in which the category of the listening public was a problematic one in the early years of radio in Germany, and to indicate some of the available alternatives to the idea that came to prevail – that of the broadcast audience as an individualized and *privatized* public. My contention is that we can look again at the early years of the medium to identify some of the dead ends of history – specifically the kinds of listening positions and techniques that were at least potentially available and died away, and that have since been obscured in most of the histories. This is not just about identifying some fleeting historical curiosities in the necessary progress towards the standardization of the radio audience, but rather about understanding the definition of radio as an institution and the redefinition of listening in the public sphere. By paying attention to gendered differences in listening, the practices of collective listening, the role of organized and politicized listener groups and so on, it becomes clear that we have to challenge conventional, teleological accounts of the inevitable rise of the mass individuated, isolated and disciplined audience.[1]

The pattern of public radio

Despite the seemingly unshakeable notion of a privatized listening audience, some of the earliest plans for public radio in Germany drew inspiration from public events in the classical sense – the gathering of an audience in a common space – to listen to programmes via a telephone with a loudspeaker attachment.[2] As with other public events, the audience would pay an entrance fee to the hall, in this case to listen to concerts, lectures, educational items and light entertainment broadcast from the state transmitter to community halls throughout the region. These plans were a compromise solution to the dilemma faced by those intending to open up radio to the 'general' or 'anonymous' public while nonetheless hesitating before the idea of mass individual reception in the home. The proposals for such forms of 'public listening' faltered not only on technical limitations (such as the primitive loudspeaker technology at the time, and the limited range of reception), but also, more importantly, for a range of political, ideological and commercial reasons.

By the mid-1920s radio had already found what came to be its domi nant social application as a medium broadcasting from centralized stations to private homes, its fragmentary, ephemeral content listened to, increasingly distractedly, by individuals and family groups.[3] Under the rubric of *Unterhaltungs-Rundfunk*, the schedulers developed a mix of formats of informational, educational, cultural and entertainment programmes, and rapidly learned to follow the patterns and routines of the average family day, and to mark out particular groups of listeners, such as farmers, parents, housewives and children. There are various explanations for the implementation and success of this mode of broadcasting. At a political and bureaucratic level, it

suited the government at a time of social and political unrest to centralize control of this potentially explosive new medium, licensing both its production and its reception – and in particular controlling any explicitly political content. At a commercial level, it suited the electronics industry to be able to sell individual sets to private listeners. For broadcasters there was the advantage of being able to attract already-existing constituencies to programmes (which in most cases brought familiar fare from more established cultural realms like the theatre, literature and the concert hall) via a reliable and readily accessible schedule. There was also increasingly a consumer demand, fuelled by commercial and state-sponsored advertising, for the easy and direct access to glamour, entertainment and information that a wireless in the home would offer.

Probably the most fundamental explanation is that, at a structural level, 'public radio' fulfilled a 'social need' arising out of the very process of modernization itself. In particular, the dissolution of traditional communities in the wake of industrialization, urbanization, the new mobility offered by modern forms of transport, and the rise of the home-centred nuclear family – a contradictory set of conditions for which Raymond Williams coined the term 'mobile privatization' – generated a need for an appropriate mode of communication.[4] In the wake of the First World War, public radio held out the promise of social cohesion amidst the centrifugal processes of modernization, a channel of communication from the state to its citizens, a place of education, information and entertainment, a distraction from the hardships and dislocations of modern life, a connection for isolated individuals and dispersed communities, a common and dependable experience in a shifting and uncertain world.

It is hard to reconstruct the sense of wonder and awe surrounding the arrival of wireless broadcasts into the public domain, but radio was a sensation in both senses of the word: a marvel that aroused huge public interest as well as a medium that invited participation in a new sensory experience. Radio's impact on the transformation of perception – including a reconfiguration of the aural/oral dimension of the public sphere – has to be understood in the context of an auditory environment that was already undergoing tremendous change on a variety of fronts. A whole new generation of noise had been unleashed by the processes of industrialization and urbanization, while architects, scientists and engineers were actively finding new ways to produce and manipulate sounds in a variety of environments.[5] In media terms, telegraphy (first visual and then sound telegraphy) had opened the way to the immediate transmission of information over distance and accelerated the compression of time and space that has become axiomatic for the modern condition. However, the specialist form of its encoding and decoding rendered the telegraph a privatized and individualized mode of communication in terms of reception and experience, despite its impact on the public spheres of news and business. In terms of a cultural media

history of modern *listening publics*, therefore, the explosive arrival of Edison's phonograph is a key phenomenon,[6] allowing for the first time potentially unlimited numbers of listeners to share in the same acoustic event. Unlike visual images that have been recorded in a variety of media for millenia, sound had never before been 'stored', nor voices disembodied and immortalized. The invention of sound recording was, then, as John Durham Peters has put it, 'perhaps the most radical of all sensory reorganizations in modernity'.[7]

Of course, what this means is that listening is taken to be a cultural practice, determined not only by nature but by historical circumstances as well. Although this insight is well-rehearsed in the literature, it is still worth reiterating since there remains something stubbornly counter-intuitive about the idea that our senses are not natural faculties – universal and trans-historical – that simply apprehend external phenomena. The emergence of radio and its publics therefore has to be considered in light of ongoing reconceptualizations of the art of listening.

Radio was the third of the new acoustic technologies, following the phonograph and the telephone. The techniques of listening that were associated with these pioneering technologies have been situated within a broader archeology of listening by Jonathan Sterne, who argues that there was an 'audile technique' – a specialist technicized notion of listening – that had developed in scientific and medical discourses over the long nineteenth century and which the telegraph eventually brought into the realm of mass media and everyday life.[8] This modernized listening was characterized by the 'individuation of acoustic space, the stratification of sounds and the separation of hearing from the other senses',[9] and prefigured all subsequent incarnations of audile techniques, including radio listening.

Arguably, this modern 'training of the ear' exerted a powerful, if subtle, influence on the development of radio listening, and coincided with the other pressures that led to the development of an individualized and privatized audience. Certainly there are numerous examples of Weimar writers commenting on the relentless solitude inspired by the new form of listening.[10] In other words, no matter what the conditions of reception, whether in a family group, a public place or alone, the modern disciplinary technique always serves to separate listeners, privatizing and individualizing their listening experience. Sterne cites William Kenney's description of the phonograph audience as 'large numbers of individuals [...] "alone together" ' to support this view. Yet he fails, in my view, to recognize the importance of Kenney's subsequent words: phonographs, 'far from promoting only "ceremonies of the solitary," paradoxically encouraged widely shared patterns of popular behavior, thought, emotion, and sensibility'.[11] In other words, here is a description of a social horizon of listening experience that potentially transcends the process of technical individuation. I would argue, therefore, that the modernization of listening needs to be understood precisely in this

field of tension between the privatization of the listening body and the emergence of new forms of inter-subjective auditory experience.

It was, then, into this fluid acoustic environment of new noises, new sound technologies and new listening techniques that 'public radio' was born. Where the phonograph had enabled a multitude of listeners to experience identical recordings in separate locations, the significant new dimension that public radio offered to each individual listener was, of course, the simultaneity of this experience with innumerable, absent others. For many observers, this reconfiguration of the experience of time and space, rather than any aesthetic or acoustic quality, was the irreducible essence of radio, and it seemed fitting that the technology to speak simultaneously to millions of listeners followed closely on the rise of mass politics and the experience of urban living. Here was a new technology with the ability to relay events as they happened, matching the speed and tempo of modernity and the metropolis, but reaching into the deepest rural regions. Moreover, its disregard for physical and social boundaries and its easy accessibility (at least in principle, though poor reception and high costs were prohibitive for many), was widely embraced in the prevailing mood of democratization and mass consumption.

Many of these themes were explicitly commented upon by contemporary observers. Indeed, far from perceiving radio as a quintessentially 'individualizing' medium of communication, some saw a virtue in radio as the natural instrument of collectivist politics and experience.[12] It was not uncommon to regard the reproductive recording technologies as by nature 'democratic'. It had often been remarked before the radio era how the new technologies of photography, cinema and gramophone had a democratizing function through the multiplication of the unique visual or aural event. In the words of the critic Fritz Ackermann, contributing in 1932 to an ongoing debate about the use of records on the radio,[13] the gramophone, 'brings the acoustic experience out of its aristocratic individuation into civilization's democratic arena'.[14] Radio took this a stage further, he suggested. Although the gramophone extended the reach of the original sound event, at the same time it worked to destroy its originality. Radio, by contrast, amplified its uniqueness in bringing it to the ears of all without diminishing the originality of the sound event. This was just one example of the privileging of 'liveness' as part of a realist aesthetic and the keystone of radio's public horizon of experience.

For others, radio's destiny lay less in its liveness than in its potentially all-embracing address, which could bring the peoples of the earth closer together – a particularly heartfelt desire in the aftermath of war and the years of 'Locarno Spirit'. So often were such claims made in the early days of the medium that one can legitimately speak of the mythologization of radio's democratic impulse. The so-called 'father' of German radio, Hans Bredow, proclaimed as early as 1924 that radio, as a 'worldwide auditorium', had to live up to its 'ethical responsibility' to create new channels for the human

spirit.[15] Bredow thought that radio should be called upon to develop a shared culture (significantly, a *Heimkultur)* and so heal the wounds of war, inflation and socio-political cleavages. At the same time, however, his fear of stirring up the political divisions within Germany prompted the architects of Weimar radio to keep it free of politics, a policy that was contentious even in the eyes of most of his contemporaries and arguably had dire consequences for the survival of the young republic. Radio had the potential to unite, but also to divide.

Despite the utopian and 'collectivist' discourses that surrounded the emergence of radio, the paradoxical situation that arose – that of a predominately *privatized* modern public characteristically encountering public life within domestic space – has raised the question of whether this relocation of the public into the home is by the same token a taming process, a literal *domestication* of the public by a regime of disciplinary techniques that include individuation, immobilization and separation;[16] or whether broadcasting in this form has generated new communicative entitlements across the public/private divide to reconfigure and reinvigorate the public sphere. This remains a live debate in both academic and public discourses, but it still revolves around the privatized form of broadcasting that took root during the 1920s. Indeed, so familiar and entrenched is this idea of broadcasting that alternative narratives have commonly been written out of the history, together with any notion of resistance to the various disciplinary mechanisms at work.

It might be instructive, therefore, to look again at radio's formative years to explore the parallel potentials for alternative publics that could lie behind the dominant historical narrative of a privatized audience and the textual inscription (through scheduling and target audiences) of an idealized and domesticated listener. The following discussion will look at three possibilities that are evident in the history of Weimar radio – the modernization of a mode of listening that had progressive potential even among the most domesticated and disciplined of audiences; the potential for an interactive radio network; and the potential for a public rooted in a collective listening experience.

A feminized listening public

Arguments about the prospect of a feminized public sphere echo throughout the early period of radio's definition as a privatized public medium, coinciding as it did with widespread challenges to the conventional gendered delineation of the public and private spheres.[17] For most liberal and left-wing commentators, radio's location in the home promised an ideal channel for reaching (and mobilizing) the newly enfranchised female electorate and for connecting countless women traditionally isolated in the home.[18] For Alice Fliegel, a writer and presenter for Norag (the Hamburg-based station), one of

the main values of radio for women was this opportunity, 'to break through the barriers of the four walls and be united with their sisters'.[19] For the SPD politician, Adele Schreiber, radio offered the potential, '… to educate women to *think politically* […] the radio can fulfil a great mission: the education of women to citizens of the state and their further education as citizens of the world'.[20] For others, this was a more alarming prospect, and they argued for the need to protect women and children from the 'intrusion' of (masculine) public affairs into the private sphere since it might entice women away from their domestic duties:

> There are some women who call on the inner riches of their homemaking powers to keep the radio at bay from their homes because it seems to them that the outside world will push its way into the realm of their family life with a much too brutal force.[21]

Yet not all conservative commentators saw the radio as a threat to family life. Some argued that the radio could, by integrating the home more closely into the modern public world, offer an incentive for more women to stay at home:

> Radio has given the woman's home a new quality, a new meaning. If up to now she has been driven out of the home to recover from the burden and monotony of domestic activity, nowadays the radio brings all her heart's desires into the home. […] in all probability, thanks to radio, the home will once again become her world.[22]

On all sides of the debate, though, women were deemed to have a special relationship to radio by virtue of its status as a *secondary* medium that could be listened to distractedly while continuing with their domestic chores.

This was an especially attractive proposition given the visibility of so many women 'idling their time away' at the movies, which had been, for many observers, just one more sign of the changing times, evidence for the way in which traditional values and social relations were being whittled away. These views were part of a widespread fascination with the presence of women inhabiting the new public space of the cinema; there is, moreover, a striking similarity in many of the commentaries in the way they describe how women – across class and generation – tended to become completely involved in the events portrayed on the screen, caught up in the sheer pleasure of seeing.[23] This image of the female spectator lost in emotional attachment, absorbed by the medium, could not be further from the dominant image of the female radio-listener as a housewife half-catching the sounds of the radio while going about her everyday tasks. This image of the radio-listener as housewife – a passive, distracted consumer of fragmentary, standardized, superficial fare – long dominated critiques of broadcasting and indeed of

mass culture more widely. She is, apparently, the paradigmatic member of a domesticated and therefore disciplined radio audience.[24] Yet it is nonetheless possible to identify a contradiction in her condition that opens up the possibility of a different interpretation, a contradiction that hangs on the notion of 'distraction'.

Zerstreuung is a term that appears time and again in writing on practices of perception in the Weimar cinema, often to disparage the idle diversions of cheap entertainment. In the work of Kracauer and Benjamin, however, *Zerstreuung* is recharged as a positive adaptation of spectatorship under the conditions of modernity.[25] For Kracauer, the conditions of reception in the picture palaces with their opulent decoration and constantly changing spectacle directed attention to the peripheral, the superficial, the external. For Benjamin, the constant 'shock effects' of the film could jolt the viewer out of unreflective absorption. For both, *Zerstreuung* reflects the fragmentation, alienation and cultural disintegration of modern experience and opens up a critical space in which the spectator is brought face to face with the transformation of modern society.

What, then, are the implications of all this for thinking about the radio audience?[26] Could the 'distracted' mode of listening associated with women in the home perhaps have had the same progressive potential for public life as the cinematic distraction identified by Benjamin and Kracauer? And are the gender roles identified in their analysis of the cinema – where women are described (implicitly or explicitly) as lost in their absorbed contemplation and emotional investment – not reversed when it comes to broadcasting?

In the main, radio was listened to absorbedly and during their leisure time by those working outside the home, whereas it was listened to distractedly during the day by housewives for whom the home was their place of work, that is to say, by precisely those women whose lives were least integrated into modern society and who were least likely to be reached by other media. Just as the changing spectacle and decorative surroundings of the picture palace invited a restless and curious way of seeing, so might the changing public soundscape clash against the insistent surroundings of private space to engender a restless and curious way of listening. The aural transportation to different places, a constant and repeating dislocation, might well act as a series of shock effects to jolt a listener out of unreflective absorption. Moreover, while the schedules were constructed by the mid-1920s to mirror and reinforce the average domestic day (thus making it more attractive for housewives to listen to radio), it was possible that the public horizon that opened up on these routines could have made the triviality, repetitiveness, isolation and monotony of that condition apparent. The schedule that was designed to weave itself into the routines of the household at the same time drew attention to those routines and the fact that those routines were shared by countless other households across the country. At the same time, despite having tailored its daytime programmes to the schedule of domestic routines,

radio brought the outside world into the home. In this sense, the customary daily round could be defamiliarized, made to seem somehow less 'natural' and preordained, and potentially allow for a more conscious – and thoroughly modern – mode of perception. Moreover, to paraphrase Benjamin's analysis of film, the sheer number of participants involved in perceiving a work of art (in this case a radio programme) changes the way that work of art is perceived. The radio – even in the most banal and formulaic guise of the *Frauenfunk* – would not merely reproduce the reified and 'individualized' world of the housewife, but potentially redeem aspects of shared experience, investing it with new inter-subjective significance and therefore a distinctly *public* dimension.

The (inter)-active listener

The redemption of shared experience that was discernible even in relation to the most standardized broadcast fare was not a sufficiently radical incarnation of the public for all critics. Among the most significant calls for radio reform was Brecht's demand for a more reciprocal arrangement between transmitter and receiver, for listeners to be not only more active, but more interactive.[27] When he made his famous appeal to the station directors in 1932 for radio to be allowed to become a true means of communication and not just one of distribution, he was doing so in the context of a recent history of lively two-way radio communication among amateur individuals, a history that was sidelined and eventually all but extinguished by the rise of public radio. In its early years, radio was a fascinating and relatively simple new technology that had been widely adopted by enthusiasts who sent and received signals both within Germany and beyond. The potential for radio to develop as a multifaceted network of communication was all the greater given the return to civilian life of war veterans who had gained experience in radio transmission and reception and who represented a pool of technical expertise in the community.[28] Indeed, it was precisely the very real prospect of radio developing into a potentially anarchic but influential form of communication that encouraged the nervous authorities to import the idea of entertainment radio from America – for which there was very little public demand at the time – and set it within a tightly regulated framework.

The broken promise of interactive radio is often implicitly read as a history of emasculation, from the heady days when boys would build and refine their own transmitters and talk to exotic strangers over the magical airwaves, locked away in their attics away from the everyday round of domestic life, to the dread years of passive, isolated immobility of mass domesticated and therefore feminized culture with its standardized, fragmentary and routinized programming listened to on manufactured sets. This reading, as William Boddy pointed out, would also offer a neat explanation for the hyperbolic celebration of 'interactivity' that surrounded the eager adoption

of new interactive computer-mediated technologies by a new generation of mainly male enthusiasts.[29] In other words, these invocations of radio's infancy as a two-way means of communication, while indicative of an unrealized potential, are ultimately little more than refinements to the conventional teleological account of the inevitable rise (and less inevitable fall) of the mass individuated, isolated and separated audience. Moreover, as so often in critical evaluations of media communication, the active audience is set before and above the passive audience, and the sender is privileged over the receiver.

So clearly, one of the alternative listening publics that was available but marginalized by 'public radio' was this idea of a network of interpersonal communication. But a further question arises: has this dominant narrative of a binary opposition between the (inter-)active and the 'passive' audience blinded us to the possibility of alternative publics that were not necessarily founded on the notion of involving those audiences actively in the *production* of radio texts? In other words, is the position of the listener always necessarily a disempowered one? Is the only way listeners can participate actively in the public sphere to 'make their *voices* heard'?

Again, a comparison with the cinema can be instructive. The silence and passivity expected of moviegoers in the darkened auditorium would seem on the face of it to have little to do with classical public participation. However, in a reworking of Habermas' thesis, Negt and Kluge argued that the cinema represents an alternative public sphere in as much as its arrangements allow for a degree of unpredictability that opposes the extent to which a dominant public sphere can be imposed from above.[30] The cinema cuts across both a particular local site of exhibition and the broader public horizon of the institution. Responses to a film are invoked at both an individual and an inter-subjective level in spectators who share in cinematic space, both architectural and symbolic, and who have the opportunity to engage with an imagined public. Miriam Hansen has demonstrated how the potential for an alternative public sphere can be identified in the mechanisms that were introduced to offset it, including censorship, the imposition of silence, the standardization of narratives and so on,[31] and we can certainly locate similar disciplinary techniques in relation to Weimar radio with the licensing of both broadcasters and receivers, the strict regulations on political and other content and the explicit attempts to construct a national family audience via a routinized, predictable diet of targeted programmes. There are, then, many parallels between cinema and early radio in terms of strategies of disciplining their respective audiences. But clearly one of the crucial differences between the cinema and the radio lies in the conditions of reception – primarily public and collective on the one hand, private and individuated on the other.

But radio was never exclusively a solitary experience. Radio was not only a social phenomenon, but a sociable one, with families and neighbours listening

in together as a matter of course right from the start. But this domesticated, familiar collectivity is difficult to describe as the kind of public that, in Negt and Kluge's sense, could allow for the 'unpredictability' that could oppose the imposition of the public sphere from above. Rather, we need to look elsewhere for the possibility of an 'oppositional' public sphere, in particular to those instances where an alternative organization of experience can be discerned. So perhaps the obvious place to begin looking is in those historical instances of collective listening outside of the familial home, and to recover the debates about the possibility of a politicization of the audience and a radicalization of listening.

Collective listening

From the outset, public radio in Germany was broadcasting to an already highly politicized population, deeply divided along ideological lines, but also highly organized in terms of joining political parties and unions and a host of other organizations, from walking and cycling groups to youth clubs and drama troupes. So perhaps it is not surprising to find that from the outset there were also groups that came together to listen to the radio.[32] The earliest were probably radio hams (*Bastler*) who built their own receivers too, and some were offshoots of existing organizations, for example the churches, women's union groups and the *Stahlhelm*.[33] School radio had begun in Germany in 1927, with communal evenings extended to parents' evenings and fairs.[34] The unions, too, were keen to promote collective listening to enable workers to exchange views and interpretations on what they heard over the radio. Indeed, one of the striking things about the radio magazines and popular illustrations of the day is the prevalence of images of listening. Alongside the familiar scenes of family groups and glamorous women, there is a surprising number of images of people listening in groups, and listening in public places – for example, in school, on the beach, on picnics, and in restaurants.

The first dedicated 'listening communities' (*Hörgemeinde*) were reported in spring 1929, mostly in villages, led by teachers involved in adult education.[35] Generally, these groups were organized by well-meaning professionals who were explicitly concerned to teach people how to listen 'properly' in order to make the most of the radio as an instrument of personal improvement. Professor Dr Behrendsohn, who ran a listening group in Hamburg, put it as follows, '…the people learn how they can work with the radio, how to approach the lectures, how to unpack what they've heard and make it productive for their further advancement'.[36] Such a position dovetailed neatly with the interests of the predominantly middle-class programmers, who had an explicitly pedagogic attitude towards public service, and had long been concerned with promoting an appropriate *Hörkultur* or 'listening culture', a mode of selective and concentrated perception by the discerning

listener in place of the so-called 'radio sickness' where the radio, far from acting as a cultural good, becomes an indiscriminate source of background noise.[37] It can also be read as an attempt to graft something of the discursive bourgeois public sphere on to the modern mass media.

The stations, therefore, did begin to respond positively to the growing interest in collective listening. For example, the national radio service, the Deutsche Welle, began broadcasting experimental programmes for collective listening on Tuesday evenings in the autumn of 1931, with titles such as *Weltanschauung und Gegenwart* (a series introducing key terms in political thought, including socialism, conservatism and humanism) or later, when the economic crisis was at its height, a series on *Das Problem der Arbeitslosigkeit*.[38]

By the end of the year 749 listening communities were reported, well over half (479) of them in rural areas, mostly led by teachers associated with the Deutscher Schul-Funk-Verein, some by priests. There were also some 166 groups associated with existing organizations, 66 associated with bookshops and 26 in adult education colleges.[39] There were regional experiments, too. The station in Cologne (Werag) broadcast *Menschen und Welt* every weekday morning from November 1931 explicitly as 'Gemeinschaftsempfang für Arbeitslose'. The stations in Leipzig (Mirag) and Berlin (Funkstunde) ran similar programmes, and by 1932 there were 500 listening groups reported among the growing ranks of the unemployed.[40]

In some ways, these kinds of endeavours can be seen as the radio establishment's response to a much more significant development in collective listening, namely that organized by the various workers' radio clubs.[41] These activist clubs, which grew out of the social democratic and communist parties, proclaimed that radio must become the mouthpiece of the proletariat in the realization of the historical destiny of the working class. They were operative on all fronts – teaching workers how to build low-cost transmitters and receivers, campaigning for a workers' station, occasionally jamming the signals of the bourgeois stations,[42] and inculcating a critical ear in their members by the reviews and essays in their journals and in the organization of collective listening. Groups as large as 500 would gather in public halls to listen to the radio and to generate a critical public discussion of the output, not just in the hall, but by sending reports of the proceedings to the party press and to the head of the radio station.[43] In 1931, the *Arbeiterfunk* published guidelines for collective listening, and recommended that representatives of all the local socialist groups and members of the press should be present. For greatest effectiveness, numbers should not exceed 100 participants (an indication of the popularity of such events). After the programme, the discussion should be ordered according to the following critical rubrics, 'Value, Effectiveness, Relevance, Weaknesses, New Suggestions etc.' After the discussion, there could be either a record or a radio concert, or recitals or readings by those present.[44]

In 1932, as nationalist radio reforms under the right-wing von Papen government presaged the National Socialist takeover a few months later,[45] the

workers' radio clubs organized a series of demonstrations, attracting 20,000 people in Leipzig, 30,000 in Essen and Düsseldorf. Although they never achieved their aim of a workers' station, it is clear that the workers' radio clubs did make a considerable impact throughout the latter years of the Weimar Republic, not least in acting as a model for another section of the disaffected audience that self-consciously learned from the organizational strategies of the workers' radio clubs – the right-wing nationalists and the National Socialists.

Though the Nazi Party had burst onto the political scene at the same time as the first broadcast in the autumn of 1923, their voices were banned from the airwaves and the organization concentrated on other forms of political action and propaganda. However, by the end of 1930 the regional Party organizations had begun appointing radio lieutenants to organize what they called 'the struggle for the radio', at first under the auspices of the nationalist 'union of German radio listeners'[46] and then later on their own behalf.[47]

An article in the Nazi journal *Die Sturmwelle* on 22 June 1931, entitled 'The conquest of the radio has begun!', acknowledged that the left wing had been much quicker to recognize the power of the new medium and to learn how to exert influence over the programme-makers. Of course, the extent of this influence was drastically exaggerated for propagandistic ends – and so it was claimed that 'the so-called "cultural pioneers", the enemies of the people and of the race' had appropriated the radio to carry their spiritual and moral destruction to ever-wider circles of the German nation'.[48] As they saw it, the 'Jew-infested' radio[49] had succumbed to the false gods of objectivity and neutrality, instead of fulfilling its destiny as the monolithic voice of the national will.[50] It was incumbent upon all 'nationally-minded' Germans to attack the 'Marxist' cultural propaganda, and that was why the NSDAP had taken over the leadership of the nationalist union of German radio listeners – to build a power base among the listeners equal to that of the Marxist organizations. The tasks would be threefold: to bring together all of the nationalist listeners against the predominance of the socialist and communist listener organizations; to end the disenfranchisement of the listener with representation on programming advisory councils; and to educate the listener in their own training and technical courses. The Party also organized a new listening service in every region where radio lieutenants would listen to and report weekly on a given list of agreed stations, both local and foreign. The documents indicate that there were at least 24 local groups in Hamburg alone during this period.[51] What becomes clear, then, by looking at this extraordinary period, where just a few years after the introduction of broadcasting the definition of radio was still not quite settled in a country riven by crisis and political fragmentation, is that there was a range of alternative configurations of the audience available. What is striking about the 'struggle' for the radio on both sides of this intense ideological confrontation is the way in which listeners were regarded as potentially *active* publics, and not just as *passive* recipients of propagandistic messages.

However, once the Nazis were in power, any such notion of an alternative public sphere was rapidly abandoned.[52] Although the listeners' groups were lauded in hindsight as a 'revolutionary movement', the revolution was considered complete and the task became simply to keep the listeners in line, as Hadamovsky, the head of the Nazi Union of German Listeners, made clear: 'We went into the radio as Hitler's soldiers, under the orders of Dr Goebbels. [Our task is now…] to make every fellow German a radio listener and so bring each and every one into direct contact with the political and spiritual leadership of the nation.'[53] Collective listening was still on the agenda, but to be achieved by the installation of loudspeakers in factories and public places, where people were expected to down tools and listen attentively whenever the *Führer* spoke to the nation.[54]

Listening publics

Running through this discussion has been the understanding that the construction of an audience is not necessarily the same thing as the formation of a public. While broadcasters in inter-war Germany, as elsewhere, were generally interested in constructing an audience in terms of an empirical aggregate of listeners, the construction of a listening *public* relies on the imaginary, subjective reference to other unknown listeners. This awareness of absent others, however dimly perceived, is a condition of participation in a public. We can see how this came to be reflected in the development of broadcast forms which acknowledged and yet sought to overcome the distant, dispersed and domesticated audience – programmes that played up the semblance of participation by emphasizing liveness, the universality of appeal, or the intimate, dialogic mode of address. But it also has implications for the ways in which people listened to the radio and how that in itself feeds back into conceptions of 'the public'.

The 'public sphere' cannot be reduced to the space for information, discussion or will formation, but must include that subjective rhetorical dimension that connects any one listener with any number of others. For the bourgeois public sphere, print technology had lent a depersonalized authority to the word and could be (re)produced for an anonymous, dispersed and indefinite readership, an abstracted audience that was imagined, and imagined itself as 'a public' (and, indeed, as a 'nation'). This invention of a *reading* public was not just a technological transformation, but also a cultural one that understood the 'publicness' of print in new ways.[55] That notion of publicness informed the development of public radio in Germany, as elsewhere, with explicit attempts to reinvigorate a sense of public participation and cultural nationhood. But radio did not simply add a soundtrack to conventional notions of the public sphere since the new forms of publicness it enabled were at least as much about distraction and distance as about rational deliberation and involvement. The invention of a new *listening* public was,

in other words, caught up in the tensions between normative ideals of publicness associated with the bourgeois reading public and newer forms of mediated publicness associated with the cinema and mass culture.

The ways in which understandings of the public have changed in relation to the successive generations of communication technologies and changing commercial contexts have been the subject of countless investigations and debates, although there has been a tendency to pass over the particular auditory dimensions of the experience and imagining of public life. It is worth adding, therefore, that the tensions between competing ideas of publicness are echoed in radio's peculiarities as a medium. The absence of image, its disembodied voice and its call to the imagination have affinities with the printed word, while its immediacy and sensory appeal locate it just as firmly in the realm of performance. This contradictory character contributed to the variety of responses to the new technology.

One of the characteristics of the way that the potential of radio was talked about in the 1920s was as the construction of an 'artificial reality' through an acoustic space, a space that was *subjectively* perceived or imagined by individual listeners, but that nonetheless had some *objective* reality in its simultaneous and dispersed consumption by a multitude of such individual listeners. Since this 'artificial reality' was technologically generated, it followed that the effects could be strategically controlled on a number of levels: as aesthetic experimentation in the technological age; as an intervention in political debates; and as an experiential response to the consequences of modernization.[56] Whatever the limitations in practice, in the first decade of public radio in Germany, the utopian debates and experimental listening practices certainly demonstrate a widespread and imaginative engagement with the idea of a listening public. There were also, it seems, spaces carved out by listeners both individually and collectively for resistance to the public sphere imposed from above. Radio was a site that both generated new experiences and enabled and encouraged reflection of those new experiences in and by its listeners. In all its various forms, radio represented a distinctive recombination of individual sense perception and social reality, and thus redrew the social horizon of experience by bringing into being something that might be called a listening public.

Notes

1 This kind of account is particularly problematic in the German context since organized collective listening became an everyday experience for many people during the Third Reich with the setting up of loudspeakers in workplaces and public spaces. However, it is also true that domestic reception continued as the dominant model for radio listening throughout this period.

2 For example, in 1922 the 'Deutsche Stunde für drahtlose Belehrung und Unterhaltung' announced plans to exploit wireless technology in new ways by installing receivers with loudspeakers in halls to educate and entertain the public: *Münchener Neueste Nachrichten* no. 374, 6 Sept. 1922, cited in D. Tosch,

Der Rundfunk als 'Neues Medium' im Spiegel der Münchner Presse 1918–1926, 2 vols (Munich, 1987), vol 2, p. 148. Significantly, this is one of the first press references to the idea of entertainment radio. It also raised the prospect of music in the factories. Plans for such a 'Saalfunk' continued to be put forward at least until autumn 1924. For more information see W. B. Lerg, *Rundfunkpolitik in der Weimarer Republik* (Munich, 1980); C. Lenk, *Die Erscheinung des Rundfunks: Einführung und Nutzung eines neuen Mediums* (Opladen, 1997); C. Lenk, 'Medium der Privatheit? Über Rundfunk, Freizeit und Konsum in der Weimarer Republik', in I. Marßolek, A. von Saldern (eds), *Radiozeiten: Herrschaft, Alltag, Gesellschaft (1924–1960)* (Potsdam, 1999), pp. 206–17.

3 The repeated calls for a concentrated 'Hörkultur' furnish evidence for the widespread form of distracted listening, particularly as radio lost its mystical status and became normalized as part of everyday domestic life. The technological transition from headphones to loudspeaker may also have accentuated this trend as the decade wore on, although even headsets did not preclude people from engaging in other activities while listening in.

4 R. Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (London, 1990), p. 26.

5 See E. Thompson, *The Soundscape of Modernity: Architectural Acoustics and the Culture of Listening in America, 1900–1933* (Cambridge MA, 2002).

6 Indeed, it was Edison's desire to develop an automated transcription service for the telegraph that inspired his development of the phonograph, 'a repeater that would store words without the labor of the human hand or errors of human attention.' John Durham Peters. 'Helmholtz, Edison and Sound History', in L. Rabinovitz, *Memory Bytes: History, Technology, and Digital Culture* (Cambridge MA, 2003), p. 188. Of course, Edison's work was itself the product of a wider cultural and scientific interest in acoustics and technology, and indeed was only the most successful of a range of related inventions that were developed in the nineteenth century. Special mention should also be made here for Emil Berliner's 'grammophone' that used discs rather than cylinders. For a full 'archaeology' of reproductive sound technologies ('hearing and talking machines'), see J. E. Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham, 2003). See also Corey Ross in this volume (Chapter 2) for a detailed account of the development of phonography in Germany.

7 J. D. Peters, *Speaking into the Air* (Chicago, 1999), pp. 160–1.

8 Sterne, *Past*, pp. 137–8.

9 Ibid., p. 155.

10 See Lenk, *Erscheinung*, pp. 157–9.

11 W. H. Kenney, *Recorded Music in American Life: The Phonograph and Popular Memory, 1890–1945* (Oxford, 2003), p. 54.

12 See M. M. Gehrke, 'Das Ende der privaten Sphäre,' *Die Weltbühne* 26 (1930), vol. 2, pp. 61–4. See also R. Arnheim, *Radio* (New York, 1971). For Arnheim, radio 'eliminates not only the boundaries between countries but also between provinces and classes of society. It insists on the unity of national culture and makes for centralization, collectivism and standardization.' He saw radio as a 'universal commodity', cheap enough to be accessible regardless of class (pp. 238–9).

13 There was a veritable showdown between the record companies and the radio stations for several months in 1931 over the proportion of recorded music on the airwaves. See J.-F. Leonhard (ed.), *Programmgeschichte des Hörfunks in der Weimarer Republik*, 2 vols (Munich, 1997), vol. 1, pp. 414–15.

14 F. Ackermann, 'Rundfunk und Schallplatte', *Rufer und Hörer* 12 (1932), pp. 534–6, here p. 534.

15 See P. Dahl, *Radio. Sozialgeschichte des Rundfunks für Sender und Empfänger* (Reinbek, 1983).
16 According to Jonathan Crary, part of the cultural logic of capitalism in modernity (capital as high-speed exchange) was the demand to be able to switch attention rapidly from one object to another. This adaptability of perception is part of the internalization of disciplinary imperatives as theorized by Foucault; the management of attention and modes of perception is part of the wider process of disciplining the body. See J. Crary, 'Fernsehen im Zeitalter des Spektakels' in W. Herzogenrath (ed.), *TV Kultur: Das Fernsehen in der bildenden Kunst seit 1879* (Dresden, 1997), pp. 66–75, here pp. 73–4.
17 For a detailed analysis of these debates see K. Lacey, *Feminine Frequencies: Gender, German Radio, and the Public Sphere, 1923–1945* (Ann Arbor, 1996).
18 For an account of the formal propaganda devised for women by the political parties of the Weimar Republic, particularly during elections, see J. Sneeringer, *Winning Women's Votes: Propaganda and Politics in Weimar Germany* (Chapel Hill, 2002).
19 A. Fliegel, 'Die Frau im Rundfunk', *Die Norag* 4 (1927), no. 57, unpaginated.
20 A. Schreiber, 'Dein Rundfunk – sei Deine Welt!', *Die Sendung* 5 (1928), p. 131.
21 M. Buczkowska, 'Der Rundfunk und die Frau', *Rufer und Hörer* 1 (1931/32), p. 561.
22 R. Zuar, 'Die Stellung der Frau zum Rundfunk', *Die Sendung* 3 (1926), no. 11, p. 3.
23 Many contemporary commentators on the cinema seemed to be more concerned with the spectacle of the female spectator (as did their chaperones) than with the spectacle on the screen. See P. Petro, *Joyless Streets: Women and Melodramatic Representation in Weimar Germany* (Princeton, 1989), pp. 39–46.
24 The recognition of the 'activity' of all audiences in the production of meaning is, it should be noted, something that is now widely acknowledged in the field of media and cultural studies. The 'active audience' in this sense, however, did not feature in the contemporary debates. The radio press, especially the middle-class magazines, focused rather on the cultivation of a 'listening culture' in which selected and concentrated appreciation akin to that found in the concert hall would replace the 'Nebenbeihören' of mass culture.
25 S. Kracauer, 'Cult of Distraction' in S. Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament* (London, 1995), pp. 323–30 (originally published in *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 4 Mar. 1926); W. Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', in W. Benjamin, *Illuminations* (London, 1992), pp. 211–44.
26 This question is more fully explored in K. Lacey, 'Zerstreuung, Langeweile und Kitsch. Der Weimarer Rundfunk und die Modernisierung des Hörens,' in Marßolek & Saldern, *Radiozeiten*, pp. 218–30.
27 B. Brecht, 'Radiotheorie 1927–1932', in B. Brecht, *Gesammelte Werke. Vol. 1* (Frankfurt/Main, 1967), pp. 119–29.
28 Some 185,000 men from the signals corps returned after the war, armed with equipment and expertise. Lerg, *Rundfunkpolitik* , p. 43.
29 W. Boddy, 'Archaeologies of Electronic Vision and the Gendered Spectator', *Screen* 35 (1994), pp. 105–22.
30 O. Negt & A. Kluge, *Public Sphere and Experience* (Minneapolis, 1993).
31 M. Hansen, *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film* (Cambridge MA, 1991).
32 There were also events organized by radio dealers to promote the new medium, and pub landlords and fairground managers and the like, who would present the wondrous new machine to impress their clientele. See Lenk, 'Medium der

Privatheit?', pp. 207–8. There were also groups that came together to build radio receivers and transmitters (*Bastelvereine*).

33 Der Stahlhelm (Bund der Frontsoldaten) to Bredow, about the founding of a 'Funkhörer–Vereinigung' with a journal called the *Stahlhelm-Sender*, 2 May 1932, Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde (BArch BL) R78/585, fol. 199–202.

34 A. Neels, 'Gemeinschaftsempfang als Aufgabe und Tatsache', *Rufer und Hörer* 2 (1932), pp. 55–9, here p. 57.

35 *Gemeinschaftsempfang* was understood at the time as 'das Abhören von Rundfunkdarbietungen in Gruppen und mit dem Zweck zu verstehen, das Gehörte unter Leitung eines mit dem Inhalt der Darbietung Vertrauten zu erörtern.' Professor Dr H. Schubotz, Director of the Deutsche Welle, in *Funk-Almanach* 8 (1931), p. 30, cited after Lenk, *Erscheinung*, p. 85.

36 Neels, 'Gemeinschaftsempfang als Aufgabe', p. 58.

37 F. K. Enders, 'Hörkultur', *Rufer und Hörer* 3 (1933), pp. 239–40, here p. 239.

38 'Die nächsten Abende für Gemeinschaftsempfänge durch Rundfunk', *Hamburger Echo* no. 307, 7 Nov. 1931, cited after F. Merkel, *Rundfunk und Gewerkschaften in der Weimarer Republik und in der frühen Nachkriegszeit*, (Potsdam, 1996), p. 239.

39 *Hamburger Echo* no. 146, 18 June 1932, cited after Merkel, *Rundfunk*.

40 Neels, 'Gemeinschaftsempfang als Aufgabe', p. 58.

41 There is evidence that the authorities were extremely anxious about offering such groups 'the oxygen of publicity'. For example, the Minister of the Interior, Wirth, wrote to radio executive Bredow in 1930 asking that the broadcast greetings to the workers' radio clubs not be repeated. He deemed the Freier Radiobund a 'purely communist organization' that was working to serve only the interests of the KPD. Although he had sympathy for the desire to speak directly with enthusiastic listeners, he could not countenance any indication of support for the extremist 'staatsfeindliche' parties: Letter from Wirth to Bredow, Berlin, 30 April 1930, BArch BL R78/602, fol. 31.

42 The *Berliner Börsenzeitung* in an article entitled 'Störung des Westdeutschen Rundfunks durch Kommunisten' reported on 3 July 1931 that protesters had climbed up a transmitter in the Cologne region, cut the cable, fitted their own, and broadcast an election speech on 1 July at 11 p.m.

43 H. M. Funck, 'Die Frau und der Rundfunk', *Arbeiterfunk* 6 (1931), p. 99.

44 'Richtlinien für Rundfunkhörstunden', *Arbeiterfunk* 6 (1931), p. 549. See also 'Wie wird die Deutsche Welle abgehört?', *Arbeiterfunk* 4 (1929), p. 134.

45 The reforms were introduced on 29 July 1932. Private capital was withdrawn from all radio concerns, giving the national and regional governments total financial control. The *Reichsrundfunkgesellschaft* (RRG) became the central radio authority and was given new powers to pursue the interests of the state in broadcasting according to a new set of guidelines drawn up by the Ministry of the Interior. The sole authorized national station was the *Deutschlandsender*, and the only authorized news agency was the *Drahtloser Dienst*, a company directly associated with the RRG. For more details about these radio reforms see Lacey, *Frequencies*, pp. 33–5.

46 The declared aims of the Reichsverband Deutscher Rundfunkhörer e.v. included 'breaking the red listeners' organizations': *Berliner Illustrirte Nachtausgabe*, 6 June 1930 (press cutting in BArch BL R78/836, fol. 137).

47 Minutes of the meeting of the OG-Fob (Ortsgruppen Funksobleute) bei Krüger, Brodschrangen, 3 Dec. 1931, BArch BL NS22/1178, fol. 5.

48 *Die Sturmwelle*, 22 June 1931, press cutting in BArch BL R78–585, fol. 56.

49 'Die jüdische Klagemauer', 31 Aug. 1933, unidentified press cutting for the Pressedienst der deutschen Sender in BArch R78/780, fol. 163–4.

50 E. Hadamovsky, 'Ein Vorkämpfer des nationalen Rundfunks' in BArch R78/780 Pressedienst der deutschen Sender 1933, p. 2; also Politisierung des Rundfunks, 1 June 1933, p. 55.

51 See BArch NS26/1178. Rundfunkorganisation Hamburg: Anordnungen; Rundschreiben; Wahlpropaganda; Beschwerden. See also D. Rimmele, 'Anspruch und Realität nationalsozialistischer Rundfunkarbeit vor 1933 in Hamburg,' in W. B. Lerg & R. Steininger (eds), *Rundfunk und Politik 1923–1973* (Berlin, 1975), pp. 135–151.

52 There had been a stagnation in the number of *Hörgemeinde* already by 1932. This has been attributed to the role of the 'opinion maker' undermining spontaneity and creativity (B. Liedmann, 'Hörgemeinden in der Weimarer Republik. Ein Beitrag zur historischen Rezeptionsforschung des Rundfunks', *Mitteilungen des Studienkreises Rundfunk und Geschichte* 2 (1987), pp. 147–166, here p. 162); and also to the increasing private ownership of radio sets and a decline in the explicitly educational content of the programming (Lenk, *Erscheinung*, p. 86). Writing at the time, Axel Neels claimed that groups only prospered if there was a charismatic personality to lead the discussions. There was also a problem in that groups tended to come from similar backgrounds with similar political and ideological positions (Neels, 'Gemeinschaftsempfang als Aufgabe', p. 56). Other commentators, however, were more sanguine about the homogeneity of listening groups and their durability: A. Marx, 'Das Wesen Des Gemeinschaftsempfanges', *Rufer und Hörer* 2 (1932), p. 404.

53 E. Hadamovsky, 'Dienst am Rundfunk ist Dienst am Volk', 10 August 1933, BArch BL R78/780 Pressedienst der deutschen Sender 1933, p. 124.

54 Special radio sets called *Deutsche Arbeitsfrontempfänger 1011* were produced for use in factories. The number 1011 was a reference to a speech Hitler broadcast from a Siemens factory on 10 November 1933, which had been massively promoted to the extent that every factory siren in the country was sounded before the broadcast and all production came to a standstill while he spoke. The speech was reprinted in newspapers and pamphlets. E. Fischer (ed.), *Dokumente zur Geschichte des Deutschen Rundfunks und Fernsehens* (Göttingen, 1957), p. 31. The factory radio was also considered instrumental in providing distraction and relaxation with entertainment in rest periods. See *Handbuch des deutschen Rundfunks* (Heidelberg, 1938), p. 16; H. Teichert, 'Erfolgreiche Arbeit der Funkwarte: Ausdehnung der Funkwarte organisation auf die Betriebe', 23 Jan. 1933 BArch R78/780 Pressedienst der deutschen Sender 1933, p. 116; and documents of the Propaganda Ministry relating to public loudspeaker 'columns' dated 1939 in BArch NS–10/46, fol. 212–37.

55 The reading public valorized the universality implied by the disembodiment and disinterestedness of printed public discourse, even while this disembodiment was more illusory – and ideological – than real. See N. Fraser, 'What's Critical About Critical Theory? The Case of Habermas and Gender', in S. Banhabib & D. Cornell, *Feminism as Critique: On the Politics of Gender* (Minneapolis, 1987), pp. 31–56.

56 See D. Schrage, *Psychotechnik und Radiophonie: Subjektkonstruktionen in artifiziellen Wirklichkeiten 1918–1932* (Bonn, 2001).

5

Radio Programming, Ideology and Cultural Change: Fascism, Communism and Liberal Democracy, 1920s–1950s

Konrad Dussel

Twentieth-century German history is indelibly marked by deep ruptures that have profoundly affected all aspects of society. The history of German radio is no exception. The political systems of the Weimar Republic, the Nazi dictatorship, and the East and West German states each established not only entirely different forms of broadcast organization, but also completely different ideas about radio programming. This chapter attempts to give an overview of the relevant types and how they changed over time. However, it limits itself to the period until about 1960, when television began to emerge as the dominant mass medium, thus presenting its own particular challenges to radio. In this sense the decades before 1960 comprise a discrete era, a Radio Age without competition from television.

The Radio Age possessed its own radio programming culture, or to be more precise, multiple radio programming cultures, especially in the case of Germany, where four very different incarnations emerged: two liberal democratic, one fascist and one communist. However, these cultures cannot be adequately captured through sole reference to their political labels. Perhaps even more than in most areas of culture, in the case of radio it makes sense to differentiate not only according to political content, which was in any case rather limited, but also to examine the more general structures within which radio was situated.

For the sake of orientation, it is helpful to adopt a three-point framework which was first developed as the guiding principles of the BBC (and to this day frames the BBC's self-definition), and later taken up by the public broadcasters of West Germany after 1945: 'to provide sound and television programmes of information, education and entertainment for general reception.'[1] 'Information', 'education', and 'entertainment' can serve as the general points by which the specific expressions of the various radio programme cultures can be more precisely defined. This does not mean simply evaluating them against given normative measures, but also determining how much information, education and entertainment existed in each of the programmes and how they were expressed in terms of concrete content.

The resulting differences between the various radio cultures can be explained to a large extent by the changes of political regime. Yet there also existed within the medium itself a clearly discernible dynamic driven first and foremost by the seemingly permanent conflict between programmers and listeners over the amount and content of entertainment music to be broadcast. In this context, the provision of American products has always been the central bone of contention.[2]

State-controlled educational radio in the Weimar Republic

At the beginning of the 1920s, the new technology of radio was being cautiously evaluated in Germany. From very early on, two things were already clear. One was that it could not be stopped: 'The development of this new facility… is now encroaching on Europe and will also have to be dealt with in Germany.' However, it was just as clear that this development should be pursued differently from the practice in America, where 'due to lack of any governmental guidelines, no restrictions stand in its way, which has already led to chaotic conditions.' Sole responsibility was assumed by the representatives of the *Reichspostministerium* (Reich Postal Ministry), who wanted to 'shape the affair in Germany from the beginning in such a way as to preserve the interests of the nation, so that a development such as that in America is made impossible.'[3]

Conditions in America were not nearly so chaotic as imagined in Germany,[4] but this fact effectively played no role in subsequent actions. Under the leadership of the energetic State Secretary of the Postal Ministry, Hans Bredow, a broadcast regime was established by the end of 1926 which was as complex as it was over-regulated. Since the Ministry did not want to refuse the money of private investors, an essentially privatized system was chosen–though ultimately the national and local state governments maintained clear controlling rights. To begin with, although the regional broadcasting companies' entire financial investment had to be paid for by private shareholders, they were required to transfer majority voting rights to the Postal Ministry. Then, the programming was completely split into two components: the entire up-to-the-minute informational programming would be provided by a specially tailored central editorial office, which was strictly regulated to guard against improper political bias; all other programming would be supervised by either a 'monitoring committee' composed of governmental representatives, or at least by a 'cultural advisory council'. Finally, there was also to be a co-ordinating umbrella organization, the *Reichs-Rundfunk-Gesellschaft* (Reich Broadcasting Company), in which the majority voting rights were also possessed by the German government.[5]

Curiously, the financial model chosen by the architects of Weimar radio survived through all the changes of political regime in twentieth-century Germany. In order to listen legally to the radio, one had to pay a regular subscription fee to the *Reichspost* (Postal Corporation).[6] The fact that the payment

of 2 RM introduced in 1924 remained unchanged in West Germany until 1969, and in East Germany even until the collapse of the state, clearly highlights how expensive radio-listening was in the 1920s. The fundamental importance of this regulation deserves special emphasis: since programmers were largely independent of advertising income, they had a great deal of freedom, and only gradually had to learn to take the interests of listeners into consideration.

Democracy in Weimar Germany was young and had many enemies, so its defenders had very little chance of directing the new medium exclusively towards their own goals. Since the understanding of democracy was at this time largely formal (the emphasis lay more on the process of majority rule rather than the values that underpinned it), it was thought that one would have to allow equal broadcast time to different political views, even anti-republican ones. In order to avoid the potentially huge difficulties that such an arrangement would entail, Weimar radio retreated into the principle of apolitical non-partisanship: nobody should be able to say anything about political issues on the radio. Although this policy continued to present problems in practice, and although there were also a few attempts towards a certain politicization of programming, in general it was strictly adhered to.

During the Weimar Republic, German broadcasting was not primarily a medium of information. It was above all a medium of education, with entertainment taking a distant second place. In this regard, there was strong concordance with the principles by which John Reith led the early BBC.[7] The basic outlines and many of the details of Germany's early radio programming have recently been researched.[8] It is clear that radio was seen by its producers primarily as an educational tool: its focus became narrower and more school-like in the late afternoon and early evening, before shifting to a more wide-ranging bourgeois-intellectual tone in the prime time between 8 and 10 p.m.

The early evening was reserved for general educational lectures. For example, starting in 1926 the Stuttgart station broadcast three daily half-hour lectures. The largest proportion consisted of lectures with cultural themes, such as theatre, art and cultural history, but there was also a place for medical, legal, scientific and technical lectures. Beyond this, the peak listening time in early evening brought a steady diet of language lessons, in English, French, Spanish, and even in the artificial language of Esperanto.

After 8 p.m., German broadcasters clearly saw themselves in the tradition of refined bourgeois theatre: this was the time for opera and drama programmes, classical concerts, radio plays and literary readings. Highlights (as understood by the programmers, if indeed not by all of the listeners) included series such as the 32-part cycle 'Mozart: His Life and Work', which was broadcast on the Stuttgart station for several months during 1925 and 1926, always on Monday evenings from 8 to 11 p.m.

In this unmistakably *bildungsbürgerlich* context, simple entertainment found it more difficult to establish a slot. On no account were standards to

be compromised; even here, the programming heads saw themselves as educators and arbiters of taste. When 'light' music was presented by the stations' entertainment orchestras, it still generally originated from major classical composers, albeit specially selected and sometimes re-arranged. In contrast, modern entertainment music influenced by contemporary American jazz was hardly to be found in radio programming. In so far as it was broadcast at all, then invariably in the small hours, and often in the form of dance-hall broadcasts in order to save costs.[9]

Yet German programming did not remain wholly static. Programmers critically observed the work of their colleagues as well as their own; they experimented and improved. Over time, some of the ambitions towards high culture were scaled back as less demanding entertainment gradually received more emphasis and the news/information content expanded. None of these changes, however, signalled any fundamental reorientation. The only far-reaching changes during the Weimar years were organizational, as radio was brought even closer to the state during 1932, culminating with complete nationalization after Adolf Hitler was declared Reich Chancellor on 30 January 1933.

The National Socialist approach: Radio entertainment for the nation

Although German radio was organizationally very close to the state during the years of the Weimar Republic, this gave it at least one advantage: during most of that time, the National Socialist party was not permitted to use it. It was only during the final phases that there appeared a few Nazi propaganda broadcasts, beginning in mid-1932. After the National Socialists came to power, this was to be immediately and fundamentally changed. Among the most spectacular actions was the realization of a long-prepared plan: namely, the foundation of the *Reichsministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda* (Reich Ministry for Public Education and Propaganda), under the leadership of Joseph Goebbels. Among the central functions of this new ministry was the control of German broadcasting.[10]

Establishing this control took time, for the complicated, multifaceted German broadcasting system that had been built up since 1923 could not be converted overnight into a compliant, obedient instrument of the Propaganda Minister. Resistance to the changes arose on a number of levels, but only a very small part of it was directly political and anti-Nazi. The easiest matter was to change the management personnel. After just a few weeks, 10 of the 11 German broadcasters had new station managers. But although most of the new men were confirmed National Socialists, this still did not mean that they unconditionally obeyed every command from Berlin. In the beginning, the regional party leaders (*Gauleiter*) still maintained considerable influence.

The first step in unifying German broadcasting into a centrally controlled national system was the creation of the *Reichssendeleitung* (Reich Broadcasting

Management), a new headquarters placed above the regional companies and their managers. In the summer of 1933, the young National Socialist, Eugen Hadamovsky (b. 1904), was installed as *Reichssendeleiter* (Reich Broadcasting Director); he had been working under Goebbels since 1931. Hadamovsky was the contact man between the Ministry and the individual stations, and his primary task was to co-ordinate programming and to influence it along National Socialist lines. The first clear manifestation of this central influence was a daily programme with the straightforward title 'The Hour of the Nation', which all stations had to broadcast from 7 to 8 p.m. Its primary goal was to present Germany's cultural heritage, filtered according to National Socialist criteria, and to cast a positive light on home-grown cultural achievements. After running for approximately two years, however, the programme was discontinued at the end of 1935.

Apparently, Hadamovsky and other early staff members failed to satisfy Goebbels' expectations completely. In the spring of 1937 there were several staff shake-ups and the creation of a new office with the imposing title of *Reichsintendant* (Reich Superintendent). This new position was given to Heinrich Glasmeier, who had previously been the manager of the Cologne station and would now be the new head of the still extant *Reichs-Rundfunk-Gesellschaft*. However, there was still no uniform 'Reich programme', just the continuing, coexistent programmes of the regional stations, which had nominally been converted into *Reichssender* (Reich stations) in 1934. German federalism in cultural matters managed to defend itself, even against National Socialist centralization efforts. It was only the escalating pressures of the Second World War which forced the start of a truly unified programme on 9 June 1940. However, Goebbels was not to be the unquestionable master of this new programme. Even at the beginning of the war, he had to allow the armed forces to edit or at least inspect anything even vaguely military in nature. Foreign propaganda was also taken away from him and put under the control of Foreign Minister Ribbentrop.[11]

Goebbels therefore never had sole authority over what programmes were broadcast on German stations. He had even less power over what the audience chose to hear. In the beginning, his priority was simply to enable as many Germans as possible to receive radio broadcasts. Towards this end, increasingly inexpensive receivers were developed, starting with the famous *Volksempfänger* (people's receiver) and later followed by the *Deutsche Kleinempfänger* (German mini-receiver) which was soon colloquially re-christened the *Goebbelsschnauze* (Goebbels' gob). The building of a closed Soviet-style wire-transmission system was rejected due to the high costs, but stand-alone receivers presented another problem, in that even the simplest ones could still pick up foreign broadcasts too. Therefore, German stations always had to compete with foreign ones. Although the reception of 'enemy signals' was categorically forbidden when war broke out, this prohibition had little real effect.

National Socialist propagandists acknowledged this situation from the start and proposed programming guidelines accordingly. As early as 1934, Eugen Hadamovsky declared: 'If we don't want to ruin our broadcasting with misguided reactionary tendencies and turn our audience into regular listeners of foreign radio, then our entire programming must be built upon the basis of light music and current news.'[12] However, these principles could at first only be implemented in a very limited way, due to the (continued) cultural conservatism of the programmers. Where they were most successful was in the reduction of spoken-word programmes. The early evening educational and intellectual broadcasts, so typical of the Weimar Republic, were unceremoniously cancelled. There were no more cultural lectures or language lessons; what remained was mostly music. There also followed a general rejection of all things 'Jewish', whether it be music by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy or Emmerich Kalman, literature by Heinrich Heine, or productions of contentious plays such as Lessing's Enlightenment classic 'Nathan der Weise' (1779). Much more difficult than the 'de-Jewification' of radio was the reorientation towards more entertainment, which Goebbels continually demanded. In 1936, he argued that 'the vast majority of radio listeners… [had a right] ultimately to find true relaxation and recuperation in their few hours of rest and leisure. In comparison, those who only want to be fed a diet of Kant and Hegel are miniscule in number.'[13] But in the event the competition from high culture and 'serious' music proved less of a problem than the disagreement about what new entertainment music should be played. For example, it was easy to forbid the term 'jazz', but to avoid the corresponding musical forms was much more problematic.[14]

Over time, entertainment music gradually expanded as part of German radio programming; by 1942, it had become the absolute focal point.[15] Its primary role was to offer relaxation and diversion from the worsening conditions of everyday life during the war, as well as to create a ready vehicle for political propaganda, which of course was incessant. One should not, however, have too many illusions about the effectiveness of this propaganda. Generally speaking, listeners remained convinced of the quality of German news broadcasts only so long as the German military was winning. By 1943, most listeners had long since begun losing their faith. The increasing distance between the audience and official propaganda was diligently registered in the situation reports of the state security service, such as that of 30 May 1943: 'The population sits uninterestedly through the updates and reports from the press and radio, due to their deep worry about if and how we will win the war, and then they come to their own conclusions.'[16] Similar tendencies had already been noticed by observers from the Allied side. Hans Speier, for example, drew a shrewd conclusion from the juxtaposition of Nazi propaganda efforts with the enormous, all-controlling internal repression apparatus: 'If Goebbels were entirely successful, Himmler would be unemployed.'[17]

The East German communist approach: Contributions to 'Building a Socialist National Culture'

The Allied occupation of Germany naturally meant the end of Nazi broadcast propaganda. It was only a few days after the cessation of hostilities that stations started working again, albeit with different personnel in the wake of a thorough purge. Even in these earliest days there was a noticeable divergence between the Soviets and the Western occupying powers: the Soviets allowed Germans to broadcast from the beginning. Tried and true communists were flown in from Moscow with Walter Ulbricht, one of whom, Hans Mahle, established the new broadcasting organization.[18]

Despite the appearance of a completely new start in summer 1945, the personnel purge and ostensible clean break with Nazi programming concealed far-reaching organizational continuities. Understandably, the existing systems at hand continued to be used; the inhabitants of the Soviet occupation zone still tuned their radios to Berlin and Leipzig. In addition, the technical facilities and the content programming remained fundamentally separated. This division was first established by the Weimar Republic, continued by the Nazi state, and was now further extended: not only the broadcasting, but also the recording facilities were to be part of the Postal Ministry, while the broadcast managers were to be limited to the content side of programme production. Finally, the basic principle of state broadcasting was retained: it was a broadcaster organized by the state and controlled by the State party. Within the leadership of the SED (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*, Socialist Unity Party), primary responsibility for the supervision of radio lay with the Secretary of the Central Committee for Agitation, as well as the Agitation Department under his/her control.

The organizational circumstances at *Deutscher Demokratischer Rundfunk* (German Democratic Broadcasting), as it was called almost from the beginning, became decidedly more complicated in the summer of 1952 when the party leadership decided drastically to accelerate the Sovietization of the GDR. For the proclaimed *Aufbau des Sozialismus* (building of socialism), they followed the model of the Soviet Union as closely as possible. In the sphere of broadcasting, this meant abolishing the traditional structure of largely regional stations and centralizing all broadcast production employees in the unified institution of the *Staatliches Rundfunkkomitee* (State Broadcasting Committee). At the same time, all production was to be concentrated in Berlin, allowing major reductions in personnel, especially among those who had been (until then) regarded as unreliable but indispensable. However, it would be years before all of the attendant restructuring problems were overcome.[19]

In addition, the constant expansion of the system of centralized planning also affected radio in a number of ways. Broadcasters not only had to promote the targets of the planned economy, they also had to structure their own programming according to such plans. While the National Socialists lacked such

complicated conceptions and were able to manage their propaganda flexibly as required, the GDR broadcaster placed absolute priority on the 'Plan': it routinely mapped out a system of plans with different timescales, from year to quarter to week, which then had to be fastidiously implemented. In this context, new information did not carry much weight. Instant information was less important than correct interpretation – naturally along Party lines.

It is relatively easy to trace the basic outlines of this system, but much more difficult to illustrate their effects in practice. It would be highly desirable to compare National Socialist with GDR socialist news broadcasts (and perhaps also with those of the Federal Republic), but unfortunately this is not possible due to the lack of a vital resource, namely original transmissions, whether in tape or text form. The situation appears much better in the case of editorial comments, but no systematic research has been conducted as yet. Nonetheless, this much is clear: the political programme of GDR broadcasting was strictly controlled and completely aligned to state and Party interests.

At first glance, both Nazi and GDR radio seemed to have a very similar perception of entertainment in relation to education: both broadcast much entertainment with relatively little educational music and talk. However, closer examination reveals considerable differences. National Socialism had no theoretically grounded relationship to the German cultural tradition. Beyond anti-semitism there existed little more than a vague invocation of a few great names, like Beethoven, Schiller and Wagner. This was completely different in the GDR. Not only did the German communists continue the old traditions of the workers' movement, they also took specific impulses from the Soviet occupation. Support was given not only to the 'progressive' part of the classical heritage, but also to anything which could be labelled realist and anti-fascist. By contrast, all 'formalist' works were, after a short vacillation, firmly rejected. This was summarized as part of the wider goal of 'Building a Socialist National Culture' (*Aufbau einer sozialistischen Nationalkultur*), which was proclaimed in 1958 at the Fifth Party Congress.

The march to socialism did not require any breaks for mere entertainment – this would be a fair summary of the basic position of the SED in the time of party chairman Walter Ulbricht. Whereas Goebbels had placed primary importance on radio's role in relaxation and diversion, this was only grudgingly tolerated by the SED leadership. Although entertainment music was still relatively plentiful on GDR radio, this was only because audience demands could not be entirely ignored. As one might expect, the hard-line ideologues were immediately dissatisfied with the offerings, and waged an intensive campaign over the character of 'socialist' entertainment (i.e. in accordance with socialism), especially entertainment music. All things 'American' were rejected, and alternatives were strenuously sought after. The results of this search were, however, rather modest, which eventually led to a grudging and deflated acceptance of the status quo until yet another

attempt at resolving the ideological problem of 'socialist entertainment' could be made. In the end there was only defeat for the ideologues, for as one commentator has put it, 'the history of popular music in the GDR is a history of capitulation in the face of dominant Western developments'.[20]

Our hindsight about the impending end of the GDR should not, however, obscure one's view of its beginnings. This general maxim certainly applies to radio and its audience ratings. Although systematic listener surveys were conducted on only a very basic level in the 1950s, their findings are nonetheless significant. A 1957 survey asked whether people were satisfied with the political reporting: almost three quarters answered 'yes' and only 15 per cent answered 'no'. Even if one assumes that the remaining 10 per cent (who answered 'no opinion') actually would have said 'no' if they had had the courage, it still would not have changed the majority approval. Although one might question the validity of such survey information in a non-pluralist environment like the GDR, the survey seems broadly credible not least for having addressed a key factor: in those cities where Western stations could be readily received, satisfaction was considerably lower than in cities with no such easy alternatives. But the SED leadership did not want to hear such explicit details, especially if they clashed with ideological orthodoxy. As the results were about to be analysed more precisely, the whole listener survey project was proscribed.[21]

Public radio in the early Federal Republic

In West Germany after the Second World War, the Americans, British and French pursued a broadcast organization strategy completely different from that of the Soviets in the East. At first they managed the broadcasting stations as institutions of the individual military governments, into which German personnel were only gradually introduced. When it was finally time to transfer broadcasting to German hands, there was absolutely no question of establishing a centrally run state broadcasting system, which many German politicians would have been glad to see. The example of National Socialist radio was too repellent; nor did the contemporaneous East German example seem worth copying. The Americans would have preferred to develop a commercial system such as that in their own country, but this was easier said than done due to economic, technical and organizational factors in post-war Germany.[22] The only remaining model was the BBC,[23] which became the paradigm for the newly established public broadcasters in all three Western occupation zones in 1948–49.

The situation was relatively simple at first, as the British and French decided to have just one central broadcaster for each of their zones. By decree of the British military government, *Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk* (Northwest German Broadcasting) was founded on 1 January 1948 in Hamburg, 'as an independent institution for the dissemination of news and

programmes of an educational and instructive character'.[24] During the same year, the French followed suit in their zone by founding *Südwestfunk* (Southwest Broadcasting) at Baden-Baden, also by decree of the military government. In contrast, the Americans decided from the start to consult Germans over the future organization of broadcasting. After protracted negotiations during which many German proposals were rejected as too state-oriented, four institutions were finally established in the American zone through German laws: *Bayerischer Rundfunk* in Munich, *Süddeutscher Rundfunk* in Stuttgart, *Hessischer Rundfunk* in Frankfurt (respectively Bavarian, South German and Hessian Broadcasting), and *Radio Bremen* in Bremen.

Despite the differences in details, all six of these early institutions had comparable structures. They each had three management organs. First was an *Intendant* (Station Director), who was responsible for the actual running of the station. He was chosen (and subsequently supervised) by a committee usually called a *Rundfunkrat* (Broadcast Council), which was supposed to represent the various interest groups in German society: not only elected politicians, but also representatives of the churches, labour unions, universities, and women's and sports organizations, to name a few primary examples. Since the Broadcast Councils were therefore quite large, there was also a third, much smaller and more influential *Verwaltungsrat* (Management Council), which advised and monitored the station manager on individual issues.

As the Western Allies largely withdrew from German media policy-making after the founding of the Federal Republic in 1949, the German tradition of federalism began to reassert itself, and the arm's-length distance from the state became sharply reduced. *Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk* was split into three institutions: *Norddeutscher Rundfunk* in Hamburg, *Westdeutscher Rundfunk* in Cologne and *Sender Freies Berlin* (respectively North German and West German Broadcasting, and Radio Free Berlin). Berlin also had another station, the RIAS (*Radio Im Amerikanischen Sektor*). Finally there also appeared *Saarländische Rundfunk* (Saarland Broadcasting) and two federal institutions, *Deutschlandfunk* and *Deutsche Welle* (Germany Broadcasting and German Wave). Eventually all of these broadcasters organized themselves into the ARD (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, or Consortium of Public Broadcasting Institutions of the FRG). Unlike the more centralized BBC, however, the ARD did not run its own stations. Rather, each regional station broadcast its own programmes – a fact that makes it rather difficult to obtain an overview of West German programming of the 1950s.

Although one might be tempted to surrender in the face of the plethora of regional peculiarities and endless evolutionary changes, there nonetheless emerged a few unmistakable fundamental principles. West German broadcasters pointedly distanced themselves as much from their National Socialist predecessors as from their Eastern Bloc contemporaries. Although the information they broadcast did not differ significantly from that of the state-controlled systems in quantitative terms, it was indeed very different in quality.

The focus was not on one-sided political instruction, but rather on impartial, multifaceted information. News and editorial commentary were painstakingly divided from one another. This did not mean that conflicts over content and bias were non-existent. Yet even when they arose, their very existence spoke more in support of the essential effectiveness of the system than against it.

In measuring the proportion between educational and entertainment programming, West German broadcasters tended to return to the aspirations of their Weimar Republic predecessors. Radio, especially public radio, had a public duty that went beyond the transmission of objective information. It was also a cultural institution that had to contribute to the education and instruction of its listeners. By comparison, entertainment had a far lower priority. In practice, this meant that every broadcaster supported its own large symphony orchestra for the laborious maintenance of a rich and demanding musical heritage. It also meant that literary radio plays became a permanent programming fixture, that scientists, philosophers and authors found an outlet through the plethora of lectures and readings, and that a school broadcasting programme was introduced to deepen and complement school lessons.

Viewed in the wider context, German radio reflected international trends in so far as it broadcast entertainment more or less independent of the currently prevailing political system, though the precise form this entertainment took – being confined above all to entertainment music – was considerably different from the British tradition, as well as the American. Although music dominated as the primary form of entertainment on German radio, not all entertainment music was seen as equally worthwhile. As early as the Weimar Republic, radio was already promoting 'elevated' and more sophisticated entertainment music, while the Nazi state fought a bitter and ultimately unsuccessful battle against American jazz, and the GDR of the 1950s similarly cast rock 'n' roll in the enemy role.

This general line was initially pursued in the early Federal Republic as well. Entertainment music in radio was presented primarily by the broadcaster's own *Unterhaltungsorchester* (entertainment orchestra). Vinyl records were used only in emergencies, as were singers, and if there was to be singing, it was almost always in the German language. English titles appeared in the programming no more often than French or Italian ones. The emphasis was on works by composers whose names were hardly known even in Germany. At Baden-Baden's *Südwestfunk* it was composers like Walter Leschetitzky, Toni Leutwiler and Siegfried Merath, with titles such as 'In Gedanken' (waltz intermezzo), 'Viel Vergnügen' (polka) and 'Klingende Modenschau' (orchestral suite).[25] How genuinely 'entertaining' such music was to the bulk of West German listeners is open to question, though few broadcasters in the early years of the Federal Republic were willing to ask. It was only in the face of the vast expansion of television in the 1960s that German radio programmers really had to make the entertainment wishes of the audience a top priority.

Summary and outlook

In surveying the first four decades of German radio history, one finds not only four different types of radio *organization*, but also four different types of radio *programming*. These programming types were distinguished primarily by the way they mixed and combined informational, educational and entertainment content. During the Weimar Republic, education was dominant, with some entertainment and relatively little information. Programmers wanted neither to engage with the political conflicts of the day, nor to compete with the press. In the Nazi state, priorities were essentially reversed: education was irrelevant and entertainment was dominant; entertainment was also broadcast as a means of diversion and in order to assist the reception and absorption of state-controlled political information. The post-war broadcasters of East and West Germany positioned themselves between these two extremes. East German radio bore many similarities to the Nazi model, but with more educational content; West German radio was more akin to the model of the Weimar Republic, but with more informational content.

At first glance – and also because of the necessary brevity of this overview – these different programming forms may appear to be primarily defined by politics: the Nazis and the SED were especially open in proclaiming their right to lead and control, hence their similarities in terms of organization and content; the Weimar and Federal Republics were self-avowedly pluralist systems of bourgeois-liberal colouration, which accounts for their similarities. However, on closer inspection, one quickly discovers that radio programmers and programming inspectors were never completely free to do as they pleased, even in 'totalitarian' systems. Because they wanted their programmes actually to be heard, they also had to consider the needs and wishes of their listeners.

If one conceives of the entire matter as a kind of negotiation between programmers and audiences, then one thing was non-negotiable from the start: informational programming. In the interest of political propaganda, state-controlled radio under the dictatorial regimes always had to offer a certain amount of news and educational programming. Public broadcasters in the Weimar and Federal Republics were in exactly the same position, if for different reasons: providing unbiased political information was regarded as an essential element of a public broadcasting system both by radio executives and by the members of controlling institutions. It was therefore possible to negotiate the proportions of education versus entertainment and the content of the entertainment itself, but never informational programming *per se*.

In the Weimar Republic, the trend towards more entertainment and especially more entertainment music was unmistakable. The primacy of entertainment music was no longer even debated in the Nazi state, at least not seriously. In fact, German programming authorities throughout this period faced the same basic challenge as their British counterparts: to try to resist

the flood of American music. Although BBC Programmes Controller Basil Nicolls issued a directive in the spring of 1942 to 'cut out a lot of our dreary jazz sophistications in favour of waltzes, marches and cheerful music of every kind',[26] no one held any illusions of success, even in London. As Norman Collins, the Director of the General Overseas Service, summed up in 1944: 'If any hundred British troops are invited to choose their own records, 90 per cent of the choice will be of American stuff.'[27]

After a short pause at the end of the Second World War, the struggle against American-influenced entertainment music was taken up again in both post-war German states. After a few years, however, they parted ways: while the SED was never able to overcome its distaste for Western 'capitalist' entertainment music, this posture of resistance began to loosen up in West Germany.[28] By the 1960s, a new form of English-language entertainment music, British Beat, was able to capture more and more space on German radio programmes. Major programming reforms in the 1970s were to secure these changes institutionally.[29] In this regard, the introduction of private broadcasting in the 1980s merely put the final touch to a long process of evolution. For better or worse, the over-abundant variety of German radio programmes is today focused on entertainment, and completely dominated by English-language entertainment music.

Acknowledgement

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Notes

1 See http: //www.bbc.co.uk/info/policies/charter/pdf/charter_text.shtml.
2 A great deal of literature on the subject at hand has already been published, and not all of it can be noted here in detail; the same applies for much of the evidence which supports the following argumentation. In both cases, I must make sweeping references to examples from my book: K. Dussel, *Hörfunk in Deutschland: Politik, Programm, Publikum (1923–1960)*(Potsdam, 2002). See also: K. Dussel, *Deutsche Rundfunkgeschichte*, 2nd edn (Konstanz, 2004).
3 'Bericht des Reichspostministeriums zur 21. Sitzung der Reichsfunkkommission am 9. Juni 1922', reprinted in W. B. Lerg, *Die Entstehung des Rundfunks in Deutschland: Herkunft und Entwicklung eines publizistischen Mittels* (Frankfurt/Main, 1965), p. 367.
4 See M. Hilmes, *Radio Voices: American Broadcasting, 1922–1952* (Minneapolis, 1997); M. Hilmes, 'The Origins of the Commercial Broadcasting System of the United States', in E. Lersch/H. Schanze (eds*), Die Idee des Radios*: *Von den Anfängen in Europa und den USA bis 1933* (Konstanz, 2004), pp. 73–81.
5 See Lerg, 'Entstehung'; H. O. Halefeldt, 'Sendegesellschaften und Rundfunkordnungen', in J.-F. Leonhard (ed.), *Programmgeschichte des Hörfunks in der Weimarer Republik* (Munich, 1997), pp. 23–352.
6 K. C. Führer, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Rundfunks in der Weimarer Republik* (Potsdam, 1997).

7 A. Briggs, *The Birth of Broadcasting,* vol. 1 of *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom* (London, 1961); P. Scannell & D. Cardiff, *A Social History of British Broadcasting, Vol. 1: 1922–1939. Serving the Nation* (Oxford, 1991).
8 See esp. the contributions in Leonhard, *Programmgeschichte*.
9 See M. Stapper, *Unterhaltungsmusik im Rundfunk der Weimarer Republik* (Tutzing, 2001).
10 See for the organizational history A. Diller, *Rundfunkpolitik im Dritten Reich* (Munich, 1980). A comparably comprehensive account of programming history is lacking. Important aspects are covered in I. Marßolek & A. von Saldern (eds), *Zuhören und Gehörtwerden I: Radio im Nationalsozialismus. Zwischen Lenkung und Ablenkung* (Tübingen, 1998).
11 See M. Balfour, *Propaganda in War 1939–1945*: *Organisations, Policies and Publics in Britain and Germany* (London, 1979).
12 E. Hadamovsky, *Dein Rundfunk: Das Rundfunkbuch für alle Volksgenossen* (Munich, 1934), p. 51.
13 Joseph Goebbels, opening speech for the 13th Great German Broadcasting Exhibition 1936, cited after K. Dussel & E. Lersch (eds), *Quellen zur Programmgeschichte des deutschen Hörfunks und Fernsehens* (Göttingen and Zurich, 1999), p. 136.
14 M. H. Kater, *Different Drummers*: *Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany* (New York, 1992).
15 K. Dussel, 'Kulturkonzepte im Konflikt: Britische, deutsche und schweizerische Hörfunkprogramme während des Zweiten Weltkriegs', *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 49 (2001), pp. 441–463.
16 H. Boberach (ed.), *Meldungen aus dem Reich*: *Die geheimen Lageberichte des Sicherheitsdienstes der SS 1938–1945* (Herrsching, 1984), vol. 13, p. 5286f.
17 H. Speier, 'Nazi Propaganda and its Decline', *Social Research* 10 (1943), pp. 358–77, quote on p. 376. See also D. Welch, 'Propaganda and Indoctrination in the Third Reich: Success or Failure?', *European History Quarterly* 17 (1987), pp. 403–22.
18 See K. Riege, *Einem Traum verpflichtet: Hans Mahle – eine Biographie* (Hamburg, 2003).
19 K. Dussel, 'Die Sowjetisierung des DDR-Rundfunks in den fünfziger Jahren. Die Organisation des Staatlichen Rundfunkkomitees und seine Leitungstätigkeit', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 45 (1997), pp. 992–1016. See in general Burton Paulu, *Radio and Television Broadcasting in Eastern Europe* (Minneapolis, 1974).
20 M. Rauhut, '"Wir müssen etwas Besseres bieten". Rockmusik und Politik in der DDR', *Deutschland-Archiv* 30 (1997), pp. 572–87 (quote on p. 574). See M. Rauhut, *Beat in der Grauzone: DDR-Rock 1964 bis 1972 – Politik und Alltag* (Berlin, 1993); Inge Marßolek & A. von Saldern (eds), *Zuhören und Gehörtwerden. Vol. II: Radio in der DDR der fünfziger Jahre. Zwischen Lenkung und Ablenkung* (Tübingen, 1998).
21 K. Dussel, 'Der DDR-Rundfunk und seine Hörer. Ansätze zur Rezeptionsforschung in Ostdeutschland (1945–1965)', *Rundfunk und Geschichte* 24 (1998), pp. 122–36.
22 B. Mettler, *Demokratisierung und Kalter Krieg*: *Zur amerikanischen Informations-und Rundfunkpolitik in Westdeutschland 1945–1949* (Berlin, 1975), p. 106.
23 J. Görgen, *Der britische Einfluß auf den deutschen Rundfunk 1945–1948* (Diss., Berlin, 1983; pub. Aacken 1997); T. Rölle, *Der britische Einfluß auf den Aufbau des Nordwestdeutschen Rundfunks von 1945 bis 1948*, Diss. (Kiel, 1991).
24 Cited after H. Bausch, *Rundfunkpolitik nach 1945*, vol. 3 of *Rundfunk in Deutschland* (Munich, 1980), p. 62.
25 See also the detailed study by W. Behr, *Das Kleine Orchester des Südwestfunks unter Leitung von Willi Stech*: *Untersuchungen zur Aufgabe und Bedeutung eines Rundfunkunterhaltungsorchesters* (Baden-Baden, 1994).

26 Cited after A. Briggs, *The War of Words*, vol. 3 of *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom* (London, 1970), p. 577.
27 Cited after ibid., p. 568.
28 U. G. Poiger, 'Rock 'n' Roll, Female Sexuality and the Cold War Battle over German Identities', *Journal of Modern History* 68 (1996), pp. 577–616.
29 See K. Dussel, 'The Triumph of English-Language Pop Music: West German Radio Programming', in A. Schildt & D. Siegfried (eds), *Between Marx and Coca-Cola*: *Youth Cultures in Changing European Societies, 1960–1980* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006) pp. 127–48; K. Maase, 'From Nightmare to Model? Why German Broadcasting became Americanized', in A. Stephan (ed.), *Americanization and Anti-Americanism*: *The German Experience with American Culture after 1945* (New York, 2005), pp. 78–106.

Part Two

Film and Television: Virtual Realities and Social Change in Twentieth-Century Germany

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6

Two-Fold Admiration: American Movies as Popular Entertainment and Artistic Model in Nazi Germany, 1933–39

Karl Christian Führer

In July 1937, *Variety*, the American entertainment daily, expressed opinions on the influence of Hollywood movies in foreign countries that in some ways seem to anticipate 1960s leftist critiques of US 'cultural imperialism' by several decades. American feature films, the paper stated,

> are still the subtlest and most efficient form of propaganda any nation has ever had at its command. They are still the best machinery for flooding the world with the idea that the American way of living is best, that this Republic with all its shortcomings is a garden spot in a world too full of woe.[1]

Among the nations that were influenced by this method of propaganda Nazi Germany held a prominent position. Europe was Hollywood's most important foreign market throughout the 1930s, and business in Germany, a nation with some 68 million people and more than 5,000 movie theatres, ranked highly in the marketing plans of major motion-picture corporations such as MGM, Paramount and Twentieth-Century Fox.

One of the many glimpses of the American 'garden spot' offered to German audiences in 1935 was *West Point of the Air*, a MGM production that uninhibitedly displayed the strength of the United States Air Force and praised the bravery of its men. In the rousing finale flying airplanes form the letters U-S-A against the blazing sky. Press coverage for this film in Nazi Germany was entirely enthusiastic: the *Film-Kurier*, the leading German trade journal for the movie business, called it 'a top-class performance of the American movie industry', and the *Völkischer Beobachter*, the party organ of the NSDAP, described it as 'a movie of manly character and true soldierly spirit which is

neither sentimental nor emotive and so honest and sincere that it's a pure joy to watch it'.[2] German audiences, too, liked *West Point of the Air*: the movie was screened for more than three weeks in the Berlin cinema where it received its German premiere – proof enough of a box-office attraction well above average. Also in 1935, Hollywood movies such as Frank Capra's screwball comedy *It Happened One Night*, the Marlene Dietrich costume extravaganza *The Devil is a Woman*, or the melodrama *Chained*, starring Joan Crawford, were very popular with Berlin cinema audiences.[3]

Evidence like this contradicts widely held assumptions about Germany under Nazi rule. While the presence of Hollywood movies in the Third Reich has already been noted by several scholars, the popular perception of German cultural life after 1933 is still one of self-containment, philistine pathos and aggressive jingoism.[4] However, German cinema audiences of the 1930s were not fed on a meagre diet of propaganda films only. On the contrary, entertainment ruled supreme in the movie theatres in National Socialist Germany, and American movies were very much part of this culture of diversion. Drawing on contemporaneous sources and recent scholarly writings, this essay aims to assess Hollywood's contribution to German cultural life during the years from 1933 to 1940 (from the Nazi takeover to the effective ban on US film imports) both in terms of popular response and critical acclaim. As will be demonstrated, screenings of American movies were a central part of urban life in Nazi Germany, and film critics praised some of Hollywood's prestige pictures as artistic models for German screenwriters and movie directors. By considering Hollywood's share in the German film market after 1933, the response of German audiences to American movies and the writings of German film critics on the US movie industry, this chapter seeks to shed light on the position of the Third Reich in the complex history of American cultural influences in twentieth-century Germany, and also to contribute to the history of US motion-picture corporations as 'global players' in troubled times.

Hollywood's share in the film market of Nazi Germany

From 1934 to 1939 the number of feature films distributed in Germany varied between 110 and 130 per year. As a rule roughly 20 per cent of these movies were of American origin, a further 20 per cent came from other foreign countries (including, up to 1937, Austria), while the rest was made up of German films. Forty-one Hollywood movies reached German audiences in 1934 and also in 1935; in 1936 this number fell to 28, but the two following years once again brought an increased influx. Only in 1939 did the American share in the German film market drop to less than 20 per cent, and by the end of 1940 Hollywood's import into Germany had been completely stopped. As these figures show, the German film market was hardly 'flooded' by the US movie industry, although Hollywood would have been very well equipped to

do just that: the 41 American films that received distribution in Germany in 1935 equalled less than 10 per cent of Hollywood's output that year.

The fact that only a few select American movies reached German audiences had little to do with National Socialist policies. In fact, this rationing of Hollywood productions was not peculiar to Germany. To protect the national film industry and to regulate the nation's foreign-exchange balance, many countries had already begun to restrict film imports in the 1920s. Understandably, Hollywood, as the world's most productive movie industry complex, suffered most from these regulations. When the National Socialists came to power in January 1933 they could fall back on an intricate set of trading restrictions (revised in the Weimar Republic for the last time in 1930) that discriminated effectively against foreign movie companies. Some tightening up ensued. A new law on censorship, passed in February 1934, gave German censors additional opportunities to prevent screenings of specific foreign movies for moral as well as for political reasons. New regulations on foreign exchange control from 1934 onwards were also important, as American companies had to face a 50 per cent loss of value when they transferred their gains in German RM into US dollars. The only way to avoid this partial expropriation for the benefit of the Reich and its budget was to invest in the German film industry.[5]

Not all US motion-picture corporations were prepared to do business with Germany under these rules. In 1932, four of Hollywood's 'Big Five' (Paramount, MGM, Fox, Warner Bros) and one of the 'Little Three' (Universal) ran German branches. RKO (the one missing 'major' company) as well as United Artists and Columbia (Hollywood's other small movie companies besides Universal) co-operated with German distribution companies. By 1936 both Warner Bros and Universal had closed their offices in Germany, and imports from RKO, United Artists and Columbia had dropped almost to nil. Only Paramount, MGM and Fox (since 1936, Twentieth-Century Fox) persisted, and they did so until the National Socialist regime, feeling provoked by news about Hollywood plans for several anti-Nazi films, finally forced them out of Germany in late October 1940.

It should be stressed that none of the Hollywood companies that withdrew from the German market after 1933 did so for political reasons.[6] This is true not least of Warner Bros, despite vice-president Jack Warner's post-1945 depiction of himself and his brothers Harry and Albert as stout anti-fascists who renounced German money because of the Nazi persecution of Jews. In reality it was not the plight of Germany's Jews, but rather economic reasons, that prompted Warner and many other leading executives of the American movie industry to stop the distribution of their productions in the Third Reich. Unlike Paramount and Fox these companies were not prepared to invest in the German film industry, and unlike MGM they could not hope for profits high enough to justify the dubbing of their films (which was essential to reach large German audiences). Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, the motion-picture corporation that produced more hits and had more stars than any other Hollywood

company during the 1930s, did good business on the German market even when it had to relinquish 50 per cent of the profit in transferring the Reichsmarks accounts. By contrast, for RKO, Warner and all the other less glamorous movie companies, the new rules on foreign-exchange control made exports to Germany a high-risk investment.

These risks were substantially increased by the fact that National Socialist censors could (and did) ban pictures that had already been synchronized for the German market. Early in 1934, for example, they banned the gangster picture *Scarface* (distributed by United Artists) despite significant alterations to the film that US audiences had seen in 1932, on the grounds that it threatened 'disruptions of the public order' by inviting audiences to commit crimes. Besides cuts and changes in the dialogue, a title had been added that praised the Nazi government for its fight against crime and blamed unnamed foreign countries for misunderstanding the true character of the 'new' Germany (an allusion to the movement for a boycott of German goods in the USA). Ironically, this pandering to the NSDAP furnished an additional reason for the ban on *Scarface* since the censors declared that the added title might endanger Germany's international relations.[7]

The Censorship Board's decision on this clumsily Germanized Howard Hawks movie clearly served as a warning to Hollywood that staples of the American movie business such as hard-hitting thrillers, low-life dramas and horror movies were not welcome in Nazi Germany. Sexual innuendo and a general atmosphere of carefree recklessness ruled out musicals like Warner's *Forty-second Street* or RKO's *Flying Down to Rio*, which were banned in 1933 and 1935, respectively. Understandably, motion-picture corporations which specialized in these different genres abstained from further investments in German versions of their films and looked elsewhere for profits. German cinema audiences of the 1930s therefore never got to see, for example, the Busby Berkeley extravaganzas produced by Warner, RKO's series of Fred Astaire/Ginger Rogers musicals and Universal's numerous *Frankenstein* or *Dracula* movies.[8]

Yet the continual presence of MGM, Paramount and Fox assured that enough 'big' Hollywood films still reached the German silver screens to keep audiences hooked. No one who did business on the German market after 1933 could afford to be squeamish – and the leading executives of these three movie corporations certainly stomached quite a lot. Pressured by the NSDAP and its attempt to 'Aryanize' the German movie industry, they sacked all Jewish employees in their German offices as early as 1933. For staff replacements, Fox, for one, chose long-term members of the Party and storm troopers (*SA-Männer*).[9] Bans by National Socialist censors on American films that were directed by Jews or had leading Jewish actors did not raise public protests but met with silent acquiescence from all three companies.[10] To make matters worse, recognizably Jewish characters disappeared from Hollywood movie scripts after 1933, mainly to facilitate further exports to Germany.[11] Fox used its German profits to produce *Fox Tönende Wochenschau*, one of only four

newsreels licensed by Goebbels' Ministry of Propaganda for screenings in German cinemas. Since every single frame and word of these newsreels had to pass the scrutiny of Ministry officials (or quite often Goebbels himself) no one at Fox can have had the slightest doubt that the company contributed directly to the Nazi propaganda machine. Paramount, too, co-operated closely with the Ministry in choosing the material and the news about Germany that were presented in the company's internationally distributed newsreels.[12]

Judged by today's standards, all this may appear incomprehensible or downright scandalous, but the contemporary point of view was different. In essence, MGM, Paramount and Fox acted just like other American 'global players' such as Ford or General Motors who also did business with the Third Reich without the slightest qualm – and just like those corporations they had economic reasons to do so. Hit by the Depression, even Hollywood's 'majors' were anxious about losing profits from one of Europe's best sales areas. MGM's lavishly produced Greta Garbo films, for example, made their profits not in the USA but only abroad. The same was true of most of Hollywood's expensive 'prestige pictures'.[13] Even the task of dealing with National Socialist censors could seem less irritating when German censorship was compared to policies of controlling the movies in other countries which were also characterized by considerable arbitrariness.[14]

The decision over which Hollywood movies made it onto German screens and which did not was influenced by several factors. First, the American corporations selected only those films that seemed 'suitable' for German audiences. Invariably, this was only a small proportion of their total output. For example, Twentieth-Century Fox produced 52 feature films in 1936, but selected only ten movies for distribution in Germany, all of them 'A Pictures' with big budgets and well-known stars. No effort was made to export to Germany the company's series of films centred on characters such as Charlie Chan, Mr Moto, Sherlock Holmes or the Cisco Kid, since these movies already generated a profit on the US market.[15] The same strategy was employed by all other Hollywood 'majors'.

The German perception of the American movie industry was therefore anything but comprehensive: very few of Hollywood's countless cheaply made 'B films' received distribution on the German market. Only some B westerns starring, for example, Tom Mix or Buck Jones (plus his wondrously capable horse), reached German audiences. Until 1936 small distribution companies brought at least a handful of these Hollywood 'quickies' to minor cinemas in the working-class districts of Germany's big cities.[16] But even this trickle was soon stopped, as Hollywood's marketing strategies and Nazi trading restrictions jointly excluded B-movies from the German cinema market. After 1936, almost all American movie imports into Germany were 'A pictures' produced by MGM, Paramount or Fox.

National Socialist censorship was another decisive factor in shaping the supply of American movies in the Third Reich. As was said above, censors

disapproved of violence and sexual suggestiveness while anti-semitism led to a ban on most movies that had Jews as leads or Jewish directors. This policy put considerable strain on Hollywood's business connections with Nazi Germany. In 1936 alone, 40 American movies intended for import into Germany were rejected by the Ministry of Propaganda after unofficial test-screenings, and ten more were officially banned.[17] Quite often the Board of Censors imposed cuts as a condition for a licence, most often for reasons of gratuitous violence.[18] In other cases the German distribution companies cut Hollywood movies to adjust them to the taste of German audiences: they kept sentimentality at bay or made sluggish plots move more quickly.[19]

Dubbing was another form of cultural adjustment. The synchronized versions of Hollywood films screened in Germany during the 1930s often differed markedly from the American original. For example, the German dialogue of *Cleopatra*, Cecil B. de Mille's costume epic which reached German cinemas in 1935, was much more in the grand manner of nineteenth-century historical drama than the colloquial lines written by the American scriptwriters. More subtle changes were made in *The Lives of a Bengal Lancer*, a Paramount film which chronicled the fate of British soldiers in nineteenth-century India: in German these men sounded decidedly more manly and heroic than in the original version.[20] German film critics claimed that synchronization, which had quickly evolved into a highly specialized craft since its invention in 1932/33, improved many Hollywood movies, making dialogues less brash or more trenchant and in general adjusting characters and plots to German mentalities.[21]

When German cinema audiences watched American movies during the 1930s they experienced a sanitized version of 'Hollywood', adapted both by severe selection and by more or less subtle alterations to avoid a sense of strangeness. This marked a significant change since the 1920s, when Hollywood had indiscriminately imported far more movies into Germany because of less severe trading restrictions, and when strategies to adjust movies to the taste of German audiences were far less widespread and effective.[22] In contrast, the cultural contact between Germany and the USA established by screenings of Hollywood movies took on a peculiar character during the 1930s: what Germans perceived as 'American' was to some extant fabricated or at least greatly influenced by Germans themselves. Contrary to what might be expected, both German cinema audiences and film critics therefore reacted much more positively to American movies in Nazi Germany than they had done during the years of the Weimar Republic.

German cinema audiences and American movies

Nevertheless, evidence on the preferences of German cinema audiences during the 1930s is scarce. We lack any precise information either about the attendance or the gross intake of Hollywood movies in Germany. To fill this

statistical void, Markus Spieker has assembled data on the running time American films attained in the Berlin cinemas where they were premièred. According to these figures, Hollywood movies were exceptionally successful: on average they played longer in Berlin first-run cinemas than German films, and their share among the top ten of popular attractions from 1933 to 1938 was 37 per cent (a figure that well succeeds their portion among all distributed movies). In 1935, 1936 and 1938 American movies scored best on these lists, holding the number one position.[23]

As valuable as this information is, it may well be a classic case of comparing apples and oranges. As was said above, most Hollywood imports into Germany were glamorous 'A pictures', characterized by high production values and famous stars. Of course, German motion-picture corporations offered their own kind of first-rate movies, but the greater part of their production consisted of *Mittelware* (literally: 'mediocre merchandise'), comparable to Hollywood's 'B films'.[24] It is therefore hardly surprising that German films were on average less successful in première cinemas than the highly select group of Hollywood imports; nor do we need much analytical skill to understand the American share on the lists of popular movies. What this data proves most clearly is that patrons of city-centre cinemas in Berlin recognized good entertainment when they saw it.

Whether cinema-goers all over Germany were just as unbiased is another matter. Reports on audience response from cinema-owners in the Rhineland and the Ruhr mining region offer a complex picture: Hollywood movies starring Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich seem to have been a safe bet in terms of box-office return not only for downtown first-run houses but also for neighbourhood theatres in residential areas which catered to less prosperous and less sophisticated patrons. The child star Shirley Temple, too, was immensely popular with audiences from various social strata and the same was true of Jeanette MacDonald, the singer-cum-actress who appeared in a series of nostalgic musicals during the 1930s.[25]

But not all Hollywood movies scored at the box office. Working-class audiences in Ruhr towns were unimpressed by screwball comedies centred on high-society heiresses and other blasé characters; in most cases business for genre films such as thrillers, westerns, or slapstick farces seems to have been secure but also unexceptional.[26] Tellingly enough, even some of Hollywood's most glamorous productions took only second place in box office returns to mediocre German films. *San Francisco*, an epic produced by MGM offering three major stars, catchy tunes, sentimentality, religious pathos and some of the most spectacular special effects of the whole decade, is a case in point. In 1937, the Germanized *San Franzisko* drew huge crowds in all major cities in western Germany, yet still was not as popular as *Der Etappenhase* ('The Hare behind the Lines'), a trivial comedy set in Flanders (of all places) among German soldiers during the First World War, that eschewed all the horrors of war for the sake of cheap laughs and easy entertainment.[27]

Findings for Hamburg, Germany's second largest city, confirm that distinct audiences responded differently to American movies. Exceptionally, one of the city's centrally located deluxe houses specialized in screenings of American movies in original versions (in many cases even without sub-titles) while second-run houses and neighbourhood theatres relied only on synchronized versions. Attracting both middle-class and working-class audiences, films starring Garbo, Dietrich, MacDonald or Temple circulated through all the various categories of Hamburg's motion-picture theatres. In contrast, Hollywood thrillers or westerns did not receive the same widespread attention: they were conspicuously absent from second-run cinemas in well-to-do neighbourhoods, though flea-pit theatres at the lower end of the distribution spectrum frequently screened them in short runs among a multitude of German films. Time and again, these minor houses even revived older Hollywood films.[28] This choice of repertoire reflected not only the taste of the local audience, but perhaps even more clearly a structural problem of the German movie industry: the dearth of new and attractive native fare. Meeting demand was a major and openly discussed problem in Nazi Germany since UFA, Tobis and all the other German motion-picture corporations did not manage to produce enough feature films to provide for the constant changes of programme that were customary in most cinemas.[29] Even more importantly, box office hits in the German tongue were few and far between. Small neighbourhood cinemas which were neither linked to UFA nor part of a chain of cinemas suffered most from these problems since they had to wait for weeks (and in some cases for months) for a new top-grossing German film until the chain theatres had met almost all the demand on the local market.[30] Consequently, these minor houses often screened American movies as re-runs or revivals – and their patrons seem to have been quite content with this programme.

In a big city such as Hamburg, turning out to see a Hollywood movie could therefore mean many different things. It could mean viewing the latest Garbo film or one of Hollywood's sophisticated comedies in the original version in an elegant and expensive downtown cinema. It could mean indulging in Shirley Temple's relentless cheerfulness or in Jeanette MacDonald's steely charms in a middle-sized cinema just around the corner in the undistinguished company of housewives dropping in with their shopping bags. Or it could mean experiencing the thrills of Buck Rogers' perilous life in the Wild West in a run-down flea-pit theatre during a Sunday matinée among a bunch of children who screamed their heads off in joyful excitement whenever the shooting began.[31]

In rural Germany, the situation was – as far as we know – quite different. There is some scattered evidence that small town cinemas screened only a few American films.[32] Outside the big cities even the occasional performance of Hollywood fare seems to have attracted at best only average crowds. Rendsburg, a small town of some 18,000 people north-west of Hamburg in

rural Schleswig-Holstein, may serve here as an example for closer examination. In 1938, this minor centre of commerce, set in a fairly prosperous farming region, could boast three cinemas. They operated daily but each offered only one performance, scheduled for 8 p.m.; programmes were changed on Fridays and in some cases additionally also on Tuesdays. During the last three months of 1938, Rendsburg cinema patrons had the choice between 59 different movies. Ten out of these were of American origin (a further two were French), screened invariably in dubbed versions. With these films the local cinemas offered a well-balanced selection of Hollywood's art: thrillers and Westerns were just as much on offer as melodramas and 'big' movies such as the latest Shirley Temple vehicle *Wee Willie Winkie* or the all-star musical *Broadway Melody of 1938*. But none of these films made a great impact in Rendsburg. Without any exception they disappeared from the screens after the minimal run – and this is even true of *Broadway Melody of 1938*, a film that had broken box office records in Berlin and Hamburg cinemas.[33]

Nevertheless, it would be misleading to conclude that people in rural Germany specifically shunned American movies. In truth, they did not care very much for film in general. Once again, Rendsburg may be used as a test case: German movies passed through the local cinematic scene just as quickly as Hollywood fare. Only one single film out of the total of 59 that received performances in Rendsburg during the last quarter of 1938 had an extended run (*Heimat*, a cunningly sentimental Ufa melodrama built around the company's then biggest star, the Swedish actress and singer Zarah Leander). These findings point to a basic problem of the German film industry: much to the dismay of National Socialist propagandists, cinema attendance in Germany lagged in international comparison, although the Party never tired of proclaiming that the movies were the only true 'Volkskunst' (art for the people), meriting the most eager attention. In 1935/36, the number of weekly cinema admissions per thousand inhabitants was 560 in the USA, 424 in Great Britain, and 139 in France, but only 89 in Germany.[34]

Up to now this striking difference has not attracted the scholarly attention that it clearly deserves. In terms of cinema attendance, Germany was still only a developing country during the 1930s and all the efforts of the NSDAP to boost interest in the movies did not have the effects the Party intended, above all, it seems, for economic reasons. Admittedly, the NSDAP succeeded in reducing the number of unemployed from more than six to less than one million in just the first three years of its regime, but this triumph of social engineering came with a price. Due to high taxation and a strictly controlled wage freeze, the real income of gainfully employed people remained on average as low as it had been in 1932, at the lowest point of the slump. Serving primarily the interests of the state, Hitler's economic policy was carefully designed to impede private consumption by claiming the greater part of the

national income for rearmament and state expenditure. The quick recovery of Germany's economy therefore did much less to increase cinema attendance than might be expected: in 1936, the total number of tickets sold was still smaller than in 1928, the last year of relative economic stability before the onslaught of the Great Depression. Contemporaries estimated that 50 per cent of all Germans never visited the movies, irrespective of what was on offer, but attendance remained infrequent and rare even among those who took an interest in feature films: on average, German cinema patrons turned out only for two nights every three months.[35]

Given these facts, the positive response that many Hollywood films received in Germany's big cities during the 1930s is much more telling than the indifference of rural audiences. Although tight household budgets forced most Germans to think very carefully about going to the movies, urban cinema audiences obviously cherished the extra ounce of glamour that American movies could offer. Here in the big cities the brand 'Hollywood' served as an additional pull for cinema patrons, but small town folk who were still less affluent and in all likelihood also more narrow-minded were not much impressed even by Hollywood's most starry productions.

In addition to this popular response, American movies also received great attention from German film critics. In the absence of all other documents that might tell us what German cinema patrons made of Hollywood movies during the 1930s, these writings offer us at least some hints as to how films from abroad were 'read' and interpreted in Nazi Germany.

German film critics and American movies in Nazi Germany

During the 1920s, critics who wrote film reviews suffered from a bad reputation in German journalism. Contrary to what might be expected, this had little to do with the question of whether cinema was 'art' since Germany's educated classes had already begun to embrace the notion that a film could well be a work of art (and one in its own right, too) in the decade preceding the First World War.[36] Rather, the lack of esteem movie critics experienced was due to the fact that cinema advertisements had quickly become an integral part of the newspaper economy once large motion-picture theatres were established. Advertising for brands in newspapers developed only slowly during the first decades of the twentieth century, but many cinema-owners regularly placed large adverts in the local papers twice per week, and pampering these important customers came to be seen as a high priority among all but the most financially strong newspaper publishers. More often than not, movie reviews were therefore advertising in disguise, and critical scrutiny was rare among film critics.[37]

After 1933, the NSDAP set out to change this. Feature films were meant to be the true artistic expression of the 'new Germany' that the NSDAP dreamt about and also the regime's most important propaganda tool. Asking for new forms

of creativity in the German film business to produce films that were both works of art and at the same time also political relevant and commercially successful, the Party wanted film critics to be set free from the constraints that had turned their writing into a form of 'intellectual prostitution'. Instead, journalists were called upon to educate the audience and to aid both screen writers and directors in their respective tasks by setting ambitious critical standards.[38] Eagerly answering this call, a small group of young intellectuals, writing both for newspapers and for periodicals, modelled themselves as the avant-garde of a new National Socialist *Filmkultur*, and it is especially in the articles of these Nazi movie buffs that we find the most detailed debates on Hollywood films in the German press after 1933.[39]

In principle, writing on an American movie was not a particularly demanding task for German critics since there existed a formula for such reviews that had been used over and over again since the 1920s: Hollywood films were technically laudable and lavishly produced yet also 'soulless' and superficial.[40] To be sure, there was hardly a shortage of articles that stuck to this well-worn pattern in the Nazi period as well, but at the same time many Hollywood films were highly praised that might previously have been targets for damning reviews inspired by anti-American prejudices. Once again, *San Francisco* provides a good example. Mixing several genres and pulling all the heartstrings of the audience, this MGM blockbuster might well be called vulgar in a 'typically' American way (most of all for its brazen use of religious feelings for dramatic effect), yet it was enthusiastically received by German film critics in 1937: above all, the film was praised as a prime example of what true 'Volkskunst' (art for the people) should be like.[41] Film students in Berlin even discussed the movie in an overcrowded public seminar, expressing their disappointment that it had been denied the official acknowledgement as 'künstlerisch wertvoll' (of artistic value) by the Ministry of Propaganda.[42] In the same vein, leading Nazi film journalists also presented *The Lives of a Bengal Lancer* and *Peter Ibbetson* (both directed for Paramount by Henry Hathaway) as superior examples of artistically demanding feature films, the former as a model for movies about soldiers and manly heroism, the latter for psychological subtlety and inventive use of cinematic devices.[43]

It would be too easy to read such reviews merely as an appreciation of Hollywood's superior craftsmanship. For what so fascinated National Socialists was the inclusive character of Hollywood's narrative and presentational strategies that transcended traditional cultural hierarchies. In this sense, the reviews demonstrate a much wider point: namely, that National Socialists were not hostile to American culture in general during the 1930s. American cultural populism clearly appealed to a political movement eager to create a new German *Volksgemeinschaft*, a people united as much in mutual acceptance of all social strata as in political fanaticism – and this appeal could be felt even more strongly since the policies of selection and adaptation described above

shaped the American share in Nazi Germany's film market to fit easily into the country's cultural life.

In the German perception there also existed a close affinity between Roosevelt's America and the policies of the New Deal on the one hand and Hitler's National Socialist Germany on the other, thanks to an allegedly common optimism and mutual strategies of inventive social engineering for the benefit of the common man. Even Hollywood films that seem to carry a political message and to praise specifically American values could therefore be read as affirmations of Nazi doctrines.

One such film is *Ruggles of Red Gap*, a Paramount production featuring Charles Laughton as a class-conscious British butler converting to American egalitarianism under the influence of US citizens whose warm-heartedness and sincerity more than compensate for their lack of social finesse. Near the end the Briton is seen citing the famous words from Lincoln's Gettysburg address that America is a nation 'dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal' in front of his new-found peers (who ironically could not remember the precise words of the presidential address). This could well be one of the films the author writing for *Variety* in 1937 had in mind when he presented Hollywood movies as a means of propaganda for the American way of life, yet *Ruggles of Red Gap* was cheered as a *Musterfilm* ('a model movie') when it was screened in Nazi Germany in 1935. Reaching for superlatives, the critic of the leading German trade journal, *Film-Kurier*, praised it as an ideal blend of fun and serious content and also as 'a most impressive example of cinematic art'. The fact that Ruggles, thanks to Paramount, experienced only an all-white America was of course a necessary precondition for this admiration. Yet it is nonetheless remarkable how easily film critics in Nazi Germany stomached this not-so-very-subtle example of Hollywood propaganda.[44]

In 1935/36, German cinemas also screened the off-beat Hollywood movie *Our Daily Bread*, independently produced by its writer and director King Vidor, which dramatizes the creation of a collective farm by a throng of desperate men and women who have fled the depression-hit cities. In American film histories *Our Daily Bread* features as a movie with a pronounced socialist message, yet the reception in 1930s Germany was anything but hostile. On the contrary, reviews abounded with superlatives. Werner Kark, a leading Nazi cineast and film critic, called the movie 'a miracle' and then went on to celebrate King Vidor as a master of National Socialist film-making: in Kark's view, *Our Daily Bread* offered

> a captivating picture of all *our* wishes, aims and hopes, of *our* work, *our* fight and of *our* victory. What we asked for again and again in our cinematic debates, namely a movie describing everyday life but also characterized by an infectious idea and by artistic mastery in pictorial style, sound, and word, this unfulfilled task, here it is, as we must grudgingly admit, eventually realized *by an American* in a truly cinematic way.[45]

Reviews like this clearly warn against the notion that Hollywood films screened in Nazi Germany necessarily served as counter-propaganda that undermined the tricks and ministrations of Joseph Goebbels. Apparently, there was almost no limit to the art of ideological interpretation.

This is not to say that such fascist readings of Hollywood movies were universal. German cinema audiences of the 1930s, like all media recipients, actively consumed what was offered in diverse and uncontrollable ways. Dissident interpretations shaped by individual preconceptions and by social contexts are an integral part of media reception – and there is no reason why this should not apply also to Germany under Nazi rule. Former members of the Social Democratic Party or the Communist Party, for example, may have recognized *Our Daily Bread* for what it was meant to be, a praise of self-determined collective action (as opposed to the enforced social unity of the German *Volksgemeinschaft*), and for a German Jew who happened to see *Ruggles of Red Gap* in the autumn of 1935, immediately after the passing of the racist Nuremberg laws, Charles Laughton's final speech in this movie will have held quite different messages from the one absorbed by the average 'Aryan' cinema patron.

On the whole, the history of Hollywood's presence and influence in Nazi Germany is full of tensions and ambiguities. On the one hand, audiences in the big cities seem to have been more responsive to American influences than in Weimar Germany, but on the other hand it would be misleading to regard this as 'Americanization' since these very cinema patrons experienced only a truncated and purged version of 'Hollywood' that was powerfully shaped by German policies, traditions and customs. Besides this, American movies were open to many different political and ideological readings. In evaluating the social role of Hollywood films in German society after 1933, we should perhaps stress most of all these differentiated and ambiguous social effects. To those who believed in the promises of the NSDAP, Hollywood's continued presence in the Third Reich communicated the feeling that Germany was in accord with the world's most modern nation. At the same time, it showed to dissident groups that there were still ways to evade the otherwise overpowering influence of the Party. Paradoxically, this latter reaction served the interests of the dictatorial regime just as well as the former since it ultimately kept people going by offering them a glimpse of a 'normal' life untainted by Nazi doctrines, and it was exactly this ability to appeal to widely differing points of view and audience readings that characterized the impact of Hollywood movies in Nazi Germany. In conclusion, it therefore seems that *Variety*, by discussing American films as a means of propaganda for the American way of life, fell victim to an all-too-narrow concept of propaganda, and failed above all to appreciate the different purposes for which such 'propaganda' could be used—not only by powerful ideological opponents such as the Nazi regime, but also by the audiences themselves.

Notes

1 *Variety*, 28 July 1937, cited after K. Segrave, *American Films Abroad: Hollywood's Domination of the World's Movie Screens from the 1890s to the Present* (Jefferson, 1997), p. 86.
2 'Helden von heute', *Film-Kurier* (hereafter *FK*) 17 (1935), no. 193; 'Helden von heute', *Völkischer Beobachter* (hereafter *VB*) no. 233, 21 Aug. 1935.
3 Compare the list in M. Spieker, *Hollywood unterm Hakenkreuz: Der amerikanische Spielfilm im Dritten Reich* (Trier, 1999), pp. 352–3.
4 Compare (besides Spieker) also: H. D. Schäfer, *Das gespaltene Bewusstsein: Über deutsche Kultur und Lebenswirklichkeit 1933–1945* (Munich, 1981), pp. 129–32; P. Gassert, *Amerika im Dritten Reich: Ideologie, Propaganda und Volksmeinung 1933–1945* (Stuttgart, 1997), pp. 164–82.
5 For details see Spieker, *Hollywood*, pp. 21–7, 73–6, 86.
6 For a detailed discussion see ibid., pp. 90–105.
7 'Noch ein wichtiges Filmverbot', *Rheinisch-Westfälische Filmzeitung* (hereafter *RWFZ*) 6 (1934), no. 49.
8 Only *Frankenstein*, the 1931 adaptation of Mary Shelley's classic that started Universal's series of Frankenstein movies, reached German audiences in the summer of 1932. Tellingly, the Weimar authorities initially banned the film but changed their decision when Universal objected. See Spieker, *Hollywood*, p. 70.
9 See: 'Die politische Mission des deutschen Filmvertreters', *RWFZ* 5 (1933), no. 29; 'Klärung in der Vertreter-Frage', ibid., no. 31; 'Veränderungen bei Fox', ibid., no. 33.
10 Spieker, *Hollywood*, pp. 164–6. In some cases company representatives put in protests against such bans behind the scenes. They did so not to fight anti-semitism, but to guard financial interests. For examples see ibid., pp. 172–5.
11 M. E. Birdwell, *Celluloid Soldiers: Warner Bros.'s Campaign against Nazism* (New York, 1999), p. 16.
12 Spieker, *Hollywood*, pp. 95–6.
13 See T. Balio, *Grand Design: Hollywood as a Modern Business Enterprise, 1930–1939* (Berkeley, 1993), p. 149; Segrave, *American Films*, p. 115.
14 See Segrave, *American Films*, p. 85.
15 'Film-Verleih in Deutschland', *RWFZ* (1936), no. 21. On the B-pictures produced by Twentieth-Century Fox see Balio, *Grand Design*, p. 318.
16 See ads for Tom Mix movies for example in *RWFZ* 7 (1935), no. 20, or in *FK* 17 (1935), no. 184 (here the German première of *Tom Mix räumt auf* is announced for eight suburban cinemas in Berlin). Compare an ad for a Buck Jones western to be premièred in Hamburg's amusement district, St. Pauli, in *FK* 18 (1936), no. 86.
17 Spieker, *Hollywood*, p. 168.
18 For example a torture scene was cut in the German version of the Fox movie *The Message to Garcia* and violence was also very much kept at bay in *The Texas Rangers:* 'Die Botschaft an Garcia', *FK* 18 (1936), no. 200; Spieker, *Hollywood*, p. 175. Due to cuts *Viva Villa* lost nearly half its running time in the German version, rendering parts of the plot incomprehensible: 'Zensierte Filme', *FK* 18 (1936), no. 216; 'Viva Villa', *FK* 18 (1936), no. 241.
19 For example, in 1935 both *Naughty Marietta* (starring Jeanette MacDonald) and *Reckless* (a Jean Harlow movie) were thought to be 'too long' for German audiences and therefore cut for German distribution: 'Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer-Vorführung im Marmorhaus', *FK* 17 (1935), no. 181 and no. 182.

20 'Ein Film um "Cleopatra"', *VB* no. 357/358, 23/24 Dec. 1934; '"Cleopatra" in deutscher Fassung', *VB* no. 25, 25 Jan. 1935; R. Kümmerlen, 'Filmschau', *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* 6 (1935), pp. 474–7, here p. 476.
21 K. Bleines, 'Fremdsprachige Versionen deutscher Filme', *FK* 17 (1935), no. 201. See also, for example, the praise for the German version of the Shirley Temple movie *The Littlest Rebel* in 'Der kleinste Rebell', *FK* 18 (1936), no. 151.
22 Compare T. Saunders, *Hollywood in Berlin: American Cinema and Weimar Germany* (Berkeley, 1994).
23 Spieker, *Hollywood*, p. 108. The three movies in question were: *It Happened One Night* (1935), *Broadway Melody of 1936* and *Broadway Melody of 1938*.
24 V. Fasolt, 'Gegen die Film-"Mittelware"', *RWFZ* 9 (1937), no. 13.
25 See for example: 'Geschäftsrundgang durch Westdeutschland', *RWFZ* 8 (1936), no. 12, no. 13, no. 18, no. 23, no. 27, no. 43. For Dietrich's popularity see also 'Natürlich zieht Marlene', *FK* 17 (1935), no. 152.
26 See for example the reports from Wanne, Gladbach and Barmen in 'Geschäftsrundgang durch Westdeutschland', *RWFZ* 8 (1936), no. 9, and ibid. 9 (1937), no. 9 and no. 11. Reports on Laurel and Hardy movies, westerns, and thrillers, see for example ibid. 7 (1935), no. 27, no. 35, and ibid. 8 (1936), no. 27, no. 33, no. 39.
27 'Geschäftsrundgang durch Westdeutschland', *RWFZ* 9 (1937), no. 14, no. 16, no. 17, no. 18, no. 19. See also: 'Ueberraschungserfolg im Westen', ibid., no. 17.
28 For example, in late 1938 small neighbourhood cinemas in Hamburg screened *The Lives of a Bengal Lancer* which had had its initial run in Germany in the season 1934/35, *Under the Pampas Moon*, a western premièred in Berlin in December 1935, and the Carole Lombard comedy *The Princess Comes Across*, first seen in Berlin in October 1935.
29 The insufficient production was due to two related problems: first, German movies sold increasingly badly in foreign countries during the 1930s; secondly, the German cinema audience was too small to secure profits for movie investments. V. Fasolt, 'Kampf um Millionen', *FK* 17 (1935), no. 240. See also below.
30 See 'Nachspieler – nach 12 Wochen', *FK* 17 (1935), no. 274; 'Kinogeschäft im Dezember', *FK* 19 (1937), no. 5; 'Starke Filme in den Erstaufführungskinos', ibid. no. 258.
31 See the vivid description of the atmosphere during screenings of Westerns in E. Zimmermann, 'Nachruf für den stummen Film', *FK* 17 (1935), no. 196. See also K.-H. Hermann, *Jägerstraße 42: Kindheit am Stadtrand. Erinnerungen* (Hamburg, 1998), p. 82. For the difference between down-town cinema theatres and neighbourhood houses see 'Kinopause', *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* no. 111, 21 Apr. 1936; 'Bach – und Tango', *Hamburger Anzeiger* no. 266, 12/13 Nov. 1938.
32 See the figures for three small towns in B. Kleinhans, *Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Kino: Lichtspiel in der braunen Provinz* (Cologne, 2003), p. 103.
33 These findings derive from an evaluation of the cinema advertisements in *Schleswig-Holsteinische Landeszeitung. Rendsburger Tageblatt* no. 204, 1 Sept. 1938 – no. 305, 30 Dec. 1938.
34 'Besuch der Filmtheater in den wichtigsten Ländern', *FK* 19 (1937), no. 19.
35 'Wie fülle ich mein Kino?', *FK* 17 (1935), no. 222.
36 See the extensive selection of pre-war writings in Jörg Schweinitz (ed.), *Prolog vor dem Film: Nachdenken über ein neues Medium 1909–1914* (Leipzig, 1992).
37 See 'Die Tagung des Arbeitgeberverbandes', *Zeitungs-Verlag* 30 (1929), col. 1221–6, here: col. 1225.

38 'Gerhart Weises Forderungen', *FK* 17 (1935), no. 192. See also 'Theaterbesitzer und Filmkritik', *VB* no. 6, 6 Jan. 1934.
39 See the names in 'Journalisten', *FK* no. 179, 3 Aug. 1935. Annoyed by a constant stream of slating reviews for German movies the Ministry of Propaganda radically corrected its course in this matter after some time. In November 1936, it imposed a ban on all forms of art reviews (*Kunstkritik*). Critical arguments and assessments were to be replaced by non-normative essays (*Kunstbetrachtung*). While this decree certainly changed the tone of the average review it was hardly the end of critical judgement. In practice, critics quickly developed strategies to convey opinions without contravening openly against the new rules. For a surprisingly open discussion on the possibilities to circumvent the ban see 'Wenn ein Film nun ganz mißfällt?', *Zeitungs-Verlag* 39 (1938), p. 749. Furthermore, the ban on normative judgements hardly applied to reviews of foreign movies.
40 Spieker, *Hollywood*, p. 128.
41 G. Schwank, 'San Franzisko', *FK* 19 (1937), no. 2; G. Ronge, 'San Franzisko', *RWFZ* 9 (1937), no. 2.
42 '"San Franzisko" in der Lessing-Hochschule', *FK* 19 (1937), no. 17.
43 See for example K. Sabel, 'Da schickt Hollywood einen Film', *RWFZ* 7 (1935), no. 140; W. Lohmeyer, 'Filmschau', *Nationalsozialistische Monatshefte* 6 (1935), pp. 189–91, here p. 189; 'Noch einmal: Die Amerikaner', *FK* 18 (1936), no. 152; 'Peter Ibbetson', *RWFZ* 8 (1936), no. 22; W. Kark, 'Peter Ibbetson', *Hamburger Tageblatt* no. 187, 11 July 1936. The dubbed version of *The Lives of a Bengal Lancer* even received official recognition: it was screened in special performances organized for its juvenile members by the Nazi youth movement, the *Hitlerjugend*. See Spieker, *Hollywood*, p. 162.
44 'Ruggles of Red Gap/Der Musterdiener', *FK* 17 (1935), no. 173; 'Muster-Diener wird diskutiert…', in ibid. For a more guarded review that takes the movie merely as light entertainment, see 'Der Musterdiener', *VB* no. 209, 28 July 1935.
45 W. Kark, 'Der letzte Alarm', *Hamburger Tageblatt* no. 250, 12 Sept. 1936. Italics are in the original. See also 'Unser täglich Brot', *FK* 17 (1935), no. 274; 'Der letzte Alarm', *RWFZ* 8 (1936), no. 33.

7

Looking West: The Cold War and the Making of Two German Cinemas

Thomas Lindenberger

During the first two decades after the total defeat of Nazi Germany, the modern mass media, having rapidly recovered their dynamic after the interruptions of the dictatorship and the War, acted not merely as a reflection of the increasing separation of Germany into two competing political and social systems, but constituted an active factor in German division. This essay will focus on the role of German cinema in this process of separation until the end of the second Berlin crisis – that is, the sealing of the borders around West Berlin in August 1961. In terms of both the opposing political frameworks within which the highly complex and capital-intensive East and West German film industries functioned, as well as the cinema's powerful capacity to create and popularize symbolic representations of 'imagined communities' (Anderson), post-war cinema played an important role in the gradual division of Germany and the emergence of two distinct societies in the GDR and the FRG.

Ulbricht's coup to seal off the GDR from the West by erecting the Berlin Wall not only stopped the steady stream of refugees, it also split apart the last remnants of an all-German cinematic public sphere. This bisection took place on the levels of both consumption and production. Among the tens of thousands of habitual border-crossers (*Grenzgänger*) into West Berlin, there had always been a substantial portion of moviegoers attracted by both the aesthetics of Western popular culture and the cheapness of state-subsidized entertainment (thanks to a scheme introduced by the West Berlin Senate, East Germans enjoyed reduced ticket prices at West Berlin cinemas after proving their identity). Throughout the 1950s such 'movie migrants' had effectively thwarted the SED's ambition of total control over the audiovisual public within its own territory of domination by keeping East German audiences in touch with international trends of cinema entertainment.[1] For the small community of film professionals in the region, the Berlin Wall implied the final separation of the DEFA, the GDR's state-owned monopoly producer, from its last West German and West Berlin collaborators. Before summer 1961, these technicians and artists represented – whether on a permanent or occasional basis – a tiny thread of professional co-operation between East and West.[2]

This is not to say that all contacts and cross-border exchange ceased from this very moment onwards; as we will see below, quite the contrary was true. But what continued as inter-German communication in the sphere of audiovisual media after 1961 no longer bore much resemblance to the popular film industry of the old days. For one thing, on the production side it was largely limited to semi-official professional and artistic exchanges at festivals, in particular for documentary films (Oberhausen, Leipzig),[3] under the factual exclusion of the broader cinema public. As for the wider audience, the bulk of inter-German cinema experience took place via West German TV programmes watched by GDR citizens.[4] Meanwhile moviegoing as a cultural activity was in sharp decline throughout central Europe, both East and West, very much in line with the global shift from film to television as the dominant audiovisual infrastructure.[5] This shift hardly came as a surprise: the previous decline of the US film industry in relation to television left little doubt about the overall trend. It is from this global perspective that a history of German cinema during the Cold War has to depart.

Markets, infrastructure and Hollywood dominance

The pioneer role of the US entertainment industry, in particular in the realm of film, was already an established fact before the Second World War. Cultural transfer – often seen as 'Americanization' – through expansionist marketing strategies was thus no novelty when Hollywood took advantage of the United States' new superpower status after 1945.[6] But in contrast to earlier times, when film production and distribution had been the leading sector in popular entertainment, the big studios now faced a severe structural crisis to which they had to adapt: US consumers began to prefer watching television at home for their evening entertainment, a transition process embedded in the rising material prosperity that enabled average wage-earner families to focus their leisure activities on the private sphere rather than on out-of-home activities.[7] The reopening of continental Europe as a huge market for film distribution in 1945 was therefore used (via aggressive marketing strategies, furthered through direct intervention by US administration and US military government officials) to exploit the commercial potential of thousands of backlog films that could not be exported to Europe during the War. Wherever cinemas reopened after the ceasefire and the arrival of US troops, Hollywood products filled Europe's screens (though in occupied Germany this was limited largely to the US zone before 1949). Already before the onset of the Cold War this led to tensions between, for example, the US and a newly liberated France, provoking nationalist protests from a film industry in which communist *résistance* had a strong position.[8] In Germany, by contrast, such objections remained silent in the face of the utter moral bankruptcy of the defeated regime. From the beginning of their joint control over Germany, however, the Allied powers followed contrasting policies regarding

the reconstruction of the German film industry, policies which prefigured the political divide of years to come.

Film was quickly re-established as the leading medium of audiovisual public communication. The development of television infrastructure, although already under way during the Nazi dictatorship, was not an urgent subject in 1945. Reconstruction Germany, both East and West, became a nation of avid moviegoers again, and this is why, seen from a commercial angle, the 1950s became the 'Golden Years' of German film history. Never before and never again were there so many movie theatres available, so many movies on offer and so many visitors as during the first years of the so-called 'economic miracle' (in the West) and the first Five Year Plan (in the East).[9] By the end of the 1950s, however, this boom had already collapsed due to the predatory competition of TV, bringing with it the same crisis symptoms Hollywood had faced some ten years earlier.[10]

This structural change, which was characteristic for all industrialized societies of the period, took considerably longer in the GDR than in the Federal Republic. Nevertheless it must be stressed that within the overall landscape of countries involved in the Cold War, the relatively advanced Eastern Bloc states such as the GDR, the CSSR and Hungary were more similar to West European countries in terms of cinema infrastructure and attendance than to the latecomers in their own camp such as Romania and in particular the Soviet Union. Indeed, during the 1960s they even outmatched several of the less developed countries in the West, such as Italy, Spain or Portugal.[11] Since the expansion of television depended on relatively high levels of individual affluence including family-centred, private living space, the (usually prior) purchase of other home appliances (refrigerators, washing machines) and, above all, enough free time, in many ways the lifestyle in countries such as the GDR began to resemble Western societies much more than the proclaimed model of their hegemonic power, the Soviet Union. Within this lifestyle, mass media were used primarily as a source of information and entertainment. Attempts to use them effectively as means of thought control and behaviour manipulation largely foundered on the persistence of individualistic orientations and preferences.[12] In the long run, keeping in touch with the much-acclaimed *Weltniveau* ('world-class standard') in the field of consumer culture therefore proved to be one of the primary factors of mental and ideological subversion of the communist regimes.

Film and politics in Cold War Germany

The coincidence of the pre-television climax in cinema consumption in Germany with the massive expansion of Hollywood on the German film market during the height of the Cold War moved US culture and its influence in Germany into the centre of the wider inner-German political conflict. As a policy field, cinema was particularly suited for both sides to formulate claims

of representing the 'better' Germany, since cinema had always served as a vehicle to represent the nation as an 'imagined community'.[13] With the nation lying in ruins after the Nazi defeat, claims to reconstruct it under Cold War conditions implied a deliberate distancing both from the Nazi past and from the rival on the other side of the 'iron curtain'. This logic, omnipresent in all spheres of public life throughout the 1950s, would also powerfully shape the development of post-war German cinema.

In the Soviet Zone, Soviet and SED functionaries responsible for cultural policies established the DEFA (Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft) as the monopolistic film producer.[14] Disposing of the lion's share of the UFA's material and personnel at Babelsberg near Berlin, DEFA claimed to stand for the resurrection of new German film in all of Germany. In the first years of its existence, DEFA was indeed open for non-aligned film-makers and actors from the West; the precedent was set with Wolfgang Staudte and Hildegard Knef as director and female lead in the now legendary first German post-war feature film, *Die Mörder sind unter uns* (1946).[15] DEFA also integrated the studios for child films, synchronization, educational and documentary film. The latter also produced the newsreel *Der Augenzeuge* ('The Eyewitness') as the SED's most important propaganda platform in the realm of audiovisual communication in the pre-TV era. Movie theatre performances still followed the patterns already established during the 1920s, in which newsreels were followed by an educational documentary (*Kulturfilm*) before the long feature film would start.

Establishing the DEFA meant a clear break, however, with one of the four 'D' principles (de-nazification, demilitarization, decartelization, democratization) upon which the Allies had agreed at the Potsdam conference. As a monopolistic film producer with direct material and (some) personnel continuities with the infamous UFI (as the UFA was renamed in the latter stages of the War) its very existence ran against the goal of decartelization. In the West, by contrast, the three occupation powers issued licences for film production and distribution in a restrained manner, which allowed only the establishment of small enterprises. The bulk of UFI capital stock was meanwhile managed by trustees under the control of the military governments, leaving the final settlement of its dismemberment to later German governments. This policy, of course, was perfectly congruent with the interests of the US film industry.[16] By 1949, when the two German states were founded, two opposing models of reconstructing the German film industry had already been established: in the East, a monopolistic state enterprise that was relatively well equipped, fully integrated into the emerging planned economy and tightly controlled by the political leadership; and in the West, a cluster of privately owned, small production and large distribution firms licensed by military governments, using remnants of the UFI's resources and operating on a market open to international, in particular US, competition. It has to be stressed, however, that within this semi-private sector in the

West, direct and indirect government control played a vital role. In particular, the newsreel companies founded by Western media enterprises under the auspices of their respective Military Governments not only guaranteed political control of audiovisual public communication, but also contributed to the utilization of the industry's technical infrastructure. Of course, the programming of *Welt im Film* (British–American zone) and *Blick in die Welt* (French zone) was moulded according to the 're-education' principles of objectivity, pluralism and above all the audience's right to non-political entertainment. In other words, it represented Western values within the ideological and cultural battles of the Cold War. Nevertheless these newsreels were perceived as quasi-official mouthpieces of the authorities. In 1950, the *Neue Deutsche Wochenschau*, established under direct control by the new Federal Government, extended this practice into the following decades, standing in contrast to the new principles of state-independent, publicly controlled mass media as they had been implemented in the realm of broadcasting.[17]

Despite this process of divergence into a planned versus market economy, some intra-German co-operation and exchange on the level of programming had been established by the late 1940s. Within the limits of the annually fixed trade quota, West German distributors could screen their movies in East German cinemas, and DEFA was allowed to export to the Western zones. With Cold War tensions on the rise after the outbreak of the Korean War, this modest trade came to an end when the Federal Government de facto banned the import of all films from communist states (including the GDR) in 1951.[18] While formal censorship was excluded by the West German Basic Law (provisional constitution), the surrogate practice of producer self-control following the American model was introduced by a mixture of private and political governance. In 1949, the film industry established the *Spitzenorganisation der Filmwirtschaft* (SPIO), which practised *Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle* (FSK) according to a code of taboo subjects. This was complemented by the *Filmbewertungstelle* (Film Inspection Agency) set up by the *Länder* (federal states) in 1951 to categorize films as 'valuable' or 'extremely valuable', which would reduce the taxation of their profits. After 1950, a special commission set up by several federal government ministries controlled the distribution of income-shortfall guarantees for individual film productions. In the anti-communist climate of the 1950s, this was unsurprisingly used to exert control over the content of films. Furthermore, restrictive foreign trade regulations (already mentioned above) prevented the import of East German and other 'communist' films.[19]

By contrast, West European movies remained far more prominent on the GDR's movie screens throughout the period of German division. As in all small- to medium-sized movie publics, East Germany could not satisfy the continuous demand for new and up-to-date products and was forced to import from other countries. Excessive screening of Soviet films incited occasional public expressions of hostility towards the 'Great Brother' and could therefore offer no long-term solution comparable to Hollywood's omnipresence on West

German screens. Nevertheless, more than a quarter of all films on display between 1945 and 1961 were of Soviet origin. Imports from the other communist film industries, predominately Czechoslovakia, remained selective according to their suitability to East German tastes and political acceptability to East German authorities. The remaining gap was filled by cautiously selected re-runs of Ufa and by imported West European and other international productions. In particular 'light entertainment' and 'progressive' films from France, Italy and West Germany found their way to the East German audience, complemented by British and Austrian productions. The least probable candidates for import from the Western hemisphere were, of course, US movies. In sum, nearly a third of all feature films screened in the GDR between 1945 and 1961 came from the West.[20]

This asymmetry of film exchange between the two German states is symptomatic of the paradoxical development of intra-German relations during the Cold War. Immediately after the division into two states, it was above all the SED that claimed to outdo its Bonn counterpart in trying to overcome the separation of the nation. It fiercely denounced Adenauer as the head of a collaborationist government staffed by former Nazis and executing the will of a colonial power, the US. By contrast, the West German leadership insisted on Western-style 'freedom' as the precondition of unity, to be secured by long-term integration into the transatlantic security system and the emerging West European Economic Community. While the SED regime's claims to represent the 'better' Germany had lost any credibility after the June uprising in 1953, when its dependence on Soviet military force had become obvious, Adenauer could plausibly claim to represent at least the 'real' Germany by settling the POW question with the Soviet Union in 1955. The longer the Cold War lasted, the more West Germany could rely on itself and turn away from the GDR as a point of reference. By contrast, both the population and leadership in the GDR remained fixated on their Western neighbour as the primary competitor and instinctive yardstick for comparison in all relevant fields of economic, social and cultural development.

During the 1950s, however, the politics of international cinema became a field in which the Federal Republic expended considerable diplomatic efforts in order to minimize the GDR's claims to be an international player. In line with its so-called 'Hallstein doctrine' (making diplomatic relations with other countries dependent on their denying diplomatic recognition to the GDR), Bonn intervened successfully wherever the GDR would attempt to be officially represented by DEFA productions at international festivals such as Cannes or Venice. During the first years of the post-Stalinist thaw in particular, DEFA, in turn, sought opportunities to invite West European as well as West German film producers to engage in co-productions – an attractive offer, since the Babelsberg studios were still numbered at the time among Europe's leading production sites, due especially to their talented technicians and stage designers. The outcome of these short-lived overtures to

international co-operation was several semi-official co-productions with French and Italian producers, while those with West German film-makers had to be organized via mock firms in Stockholm in order to package them as East German–Swedish co-productions.

In principle, the DEFA's opting for bi- or multinational co-productions in order to overcome the isolation imposed by West German foreign policy was well in tune with the general trend in the European film industry, namely combating Hollywood's superiority in resources and global reach by combining capital and star appeal from different national cinema publics. French–Italian co-productions became the standard case of this entrepreneurial strategy, followed by French–British and French–West German partnerships.[21] A few (though highly significant) French producers and artists nonetheless found Babelsberg's offers attractive enough to produce four feature movies with internationally acclaimed stars such as Gérard Philipe, Simone Signoret, Yves Montand and Jean Gabin between 1956 and 1960. DEFA's speculative efforts to gain international reputation through these co-productions were, however, repeatedly frustrated when their French business partners consistently failed to highlight the GDR's participation once they were released to the Western public. No wonder that the Berlin Wall also set a preliminary end to such experiments in gaining access to the West European film market.[22]

Cold War films in East and West Germany

How was the Cold War itself represented in film during these years? This question can be approached on two levels. A relatively small portion of feature films were devoted to this conflict in a more or less explicit way, either by treating an aspect of the Cold War as their central theme or by placing an otherwise unspecific story within circumstances typical of the Cold War. The overwhelming majority of feature film productions during these years did not, however, contain explicit allusions to the Cold War. Many were either set in the past or in an exotic location, as is characteristic for historical drama and adaptations from canonical literary classics. A sizeable portion of films that were set in the 'here and now' would nonetheless avoid any allusion to the existence of the ideological and cultural conflict between the two hemispheres. Conventional genres such as the detective story, comedy, western or melodrama did not depend on such a framing: on the contrary, this could potentially detract from their escapist appeal.

Nevertheless it is worthwhile considering whether and how the Cold War was *implicitly* represented in such movies. Can we attribute certain narratives, images and stereotypes to the impact of the Cold War climate in society? Can we interpret the popularity of certain genres, for instance the *Heimatfilm* (literally 'homeland film'), as the indirect effect of a general feeling of insecurity and longing for harmony fuelled by the ongoing international tensions?

Only in rare cases were parables and *roman à clef* techniques deliberately employed to treat Cold War issues, as for instance in the adaptation of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* in the 1957 French–DEFA co-production *Die Hexen von Salem*, featuring Simone Signoret and Yves Montand in the leading roles. More often, Cold War premises were present in a collateral and more or less unconscious way. Nevertheless, historians of Cold War culture must be careful not to interpret every symbolic expression of political antagonism and moral Manichaeism as wholly contingent on the Cold War predicament. For one thing, such plot devices and narrative motives had been formative elements of popular entertainment as well as high-brow cultural narratives long before the Cold War. The cinematic production of the 1950s followed a tradition of reproducing generic formulae for the sake of their entertaining and elating function. Even when obvious affinities to the scary climate of the Atomic Age might have been taken for granted or indeed systematically exploited, this did not mean that the international state of affairs was necessarily the primary subject motivating either film-makers or their audience. Secondly, it has to be kept in mind that although the Cold War conflict deeply permeated the societies involved, it was by no means the only factor informing contemporaries' world views. European societies were at the time also engaged in other conflicts and dilemmas, most of them derived from the fundamental processes of transformation such as post-war reconstruction and modernization, processes of de-colonization (in France, Belgium and the Netherlands) and, particularly in Germany, coming to terms with the Nazi past.

That being said, the small number of *explicit* treatments of the Cold War in post-war German film nevertheless merit closer inspection, since they are revealing in terms of both their uneven distribution among East and West and their preferred underlying narrative strategies and genres. They hint at contemporaries' mental and imaginary resources of 'making sense' (and sometimes also 'fun') of the Cold War beyond the brutal facts of opposing military camps and their ideologies. The striking difference between the GDR and the Federal Republic in this regard consists in the frequent airing of Cold War issues in DEFA *Gegenwartsfilme* ('contemporary films') compared to their almost complete absence in West German feature film production. 'Cold War issues' in this context refers mainly to the peculiar German situation of a nation living in opposing political systems, but also in some cases to a broader set of manifestations of the global conflict such as military deterrence, espionage and conspiracies, or proxy wars in Third World countries.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, DEFA produced at least two or three feature films that treated Cold War issues in an explicit way, increasing to between five and eight from 1956 to 1963. A total of eight such films for the last two decades of the GDR echoes the SED's renunciation of aggressive anti-Western indoctrination during the period of disenchanted 'real and existing socialism' and international detente.[23] The plots used by DEFA script

authors to address the Cold War in feature films can be roughly grouped into three variants:

1) stories set exclusively in a Western, mostly German context debunking capitalism and imperialism;
2) thrillers revolving around attempts of sabotage and espionage against socialism, the action implying frequent border crossings between East and West; and
3) dramas about individuals caught in the dilemma of mixed loyalties between faith to the socialist cause and family or love relations, also including the problem of border crossing (but with the centre of action situated in the GDR).

In the first group the message of the films often subscribes to blunt anti-Americanism and nationalism combined with outright defamation of the Federal Republic's elites as militarist, decadent and infiltrated by former Nazis. To offer an illustration, the melodrama *Das verurteilte Dorf* (1952) celebrates the struggle of a West German village community against the American military government's plans to erect an airport on the village's territory, all couched in a tone of high-pitched 'people's front' nationalism. The satire *Der Ochse von Kulm* (1955), by contrast, uses elements of the Bavarian folk comedy (*Komödienstadl*) in order to mock the American occupants and to invoke the incorruptible spirit and wits of decent German peasants. Both films draw extensively on clichés of the *Heimatfilm* genre: displaying actors in traditional costumes (*Trachten*), extensive rural landscape views, and the original intactness of rural village life disturbed only by the American intruders.[24] By contrast, the stories of films such as *Rat der Götter* (1950), *Der Hauptmann von Köln* (1956) or *Die Spielbankaffäre* (1957) were set in the higher echelons of West German society and portrayed its members as former war criminals, greedy capitalists and decadent nihilists.

The avoidance of explicit pro-GDR propaganda in such films served to underline the SED state's claim to be the only true representative of the interests of the whole German nation. Also through their generic conventionality they seem as if they were conceived to be understandable for a Western audience – although it was clear from the outset that they would only be shown in East German theatres. They therefore primarily served the SED's needs to propagate the credibility of its nationalist rhetoric in its own sphere of domination.

The films of the second group mostly fall into the thriller genre, often reflecting the SED's obsession with Western sabotage, espionage and political infiltration. In particular, the 'class enemy's' conspiracies to undermine the state socialist economy through sabotage attacks, smuggling and recruiting skilled labour for Western companies is a recurrent theme in the 1950s, as for instance in *Der Auftrag Höglers* (1950), *Geheimakten Solvay* (1953) or *Sie*

kannten sich alle (1958). Divided Berlin with its big city image ideally lent itself as background for crime stories with suspense-driven gangster hunts, for example in *Zugverkehr unregelmäßig* (1952) about sabotage against the railway tracks or *Treffpunkt Aimée* (1956) and *Ware für Katalonien* (1959) about smuggling high quality products from GDR industry. And, of course, military espionage as the 'classic' subject of Cold War movies was treated in DEFA films. Among these, the oddly titled *For Eyes Only (Streng geheim)* from 1963 excels aesthetically by its 'cool' objectivism drawing extensively on the actual case of an East German spy in the US military in West Germany who manages to flee to East Berlin just in time with NATO's military operation plans for invading the GDR.[25] The characters of these films are unambiguously either 'good' or 'bad' without much evolution in the course of action. They were devised to use the well-established genre expectation of detective and gangster stories in order to sell to GDR citizens the image of competent and sympathetic security forces protecting the socialist state. As for the group of films set only in a Western context, it was often claimed that the script was based on 'real' facts already dealt with in the press or in criminal courts.

The films of the third group can be regarded as precursors of the DEFA *Alltagsfilme* ('films about everyday life') of the 1970s and 1980s[26] in their focus on the inner conflicts of individual persons in their relation to the everyday demands of socialist society. But whereas West does not figure any more as a negative point of reference in these later films, in the earlier dramas everything revolves around the decision to be taken between East and West as synonyms of Good and Evil, solidarity and egotism, peace and war, etc. Unstable and ambivalent (but often sympathetic) characters are given the opportunity to 'mature' in the course of action until they are able to make the 'right' choice, even if this involves sacrificing personal interests. Sometimes they are allowed a happy ending by rejoining or finding a love partner preceding them on the path to socialism. The pedagogical thrust of these films is obvious: they set out to instil in the viewers' hearts and minds *Einsicht in die Notwendigkeit* (insight into the necessity) of drawing the consequences of German division. The higher ends of socialism may always demand that people subordinate present day emotions to the wider historical project. Among the films of this category we find clumsy propaganda such as *Roman einer jungen Ehe* (1952), a story about a love story of two actors torn apart by the ideological divide in the Berlin theatre scene around 1950, complete with eulogies to Stalin and denunciations of Sartrean existentialism.[27] Also *…und Deine Liebe auch* and *Der Kinnhaken* (both 1962) do little to conceal their propagandistic message by telling love stories set in the weeks after 13 August 1961, when former habitual border-crossers had to be integrated in the state socialist order.

At the same time, however, the existential and sensual dimension of the East–West tension as manifested in divided Berlin was also used by some of the most artistically successful DEFA films. In their series of Berlin films, the director–script author team Gerd Klein and Wolfgang Kohlhaase (*Alarm im*

Zirkus, 1954; *Berliner Romanze*, 1956; *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser*, 1957; *Berlin um die Ecke*, 1965/1991) adopted elements of Italian neo-realism to engage the views and needs of East German youths and the problems they faced growing up in (and into) an as yet imperfect society on its way to socialism. Yet another acclaimed work from this third group of DEFA films dealing explicitly with the German division and the Cold War was Konrad Wolf's 1964 adaptation of one of the most important novels of GDR literature, Christa Wolf's *Der geteilte Himmel*, which undoubtedly set an outstanding example of advanced European *auteur* film.[28]

It cannot at all be assumed that most of these productions were successes with the East German audience: quite the opposite. High box office returns from overtly propagandistic films such as *Das verurteilte Dorf* resulted mainly from campaigns organized by the SED state's mass organizations. If a movie proved to be popular in a more genuine sense this was due to either its exceptional aesthetic and entertaining qualities – as for instance in the case of the espionage thriller *For Eyes Only (Streng geheim)* – or to its differentiated and objective treatment of problems of ordinary people in their concrete environment – as in *Berlin – Ecke Schönhauser* or *Der geteilte Himmel*. Films that sincerely engaged with the GDR's social reality were widely appreciated as transcending the dream-world of Party propaganda, provoking in turn polemical criticism by dogmatic Party hardliners which eventually led to their withdrawal and banning.

The high frequency of Cold War issues among DEFA feature films resulted from the centralized planning of its SED superiors who year by year prescribed both the themes and genres to be pursued. Poor box office results therefore had to be remedied by attempting to treat the same unpopular themes in a more attractive way rather than by simply treating other themes. West German producers, by contrast, would only accept market mechanisms as the decisive judgement. West German moviegoers were, much as their Eastern counterparts, mainly seeking relaxation and entertainment, but had much more opportunity to focus their choices exclusively on the kind of movies deemed appropriate for this end: generally escapist genres such as family comedies, sentimental melodramas, musicals, adventure and utopian films, crime and horror, etc., whether of Hollywood or German origin. Under these circumstances, Cold War themes within West German feature film were regarded as guaranteed box office poison. Friedrich Luft, the leading theatre critic of the period, complained in 1960 that only a mere handful of German films had thus far been devoted to the 'German question'.[29] In contrast to Hollywood, the West German film industry was never forced to prove its political loyalty through alibi B-quality productions and could instead concentrate on carving out its own market niche of *Heimat* and *Landser* (World War Two) films, Karl May adaptations, and other non-exportable specialities.

The tiny sample of West German feature films to be mentioned in this context contrasts sharply to their Eastern counterparts in several ways. First,

there were no stories set exclusively in the other part of Germany. The idea that 'Moscow' and 'Pankow' exerted a brutal dictatorship over East Germany, and that its economy did not perform well, was a truism to the West German public requiring no further elaboration. Secondly, according to the ideological premises of the West, stories tended to concentrate on innocent victims of the Cold War predicament as an outcome of the reciprocal interaction of the powers to be – although, of course, the East ultimately had to be blamed for it. Individuals following the language of their hearts rather than political doctrines are shown as trapped in tragic situations which they could not escape except by fleeing from it altogether or perishing. This contrasts sharply with the rationalist approach so typical of DEFA's *Einsicht in die Notwendigkeit* dramas, where universal human values were associated with a socio-political system that deserved to be opted for. Third, placing the individual above inhumane politics was not the only way to relativize the Cold War. Another mechanism consisted in the ironic treatment of Cold War paranoia emanating from a minority of critical voices within the West German political culture. Later on this ironic twist would become characteristic also for the popular genre of exploitive spy thrillers, above all in James Bond movies.

Helmut Käutner's *Himmel ohne Sterne* (1955) can be regarded as the outstanding melodrama among these films. Set at the intra-German border between Hessia and Thuringia, it tells a story of an East German young mother seeking to smuggle her child, who lives with the dead father's parents on the other side of the border, to her own home, all with the help of a West German border police officer with whom she has fallen in love. The final tragedy of the couple dying in the gunfire of a border patrol strongly criticizes West Germans' self-complacency and growing disinterest in the fate of their Eastern co-nationals, and exposes the German division as deeply inhumane and immoral. Four films, *Postlagernd Turteltaube* (1952), *Flucht nach Berlin* (1960), *Durchbruch von Lok 234* (1963) and *Verspätung in Marienborn* (D/F/I 1963) tell escape-from-the-East stories, although with differing means: *Postlagernd Turteltaube* uses comedy elements, while the remaining films follow the dramatic logic of thrilling escape movies. *Menschen im Netz* (1959) tells the story of a former prisoner, escaped from the GDR to Munich, who tries to clear up the murder of his wife and finds himself caught up in a conspiracy of undercover *Stasi* agents. The genre of the exploitive spy thriller is represented by international co-productions such as *Im Namen des Teufels* (GB/D 1961) and *Spione unter sich* (GB/D/F/I 1965). Wolfgang Neuss, the legendary West Berlin satirist and film comedian, contributed a biting critique of West German Cold War stereotypes and Russophobic obsessions in his farce *Genosse Münchhausen* (1961).

Among these films explicitly dealing with Cold War issues, only Käutner's *Himmel ohne Sterne* met with modest success at the box office. If we search for popular feature films reflecting the mind-set and political consensus of West

German society about its place within the new world order we must rather turn to the war dramas telling the fate of the brave but innocent *Wehrmacht* soldier who ends up suffering in Siberian POW camps, or to melodramatic *mise-en-scènes* of the integration of Eastern expellees into rural West German society recurrent in *Heimatfilm* plots.[30] Burgeoning consumerism and West German *nouveau riche* mannerisms were mildly ridiculed in the popular comedies of musician and entertainer Heinz Erhard, while the successful thriller *Das Mädchen Rosemarie* (1958), based on a script by Erich Kuby about the case of a murdered prostitute in Frankfurt, delivered a poignant critique of the double standards of bourgeois morality of the Adenauer years. Otherwise, the adherence to the Western world was evident in West German cinema through the fare that the public demanded and received: their eyes and ears were open for everything coming from across the Atlantic, especially those of the younger audience.

Conclusion and outlook

The East–West asymmetry in cinematic representations of the Cold War during the height of superpower tensions in some ways prefigured the paradoxical articulation of 'separation and interconnection' (*Abgrenzung und Verflechtung*) between the two German polities that dominated in the decades to come.[31] In the GDR, media users, producers and the SED as the monopolistic commissioner and censurer of media products were all fixated, though from contrasting angles, on the West. Whether it served as the measure for good entertainment unspoiled by political indoctrination, as a source of aesthetic and technical innovation or as an ideological opponent and 'fifth column' within the regime's own sphere of domination, in the long run it was Western consumer and media culture from which the criteria for the success of the socialist project were ultimately derived. This fixation on the West was met in the Federal Republic by a decreasing interest in the East once the division became seemingly definitive after 1961, in particular after the onset of détente politics appeared to seal division in an array of international treaties and conventions.

At the same time, in both Germanys cinema continued to lose ground to the benefit of television. It was eventually on the television screen, and predominantly in documentary formats, that the reality of the German division and East–West confrontation was dealt with as far as audiovisual representation was concerned, be it through clumsy propaganda such as Karl Eduard von Schnitzler's infamous *Schwarzer Kanal* on the Eastern side, or in political magazines representing Western political pluralism (*ZDF-Magazin*, *Kennzeichen D*) on the other. With the rise of television the West German film industry disintegrated into the production of commercial mainstreamers on the one hand and a young rebellious avant-garde on the other. European co-production had meanwhile become a strategy of survival not only against Hollywood's

hegemony, but also against domestic competition through TV, in the process giving rise to popular hybrid genres such as the Karl May adaptations, Edgar Wallace, Dr Mabuse and Kommisar X Films, or the Sexy Susan (*Frau Wirtin*) Cycle.[32] The general commercial decline of the industry was accompanied by the rise of a new generation of film-makers reclaiming film as a medium of artistic expression and authenticity, criticizing its status as a mere vehicle of escapist entertainment or bourgeois indoctrination. Inspired by international trends of *auteur* cinema and highly subsidized by public institutions (including the public TV stations), this 'New German Cinema' was soon appreciated by critics worldwide, though it enjoyed limited mass resonance on the domestic market. Meanwhile mainstream cinema tried to survive the general decline of moviegoing by focusing largely on low-budget productions such as sex films, school comedies and musicals primarily aimed at a young audience.

In East Germany some parallels to this process can be observed, although, of course, embedded in the regime of tight party control. The first years after the construction of the Wall saw the emergence of DEFA feature films exposing the problems of GDR society from a standpoint of 'critical loyalty'. In contrast to the Federal Republic, this was not solely the project of the young, since the founder generation also took part in it. In any event it struck a nerve in the GDR audience weary of schematic and boring 'socialist realism'. But this extremely creative wave of politically engaged cinema came to a sudden halt in 1965 when the ominous 11th plenum of the SED central committee banned nearly a whole year's production of DEFA feature films and reaffirmed its earlier dogmatic line of censorship.[33] In its place, a different strategy was followed more consistently in order to appease the GDR audience: namely, the adaptation of internal popular genres to the exigencies of communist ideology. Whether science fiction, spy thrillers, rock 'n' roll musicals, or the western – DEFA artists found ways and means to create local hybrids that were both utterly compatible with Marxist–Leninist world views and successful with their domestic public.[34]

Notes

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8

Television and Social Transformation in the Federal Republic of Germany

Knut Hickethier

Introduction: Television and modernization

If the history of television represents a chapter in the triumph of modernity (and its subsequent eclipse by post-modernity), then the 1960s take on a special significance. For it was in this decade that television finally became a mass medium, in fact the principal means of social communication, in Germany. It attained its first full development in this late phase of cultural modernity in industrial societies, and became at the same time its most contentious product. The hallmark of television is that it brings together the characteristics of existing media, that it connects an audiovisual representation of the world with the programme character of radio, that it can present the past and present equally, and that it claims to be a medium of absolute simultaneity. Especially in the 1950s, it was emphasized time and again that television is primarily a live medium, and this notion has persisted despite the fact that even in the 1960s most TV broadcasts were no longer 'live' in the strict sense of the word. Television is a temporal stream of constantly new representations, enabling a mediated participation and a sense of 'being there' at events around the world in a completely new way.

Television grew out of the modernizing impulses associated with industrialization, and is also the most effective contemporary means of communicating – and therefore disseminating and stimulating – social changes. As an agent of social transformation, television contributes to the cultural formation of the viewer, helping him or her to adapt – in a complex and contradictory rather than straightforward process – to the requirements of society. In this way, television contributes to a new socialization of the individual.[1] It also changes perception by making flexible the nature of viewing. Different representations of the world are programmed side by side and given equal value; there is no longer a one-dimensional view of the world. Instead, the nature of television programming allows a plurality of positions, a whole gamut of visual representations. Even though it was first organized along regional and national lines, television is oriented towards the international sphere, and it shares this

international dimension with the other technological media. However, the peculiar technological interface between viewer and TV set influences people's perceptions of society and everyday life in a quite unique way – a process often unnoticed by the recipients themselves. Therefore, television can be seen as a specific *Mediendispositiv*, a medial apparatus that guides perception in a particular way and produces effects that do not occur with other media.[2] As a result, new formations of subjectivity have emerged and been constantly discussed since the 1950s, ranging from 'other-directed people' (*aussengeleitete Menschen*)[3] to the 'homo politicus' to 'flexible people'.[4] Current studies describe the socio-type of the *Histrio*, who acts out various social roles in everyday life.[5] The following discussion will attempt to draw connections between these new forms of subjectivity and the historical development of television.

The political organization of television in West Germany and the industrialization of the medium in the early 1960s

The beginning of the 1960s marked a clear break in the history of German television. At this point, the production and distribution of television broadcasts were already well developed, thanks to the previous technological and infrastructure advances of the 1950s. The expansion of universal broadcasting with a central distribution system was complete; from this point on, television could be received nationwide. Starting in 1958–59, the introduction of magnetic recordings made it possible to produce programming by electronic means (and no longer just on film) in advance of its actual broadcast time. Therefore, programme planning could be systematized and the programmes generally expanded since they were no longer tied to live production. Above all, this led to the general abandonment of live production in broadcasts not tied to current affairs (such as light entertainment, fiction and documentaries). The broadcast of a second channel (also nationwide) was made possible by the opening of new frequency bands. By 1957, the number of registered sets had exceeded the one million mark and was increasing by approximately one million each year.

These technological developments led to a long-running political controversy between the federal government, the *Länder* (state) governments, and the broadcasters concerning the social organization of the medium. Since 1948–52, television had been organized and produced as part of the network of regional broadcasting stations which had merged as the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (ARD), or Consortium of Public Broadcasting Institutions of the FRG. The programming of *Deutsches Fernsehen* ('German television') was shared by these regional stations, which were formally organized under state law as public institutions on a federal state (*Land*) level (although some broadcasters such as *Norddeutscher Rundfunk* (NDR, 'North German Broadcasting') and *Südwestfunk*

(SWR, 'Southwest Broadcasting') were also active in several states, following inter-state treaties). Broadcasting itself was structured according to the public model of the BBC, and funded by a licence fee.[6]

When technology opened the possibility of a second channel, the federal government demanded that it be centrally organized at the federal level. However, a broadcast law to this effect was not introduced until 1957. Therefore, the federal government under Chancellor Konrad Adenauer planned to organize the creation of a second channel by founding a *Deutschland Fernsehen GmbH* ('German Television Ltd'), under the corporate control of the federal government and the states. The programming was to be produced by a private, commercial company, *Freies Fernsehen GmbH* ('Independent Television Corporation'), and financed centrally by public funds. However, the states refused to join the corporation, because they did not want to share their influence over broadcasting with the federal government.

After the federal government's attempts to persuade the states to collaborate in the *Deutschland Fernsehen GmbH* had failed in June 1960, thus leaving only the Chancellor and the federal Finance Minister (acting as trustees for the states' shares) as the sole shareholders of the corporation, the announcement that the station would be launched in 1961 provoked a storm of protest from certain states. Hesse and Hamburg (and later also Lower Saxony and Bremen) brought a case before the Federal Constitutional Court, which announced a verdict on 28 February 1961 forbidding the so-called *Adenauerfernsehen* ('Adenauer TV'). At the same time, the verdict established that broadcasting was the prerogative of the individual states, and that radio and television must be organized according to the public model as long as only a limited number of broadcast frequencies were available. As early as 17 March 1961, the Minister-Presidents of the federal states agreed to establish a new central organization for a second channel independent of the ARD. On 6 June 1961, they signed an inter-state agreement for the foundation of *Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen* (ZDF, 'German Channel Two'), with headquarters in Mainz, which began broadcasting on 1 April 1963. The members of ARD were given the right to broadcast a *Drittes Programm* ('third channel') on a regional level, which would primarily support culture and education.

The creation of ZDF marked a decisive turning point in the production of television. In contrast to the 'full-grown' structure of the ARD stations, which had gradually acquired TV production facilities for themselves and had participated in shared programming only on a limited basis, ZDF had quickly to acquire the production capacity to meet the daily operations of a full programming schedule. ZDF began to 'outsource' some of its production, especially for non-current-events programmes such as entertainment shows, TV series and TV movies. Existing or recently founded television production companies were commissioned to produce programmes for ZDF, and also later for the ARD stations. In the early 1960s, around 80 companies were under contract with ZDF. ZDF also acquired its own production studios, in

the same way that WDR and SDR had purchased shares in the Bavaria Filmstudios at the end of the 1950s and NDR had taken over the Real-Film-Studios in Hamburg to create Studio Hamburg.

The ZDF agreement envisioned a co-ordination of the programmes offered by ZDF and ARD, so that a precise alignment of programming emerged on strictly predetermined patterns. This not only simplified production planning for the broadcasters, but also helped to orient the viewers to the programme offered by these first two channels. By the end of the 1960s, the range of programmes had been expanded by the regionally broadcast third channels of the ARD stations, allowing the individual viewer at least three channels from which to choose.

The 1960s can in many ways be described as the 'industrialization' phase of television, because it was during this period that the somewhat 'handcrafted' production processes that had hitherto been dominant came to an end. Television was now becoming a thoroughly planned medium geared towards programming continuity; it produced shows on a periodic and serial basis to fill programming slots. This not only schematized programming structures, but also, in turn, standardized the length of individual shows (largely into 15-, 30- or 60-minute blocks) and increasingly led to the purchase of foreign programmes (e.g. American and British TV series) produced in predefined units.

With these new ground rules for programme production, the early 1960s now saw an overall expansion in programming. In addition to the late afternoon and evening programming which had already existed at the end of the 1950s, a new morning programme was introduced after the building of the Berlin Wall in August 1961 (at first only in border areas and for citizens of the GDR), co-produced between ARD and ZDF and consisting mainly of re-runs of evening programmes. At the same time there began an expansion of weekend programming, starting in the early 1960s when work-free Saturdays were introduced in large sectors of the economy; this programming also ended up gradually expanding into the early afternoons. At ARD alone, the amount of programming roughly doubled between 1959 and 1963 (from 107,895 minutes per year in 1959 to 207,371 minutes per year in 1963).

Television had now developed into a tightly structured broadcast series organized largely around the principles of variety and continuity – though it also made constant use of special events to draw attention to itself. For example, television had now found its own fictional formats: series and multi-part TV movies became major attractions. Crime mini-series by Francis Durbridge (*Das Halstuch*, 1962) and the film adaptation of the Great Train Robbery (*Die Gentlemen bitten zur Kasse*, 1966) became 'blockbusters' and were watched by up to 90 per cent of all viewers. In addition, there were numerous family series and crime series which caused a furore, some in the early evening but others also in late evening programming. At the same time, teleplays and TV movies became important narrative forms that dealt with the realities of the Federal Republic. Elaborately produced entertainment programmes also achieved

great prominence, the most important of which was *Einer wird gewinnen* (EWG, a wordplay on *Europäische Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft*, or 'European Economic Community'), which demonstrated pan-European appeal and cosmopolitanism. In addition to its entertainment function, television also became important as a tool for shaping political opinions. Both the daily news programmes, which were deliberately neutral, and the current-affairs editorial departments of TV stations were committed to the shaping of public opinion. Magazine shows such as *Panorama* (produced by NDR), *Report* (from Munich and Baden-Baden), as well as *Monitor* (produced by WDR) did not shy away from controversy, and frequently provoked strong criticism from politicians.

Patterns of viewing and the restructuring of everyday life

The restructuring of television also affected the nature of viewing. The introduction of television in West German households was now expanding enormously every year. The TV set had become the most important household appliance, ahead of even the refrigerator and washing machine – and also ahead of the radio. The TV set in the living room contributed significantly to the wider processes of domestication that were under way at the time.[7] In many ways it became the focus of the living room and subtly re-structured familial communication and patterns of interaction. While broader societal communication was, on the one hand, given a significant boost by the new and increasingly influential platform of television, it was also, on the other hand, being shifted into the private realm. There thus emerged a new and specifically semi-private hybrid of public space hitherto unknown.

The expansion of programming meant that the viewer could no longer watch the entire programme as in the early 1950s, but had to pick and choose instead. In the mid-1960s, the two major channels each broadcast for about 12 hours per day. At the same time, however, the average viewing time was about 70 minutes per day. Selectivity therefore became an important principle of consumption, which strengthened preferences for particular programme genres. The ability to select programmes also contributed to a growing differentiation between viewers, above all between those interested more in current events and those primarily seeking entertainment; out of these categories there also arose further differentiations specific to various target groups and genres. Yet it is important to recognize that this differentiation of viewer behaviour resulted less from the differentiation in programming *per se* than from the viewers' own personal criteria and preferences.

At the same time, forms of routinization and ritualization began to take hold. Television rituals grew into important focal points in people's lives, especially in relation to regularly repeated broadcasts (such as newscasts, Friday night crime series and Saturday night entertainment). Another cherished ritual formed around the Sunday midday broadcasts of *Internationale Frühschoppen* ('International Morning Drink'), when Werner Höfer discussed

world politics with various journalists from other countries while all participants indulged in Rhine wine and an excess of cigarettes.

Regular television-viewing at certain times of day achieved an independent function in the psychic make-up of the viewer. This ritualization can be seen especially clearly in the reception of the *Tagesschau*, the main evening news. This 8 p.m. appointment with ARD became a firm point of daily contact with the outside world, for taking in news about world events. However, watching *Tagesschau* was and is for many viewers mostly motivated by a desire to feel well-informed and less about an actual engagement with world events. The thirst for information can be frequently quenched by learning that 'nothing significant happened today'. Thus there gradually developed a kind of *Kontrollsehen* ('control viewing'), or viewing simply for the sake of ensuring that one has watched the evening news. The fact that *Tagesschau* topics are forgotten immediately after viewing, as repeatedly shown by viewer studies, is evidence for such a form of perception. Another form of viewing is *Regenerationsfernsehen* ('regeneration television'), where many viewers do not even pay attention to the topics. After an exhausting workday, many sit down in front of the TV just to switch off, doze and sleep. The important factor is simply the diffuse feeling of 'being there'. Workplace problems and other personal frustrations are replaced or suppressed by TV events. The model of the 'other-directed' person, as already described by David Riesman in relation to the USA of the 1950s, was more and more becoming reality.[8]

Confrontation and adaptation in the 1970s and early 1980s

By the end of the 1960s, television had almost reached saturation point, with up to 90 per cent of the population belonging to the TV audience. Television had become the central mass medium. At around the same time, West German society found itself in profound political and social upheaval, driven in large part by the cultural movements of the time, including the student protest movement. Television became an important mediator of these changes. While it tended on the one hand to preserve existing cultural traditions by adapting them, on the other hand it also communicated information about the 'new'. More specifically 'target-group oriented' programmes were now being produced, including educational shows for children, youth programmes, and broadcasts aimed at senior citizens. At the same time, stronger emphasis was placed on topics dealing with labour issues and social organization at the grass-roots level. Even on the entertainment shows, unconventional ideas about social skills and family rapport were explored (as, for example, in the entertainment programme *Wünsch Dir was*), and fictional programmes focused more on the problems of the working class (for example the mini-series *Acht Stunden sind kein Tag*, directed by Rainer Werner Fassbinder in 1973), office workers and marginalized social groups. However, classical forms of cinematic storytelling also continued to exist alongside these innovations.

A significantly stronger polarization between political camps emerged in political reporting, not least due to the increasing attempts of political parties to interfere with the broadcasters by monitoring political balance in personnel appointments, and also by attempting to put external pressure on the broadcasters through various campaigns (such as the *'Rotfunk'-Kampagne* or 'red radio campaign' of the conservative CDU party against WDR in North Rhine-Westphalia, and the termination of the NDR founding treaty by Ernst Albrecht, the CDU state premier of Lower Saxony). Therefore, the 1970s were primarily a period of conflict in West German television, which led to bitter political controversies.[9]

The years 1973–74, when West Germany reached the end of its economic growth phase after the so-called oil crisis, also marked an important turning-point in the cultural history of the Federal Republic. During these years a similar upheaval took place in television: the euphoria of renewal at the end of the 1960s had evaporated; a mood of crisis was now spreading, which – also under the political pressure of the conservative parties – led to at least a partial return of conservative values. The changes of 1973–74 were such that by the end of the 1970s television no longer saw itself as a transformer and motor of cultural innovation, but instead withdrew more firmly into its role as a kind of neutral mediator. Extreme positions were increasingly avoided; television developed into an entity which sought the middle ground for the expression of West German public opinion and attitudes, with the goal of reaching the majority audience without annoying anyone. Stations engaged in internal discussions and developed guidelines such as *Ausgewogenheit* ('balance'), which led to the requirement that all socially important groups be allowed to speak on every controversial topic. A 'mainstream' orientation increasingly defined the programming in entertainment, TV movies and series too.

The politicization of television in the early 1970s thus stands in sharp contrast to the prevailing depoliticization of the late 1970s. One of the major factors behind this shift were the vehement debates about terrorism ('Red Army Faction', or RAF) and counter-terrorism. In 1977 (the so-called 'German Autumn', which witnessed the murder of employers' leader Hanns-Martin Schleyer and the rescue of a hijacked Lufthansa plane in Mogadishu), all controversial television programming was discontinued. At the end of the 1970s, a new 'inwardness' finally prevailed as the basic tenor of the media. In the medium term, fictional programmes also emphasized the private and the apolitical. The public arena of television shifted away from being a platform for public conflicts, and more towards offering therapy for private problems (such as child-rearing, relationship crises, and issues of sexuality). Social modernization through TV and on TV was being realized increasingly through the priorities of the 'private' interests of the viewer.

Another aspect of modernization appeared when television first began to broadcast programmes on the psychology of the individual. The examination of personal relationships, married life, child-rearing, etc. represented an

emancipatory development which helped to reduce the impact of unreasonable social constraints and alleviate the pressures of everyday life. Individuals were thus helped to adjust to changes that were connected to the slow decline of industrial society. Here we can see the emergence of a 'flexibilization' of the individual, which was also connected to a changed understanding of gender roles.

As shown by Richard Sennett, television contributed to the creation of a personal disposition which he labelled the 'flexible person': the personal sphere which had been previously hidden from public view was now being constantly exposed to public discourse and opened up for social debate.[10] This encouraged a new definition of the individual and his or her identity. By offering space to alternative lifestyles and exploring 'modern contemporary' life in areas such as marriage and family, the media were throwing traditional value systems into question. Among other things, aspects of 'social efficiency' were increasingly brought into discussions about individuality and society, discussions which in the long term contributed to disciplining how the individual organized his or her everyday life. Not only public but also private behaviour could now be reduced to a set of functions. The medium of television was in effect guiding this process with numerous programmes, above all the many advice shows such as *Du & Ich* ('You and I').

This is certainly not to say that TV producers or viewers deliberately set out to achieve such effects. The changing function of TV in its role as an agent of social control happened largely on a structural level – independent of the intentions of the participants – and therefore implemented social modernization 'behind the backs' of the viewers. There can be little doubt that this process has continued to the present. Indeed, the 1990s saw an increased focus on intimate personal relations in the public space of television, for example, the discussion of unusual sexual practices and socially unconventional relationships on daytime talkshows produced by private broadcasters.

Television as a medium of social flexibilization

In the course of the 1970s the amount of programming was further expanded and the programming structure was better adapted to the conditions of the viewer's everyday life (shifting forward the main newscast of ZDF, placing a news magazine around 10 p.m. on ARD and ZDF, extending programmes into the late evening and night, and filling the afternoon programming gaps). A parallel development that became increasingly prominent in the programming structure was a new, more fluid way of presenting the world, articulated in the transition from traditional recording technologies which were tied to TV studios to portable electronic cameras and to film. The use of film techniques in teleplays and series enabled visual storytelling to jump more quickly and unexpectedly between different locations, characters and scenes, thus making the stories themselves more 'flexible' and 'mobile'.

To illustrate this with an example: in the 1950s the desire for fictional and entertaining depictions and interpretations of the world was satisfied by television largely through recordings and broadcasts of stage productions, as well as in-house productions of theatre pieces. Television adapted established media formats and conformed to the old art forms. At the same time, these adaptations nonetheless represented a cultural modernization, because the established theatre format had previously been inaccessible to many viewers, and television reduced the personal investment required to partake in it (travel time, formal clothing, behavioural codes, etc.). In essence, the theatre was freed from its traditional cultural framework and inserted into another provided by television. In this process, established structures of perception were already growing less rigid. Theatre on television began to change subtly over time, as it adapted itself to the new technical conventions and opportunities.

This 'fluidization' or 'mobilization' gathered momentum in the TV programming of the 1970s, as fictional presentations themselves underwent an acceleration due to changing technical conditions. Since more cinematic releases and series were being shown for reasons of programming economy, viewer expectations of television productions and standards of representation were slowly being changed. The transition to film meant that TV largely abandoned its earlier relationship to theatre: for teleplays, this meant that the use of film dominated production. It was now possible to make more use of representational techniques such as montage, quick location changes, and fast and slow motion. This made fiction appear more 'contemporary' and 'modern' (because it offered more flexible perspectives), which corresponded to a similar concurrent tendency in other areas of television, to speed up perception. As far as TV series were concerned, this acceleration of perception underwent a renewed acceleration of representation in the daily soaps of the 1990s – paradoxically through yet another shift in production technology: the transition from film to electronic recording technologies, which had meanwhile been vastly improved, and which had revolutionized the editing and manipulation processes through digitalization.

In this context, theatrical broadcasts seemed 'old-fashioned'. These programmes lost viewer interest, which shifted towards TV movies and series that were filmically produced and staged and performed at a faster tempo. However, the old formats remained attractive for a small segment of the TV audience, thereby giving theatrical broadcasts a new social function. For example, they became exclusive events for the cultural elite, when showing aesthetically challenging theatrical productions that were regarded as especially significant on the cultural scene (such as productions from the Berlin *Schaubühne* and other renowned theatre companies). Therefore, such differentiated programming encompassed and altered not only the broadcast presentation formats themselves, but also the conventions outside of programming *per se*.

When considering levels of television consumption, it is noteworthy that a stagnation emerged after the 1960s in spite of television's many internal

restructurings. From 1970 to 1985, the average amount of time spent watching television rose from 118 to just 121 minutes, despite the substantial expansion of programmes. If one accepts that the wider changes taking place during this time period had made society even more complex than before, then television was, despite all its differentiated programming, obviously failing to keep up with the corresponding requirements.

The debates of the late 1970s, which focused on a stronger orientation towards entertainment in the programming of public broadcasters, can justifiably be seen as a result of the fact that the demands of the audience had shifted. Precisely because the increasingly complicated social situation required new responses from the media, new simplifications were demanded of television; in other words, a reduction in complexity. Programmes which offered information were still desired, but they had to be entertaining, not taxing.

This expectation was closely associated with an increasing differentiation in media use. In response to the changed social and psychological demands of the workplace and everyday life, viewers increasingly not only demanded a simplification of complex problems, but also desired an acceleration and expansion of programming. For example, if someone had spent the day at an automated production line monitoring and controlling multiple manufacturing processes, that person might feel the need to experience a sense of variety in the evening by tuning into multiple channels of media; or, he or she might compensate for the demands of the workplace by consciously focusing on one long programme. The flexibilization of viewing arose precisely from the fact that the viewer was no longer limited to just one method of perception, but instead could employ many different ones.

The 1980s and 1990s: A new restructuring of television

Commercial programming was introduced after a long debate which had begun in earnest around 1976–78, leading at first to the selective implementation of new distribution technologies (cable and satellite TV) in 1984, and later to the extensive development of private broadcasting starting around 1986. These private broadcasters produced programming on a commercial basis, generating revenue primarily through advertising. Underpinning this new 'dual broadcast regime' of public and private broadcasters was a further agreement among the West German states, according to which the public broadcasters would be responsible for supplying a 'basic provision' to the populace in the form of full-time programming, with the commercial broadcasters supplying an additional supplement.

In the same year, the Federal Government, led by the conservative CDU since 1982, rapidly began to cable up the Republic, thus providing the infrastructure for a multiplication of television choice. At the end of the 1980s came the additional introduction of direct satellite transmissions, significantly improving programme distribution. In addition, since the mid-1970s video recorders

gradually emerged to allow the viewer to record programmes and watch them later at their own convenience. This made possible not only a 'time-shifted' television, but also enabled viewers to watch theatre releases in their own living rooms, as well as films that were not shown on public TV (principally because of their portrayals of sex and violence).

The partnerships bidding for the cable pilot projects in 1984–86 were at first rather complicated and confusing, but after a short time two concerns/conglomerates emerged from the *mêlée*: on the one hand Bertelsmann with UFA Studios and RTL broadcasting, and on the other a group dominated by Leo Kirch with the broadcasters Sat 1 and ProSieben. Additional stations joined in as secondary broadcasters (RTL 2, Vox and Super RTL on the one hand, and Kabel 1 and DSF on the other); numerous production companies and companies providing ancillary services rounded out the new industry of private TV. Public broadcasting also expanded. As the regional third channels became full-time and were now being broadcast by cable across the nation, there also appeared new cultural and specialized channels such as Arte, 3Sat, Phoenix (as an information channel) and KiKa (children's channel). In addition, programmes from public stations were now also being digitally broadcast.

At first, the new commercial stations (particularly Sat1 and RTL) filled their broadcast hours with mostly American series and TV movies, which in some cases had already run years before on the public stations. However, RTL in particular soon introduced a targeted differentiation in programming, in which the station discovered programme niches which the public stations were not serving (such as soft porn), and establishing new formats (daily soaps, 'confrontainment' shows, and scandalous exposés) as well as sensationalist and voyeuristic programmes such as reality TV.

It was through these means that commercial television gradually increased its market share. RTL became the market leader for the first time in 1992–93, surpassing the viewing figures of the public broadcasters. The major commercial stations RTL, Sat-1 and ProSieben now began in earnest to produce their own series and ambitious 'TV movies' (in the industry's jargon), from which they had previously refrained. In general, they were attempting to build durable bonds with particular audience segments, leading to a reduction in so-called *Schmuddelprogramme* or 'trash TV' (soft porn, confrontainment shows, etc.). Struggles emerged between competing broadcast companies, especially for the right to broadcast major sporting events (soccer championships, tennis and Formula One racing), which led to enormous price inflations.[11] To some extent, viewer interest was vastly overestimated. In particular, the KirchMedia Group had committed itself financially to the acquisition of soccer broadcast rights which led to insolvency in April 2002 and finally to the break-up of the media conglomerate.

The public broadcasters' response to the challenges of the commercial competition had two primary aspects. First of all, they adapted their entertainment programmes to the innovations of the commercial stations while

successfully holding fast in other sectors (especially in broadcast news), so that, in turn, the commercial players found it necessary to abandon their 'infotainment' concept. Secondly, the public broadcasters also maintained their production of culturally outstanding programmes (such as the *Heimat* series), thus providing an alternative to the *Affektfernsehen* ('emotional TV') of the commercial stations, which largely appealed to emotions and aggressive impulses.

However, new presentational conventions eventually prevailed on both private and public broadcasters, conventions which were more rapid, dynamic and aggressive in delivering programmes to the viewer, and which turned certain shows into 'events' in order to give an overall greater significance to the everyday activity of watching television. Last but not least, exceptional political events, which were at the same time primarily media events (the fall of the Berlin Wall, the World Trade Centre attacks in New York, or the Gulf War), led to an increase in television consumption. At the end of the 1990s, the market shares of the various players levelled off as follows: in 2004, the main public broadcasters ARD, ZDF and the third channels maintained a collective average share of 46–48 per cent from 6 p.m. to 1 a.m.; the three major commercial stations RTL, Sat 1 and ProSieben amounted to 28–29 per cent, and the remaining stations totalled 24–25 per cent. During the rest of the day, the ratings shifted somewhat towards the major commercial stations, which had successfully reinforced their targeting of 14- to 49-year-olds.

In general, television was developing into a market with an increasing emphasis on entertainment (also from the point of view of PR and marketing). Because it was the primary medium of communication in German society, this also affected all other areas of societal self-understanding. The paradigm of public broadcasters, which offered a public space and communication platform that was 'above' societal interest groups without being state-run, and which also mediated between different interests towards building a consensus, was replaced by the paradigm of a communication market where the only decisive factor was the rule of supply and demand. To be sure, there existed and still exist regulatory bodies that mitigate the power of the market (such as the state media authorities which ensure that commercial stations comply with statutory regulations), but in the public debate over media issues, the ideology of the marketplace has become increasingly prevalent.

In particular, the communication of politics was restructured at the end of the 1990s with a view towards more dramatized presentation. Politics made use of the media, just as the conditions of media production altered politics in turn. Brief public appearances by politicians became decisive political events; decisions were often hastily announced, which would later have to be quietly retracted due to impracticability. Starting in 2001–02 at the latest, Germany has been subject to a crisis caused by globalization, economic recession, growing unemployment and a political stalemate resulting from the complicated balance of power between the federal government and the *Länder*. All of this has led to the growing importance of media images and to increasingly

dramatic political performances in the media and with the media's connivance. Television has become even more important in the way society understands itself: with the state of crisis now a permanent feature of the news broadcasts, a feeling of stagnation has been vastly magnified by its continual – and continually accelerating and sensationalized – re-circulation in the media. The image of a *rasender Stillstand* ('hurtling' or 'polar inertia', to borrow from Paul Virilio) has become symptomatic of the way the German media conveys the news.[12]

While the establishment of commercial stations with their often 'coarse' entertainment formats has been seen, in the critical statements of intellectuals and politicians, as a trivialization of television, at the same time it also shows that certain audience segments were being more directly addressed. Obviously, there was a great demand for banal entertainment.[13] The word *Unterschichtfernsehen* ('underclass TV') made the rounds: in order to increase their audience ratings, private broadcasters did not shy away from obscenity and scandalous exposés in their programming. These 'trash' programmes allegedly addressed precisely those viewers from socially less powerful classes. In daily talk shows such as *Ilona Christen*, *Bärbel Schäfer* and *Sonja*, invited guests were naturally expected to speak openly about their own obsessions, and interpersonal conflicts were mercilessly paraded and exploited.

This trend towards divulging intimate secrets publicly on TV activated yet another flexibilization of the viewer. To speak openly about oneself and one's own deficiencies, to have no more inhibitions, to abandon all privacy, were the avowed goals of this televised communication. And this goal made social sense. It was the only way for new control mechanisms and the strict demands of the workplace to be established in reality, and for rising unemployment and the associated marginalization it caused to be endured. In this sense entertainment TV has led the structural changes involved in social modernization within the framework of globalization. If television has always propagated behavioural norms through entertainment while communicating and asserting models of 'appropriate' versus 'inappropriate', 'modern' versus 'unmodern', and 'successful' versus 'unsuccessful',[14] then it has focused since the 1990s on behavioural strategies such as the ability to accept unexpected things, to tolerate senselessness, to live with risk, to suffer humiliation with a smile, and, in the best case, to be able to do unexpected and senseless things oneself. Trash television played a well-attuned guiding role in the society of the 1990s. The new personal flexibility promoted by entertainment also corresponded to the demands of other areas of society. The *Leistungsprinzip* ('efficiency principle') should mark and transform the viewer's individuality: voluntary self-discipline in the form of openly addressing one's shortcomings should be seen as 'fun'.

Despite appearances to the contrary, the *Spaßgesellschaft* ('fun society') propagated by television was in fact nothing other than an intensified *Leistungsgesellschaft* ('achievement-oriented society'). Today, behavioural adaptations are best achieved through and with entertainment. The point of

much contemporary entertainment is that it is not about a concrete message, but rather about schooling in 'senseless' structures, and about new modes of disciplining and conditioning behaviour. And this happens most effectively if the process remains undetected. Entertainment television is best suited for this, because everything in this genre happens on a voluntary basis.

Teleflâneurs and compulsive viewers: New patterns of viewing

In the 1980s and 1990s, the average daily consumption of television rose from 121 minutes in 1985 to 185 minutes in 2000; by 2004, an average of 225 minutes of television use per day was reported for every German citizen over the age of three. More than ever, television is the principal medium that defines our perception of the world, as described by the sociologist Niklas Luhmann in 1996: 'What we know of the world in which we live, we know through mass media.'[15] By extension, it could be said that the world is increasingly being understood as a world that only exists in the media.

Next to the already existing forms of television use (targeted attention to particular shows, daily television as a routine, 'relaxation television' as well as the cult following of certain shows and series, particularly among young people), new forms of viewing emerged in the 1990s. As early as the 1980s, Peter Christian Hall pointed to the use of television as a *Restzeitverwertung* ('use of leftover time'). Since television has now become permanently available, it can be used to fill in the gaps between other activities; after just a quick glance, one turns to yet another task at hand.[16] This is commonly connected with a general indifference towards the specific programme content: the important thing is to tune into a TV channel in order to maintain the feeling of being in touch with whatever is currently happening elsewhere – in the media world. For this purpose, a quick glance often suffices.

With the increased number of TV channels, the remote control acquired a new function: the viewer as '*teleflâneur*' can effortlessly zap between channels, independent of the intentions of producers, of dramatic composition and of sophisticated plot constructions.[17] In a four-hour evening of television, the viewer might change channels more than a hundred times, continually surfing across the airwaves in search of new visual thrills. Superficial contact with multiple programmes was now possible, but an understanding of complex situations was no longer necessarily desired. Structurally, this behaviour corresponded to new demands in the workplace and in everyday life where the ability to co-ordinate multiple simultaneous processes and react quickly and reliably to unexpected demands was becoming increasingly important.

An ever-increasing media saturation means an enormous multiplication of choices. In all media sectors – with the single exception of cinema – the rate of consumption and number of choices are increasing. Conversely, there is a correlation between television utilization and the crystallization of social milieux, which are largely being defined by media consumption.[18] This process, perhaps

more than anything else, shows most clearly that society has increasingly become a media society.

Along with the increase in flexibilization of the 1990s there also came an increase in excessive TV watching.[19] The fact that the daily average amount of TV consumption has, as mentioned above, risen by an astonishing 105 minutes since 1985 shows that television has acquired a completely new and somewhat hidden function: the social absorption of unemployment through preoccupation with TV. In Germany since the end of the 1990s, more than four million unemployed have been officially registered. However, there are hardly any correspondingly large street gatherings like those that occurred when comparable figures emerged during the global economic crisis starting in 1929. In this context, television, with its tendency towards domesticating life and privatizating problems, has taken on an eminent socio-psychological function. Although the Federal Republic's generous social welfare system is obviously of immense importance in cushioning social discontent over unemployment, the role of television as a social pacifier should not be underestimated, even when (and precisely when) it just broadcasts slapstick comedy and trash.

On the threshold of the new century: Television of the 'Histrio'?

After this general survey of selected topics and trends, it is time to return to the central thesis. As a medium closely related to modernization processes, television contributes to these processes on a structural level by altering forms of perception, particularly by rendering forms of viewing more flexible. In this context, it is not a matter of allowing the viewer more individual 'freedom' of perception (which would also necessarily encompass the permissibility of a broad spectrum of deviant forms of perception), but rather of a general alignment towards mobility and availability.

At the beginning of the new century, new developments for television are looming. For one thing, it is highly likely that television distribution will be completely digitalized by 2010–12, meaning that the number of channels (which currently amounts to roughly 30 in Germany) will increase even further. At the same time, programmes will be increasingly delivered by internet and mobile phone, changing not only the number of end receivers but also expanding the opportunities of utilization. On the internet, single programmes or groups of programmes will be available on a completely individual basis. However, this does not mean the end of broadcast television. The uniqueness of television is found in its promise to allow the viewer to tap into a continuous flow of programming and thereby to participate in societal communication on a mediated level – all at the touch of a button, at any time of day. Services that have to be retrieved can only in a limited way convey this feeling of an individually controllable connection to society. Therefore, broadcast television will continue to exist.

It seems that the representation of society on television has, through TV's own implicit conventions and standards of entertainment, produced a new socio-type that is oriented primarily towards media performances, slavishly following its aesthetic ideals, its behavioural patterns, its norms and values, while also appropriating a certain superficiality in personal relations. As described by Peter Winterhoff-Spurk, actor-like, performative qualities of self-representation are encouraged, in particular a certain superficial friendliness and a 'permanent good mood'.[20] The ideal is to exist with minimal commitments and always to be ready for new challenges. This new ideal of the contemporary individual is especially propagated by entertainment television. The *Histrio*, the actor, may well become a central socio-type of the coming years, a person moulded by television's continual supply of the necessary behavioural patterns and opinions, and who will thus playfully train himself in the desired manners of the flexibilized and globalized twenty-first century.

Acknowledgement

This chapter has been translated from the German by Wayne Yung.

Notes

1 See K. Hickethier (unter Mitarbeit v. P. Hoff), *Die Geschichte des deutschen Fernsehens* (Stuttgart, 1998).
2 J.-L. Baudry, 'The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches to the Impression of Reality in Cinema', in P. Rosen (ed.), *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology* (New York, 1986), pp. 299–318 (see also the other contributions in this volume); K. Hickethier, 'Dispositiv Fernsehen. Skizze eines Modells', *montage/AV* 4 (1995), no. 1, pp. 63–84.
3 D. Riesman (in collaboration with R. Denney and N. Glazer), *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven, 1950), pp. 19–25. The German translation appeared as *Die einsame Masse: Eine Untersuchung der Wandlungen des amerikanischen Charakters* (Darmstadt, 1956).
4 R. Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism* (New York, 1998), pp. 46–63.
5 P. Winterhoff-Spurk, *Kalte Herzen: Wie das Fernsehen unseren Sozialcharakter formt* (Stuttgart, 2005).
6 See also the chapter by Konrad Dussel in this volume.
7 R. Lindner, 'Fernsehen und Alltag der Zuschauer', *Medium* 6 (1976), no. 6, pp. 11–13. On the process of domestication see also: A. Schildt, *Moderne Zeiten: Freizeit, Massenmedien und 'Zeitgeist' in der Bundesrepublik der 50er Jahre* (Hamburg, 1995), pp. 109–51.
8 Riesman, *Crowd*, pp. 19–25.
9 See for example J. Schmid, 'Intendant Klaus von Bismarck und die Kampagne gegen den "Rotfunk" WDR', *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 41 (2001), pp. 349–82.
10 Sennett, *Corrosion*, pp. 46–63.
11 See the chapter by Judith Keilbach and Markus Stauff (Chapter 10) in this volume.
12 P. Virilio, *Rasender Stillstand: Essay* (Munich, 1992). The French original appeared as *L' inertie polaire* (Paris, 1990), the English translation as *Polar Inertia* (London, 1999).

13 K. Hickethier, 'Dalli Dalli – Tutti Frutti – TV Total. Wege in die Spaßgesellschaft', in C. Hall (ed.), *Fernsehen für die Spaßgesellschaft: Wettbewerbsziel Aufmerksamkeit* (Mainz, 2002), pp. S.83–98.
14 H. M. Newcomb & P. Hirsch, 'Fernsehen als kulturelles Forum', *Rundfunk und Fernsehen* 34 (1986), no. 2, pp. 177–90.
15 N. Luhmann, *Die Realität der Massenmedien* (Opladen, 1996), p. 9.
16 P. C. Hall, 'Erlebnisangebot vs. Restzeitverwertung. Kino und Fernsehen als Regelkreise von Öffentlichkeit', *epd/Kirche und Rundfunk* 39 (1987), no. 56, pp. 3–8. See also Hickethier & Hoff, *Geschichte*, p. 490.
17 C. D. Rath, 'Fernseh-Realität im Alltag: Metamorphosen der Heimat', in H. Pross & C. D. Rath (eds), *Rituale der Massenkommunikation: Gänge durch den Medienalltag* (Berlin, 1982), pp. 133–43, here p. 137.
18 G. Schulze, *Die Erlebnisgesellschaft: Kultursoziologie der Gegenwart* (Frankfurt/Main, 1992); S. Kombüchen, *Von der Erlebnisgesellschaft zur Mediengesellschaft: Die Evolution der Kommunikation und ihre Folgen für den sozialen Wandel* (Münster, 1999).
19 W. Schulz, 'Vielseher im dualen System', *Media Perspektiven* 1 (1997), no. 2, pp. 92–102.
20 Winterhoff-Spurk, *Herzen*, pp. 26–45.

9

Split Screens? Television in East Germany, 1952–89

Heather Gumbert

In June 2002 the 'Friends of the German Film Archive', a non-profit group and operator of the Arsenal movie house on Potsdamer Platz, held a symposium and film screening on the subject of East and West German television crime thrillers from the 1950s and early 1960s. The meeting was well attended both by media scholars and the wider public, some of whom remembered viewing the shows when they were first aired. The discussion, based for the most part on the recollections of television pioneers – including directors Hans-Joachim Hildebrandt and Jürgen Roland, and actors Hannelore Elsner and Helmut Lange – was a fascinating look at the early years of television, an era before recording technology when television workers produced television live. Panelists' comments ranged widely on issues common to both systems in the early years of television, from the pros and cons of available technologies, to the production schedule, the difficulties of acting for and broadcasting live television, and even the relative lack of respect the medium enjoyed among Germans in the 1950s.[1] But the harmonious and even jovial tone set early in the forum soon gave way to deeper tensions. One panelist referred to the crime thriller *Blaulicht* as merely the German Democratic Republic's (GDR) answer to the West German *Stahlnetz* series, a claim vigorously denied by *Blaulicht*'s longtime director, Hans-Joachim Hildebrandt. The panel then urged a reluctant Hildebrandt to explain the mechanism of censorship and repression in the East German television service (DFF).[2] Nonplussed, Hildebrandt recalled the series' relationship with police advisers and recounted an incident in which a rape scene had been expunged from one episode; this must have been an unsatisfying anecdote for West German attendees anticipating tales of SED omnipotence and manipulation.

The panel discussion juxtaposed East German 'propaganda' programming with West German 'entertainment' programming and suggested that the West set a standard that could never be matched by the communist East except through imitation. These sentiments were not unique to this particular panel; rather this discussion clearly demonstrated a post-reunification

tendency among scholars and the public alike to dismiss East German television as a pale version of the West and as a mere tool of state propaganda.[3] Such incidents are striking evidence that media history is another facet of the highly contested political and social history of post-war Germany. Indeed, the historiographical tendency to present the West German state as the naturally correct model for a post-war German state, while viewing the East German state as a 'failed experiment', has also informed historical interpretations of East German television.[4]

This interpretation misunderstands the real significance of television. Television has never been a non-political medium, rather it has always functioned in the service of the social, political and economic system from which it has emerged. In capitalist societies such as the post-war Federal Republic, the relationship between television and state power has been difficult to identify; capitalist culture seems to have no real centre of power from which any one person or institution can direct media messages, though certain individuals and institutions have more power than others to shape both the medium and the message.[5] Moreover, scholars and lay people alike are convinced of the legitimacy of the market mechanism. In particular, the widespread belief that programme ratings are an unproblematic expression of audience desire erroneously situates power over programming within the viewing public, not within production or distribution of programmes. Audiences can only make choices based on the programming delivered to their television screens; most would rather watch something than nothing and often will choose the 'lesser of two evils.'[6] In communist societies such as the former GDR, on the other hand, the relationship between television and the government has been deceptively easy for historians to discern; the state seemed to control the medium simply by virtue of the hierarchical structure of state power. Yet television ultimately served the purposes of state ideology in both societies: capitalist modernization in the Federal Republic and state socialism in the Democratic Republic. The deeper question, which this chapter aims to answer, is not whether, or how, the SED warped television to accomplish its own goals, but rather 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 world views of Germans living there; how did television mediate 'real and existing socialism' before the collapse of the GDR in 1989?

Over the course of the post-war period, GDR television's relationship to the state and its audience fundamentally changed. First, in examining the changing relationship between television and the ruling communist party I argue that, although the SED increasingly supervised television broadcasting, the DFF never functioned simply as a mouthpiece of the state. Instead it was an institution that mediated between the state and the East German audience, shaped by the agendas of a variety of groups from technicians, to artists to government officials and so on. This was especially true in the early years of television, when television workers retained relative freedom and the character of

the service was influenced as much by their real desire to appeal to the audience and their belief in the East German national project as by the vagaries of state control. Second, I will look at the phenomenon of cross-border television, sometimes held to have helped precipitate the fall of the state by offering East Germans a window onto a capitalist consumer paradise of which they could only dream. Cross-border television was possible, even successful, in the GDR because of the shared language and cultural community of the post-war German states. Yet this was an increasingly differentiated community, and ultimately West German television was 'foreign' to Germans living in the GDR.[7] West German television did not transform the way that East Germans approached the world by 1989; rather the complicated relationship between the East German audience and broadcasting in East and West helped to create a new, socialist community, that was ultimately at odds with both the West German cultural community *and* the vision of the East German state.

Television, the SED and the Cold War, 1952–56

The Cold War defined the SED's approach to the East German television service from the first moments of regular broadcasting in the summer of 1952. At the end of the Second World War the East Germans had inherited remnants of the Nazi television system: outdated technology, ideologically suspect technical personnel and, similar to the Nazi period, a disdain for the medium among the new political elite. But in the aftermath of the war the relative lack of interest in television technology is not surprising. Television was an unproven medium of communication, and the resources of the East German state privileged other, more basic reconstruction efforts. Moreover, there was little political support within the upper echelons of the SED, since some important Party members who had supported television development had fallen victim to political purges by the early 1950s. In 1952, though, the airwaves became a more important battleground in the Cold War. A pan-European conference met in Stockholm to allocate shares of the crowded European frequency band, with the proviso that unused frequencies would be reallocated to other states. This posed a clear danger for the GDR, which faced the possibility of losing its share of the frequency spectrum to the Federal Republic. The State Broadcasting Committee ordered the Television Centre to begin broadcasting 'as if [they had] a real programme.'[8] The DFF's initial broadcasts were primitive – the service commanded few resources, had no real programming, and could not broadcast signals across Berlin, much less to the rest of the country.

The provisional nature of the DFF in 1952 was due in part to the fact that control over the development of television in the 1950s had been remarkably dispersed within the East German state. The East German successor of the German Postal Ministry, which had developed radio and television broadcasting during Weimar and then Nazi Germany, was responsible for planning

and implementing the technical development of broadcasting. The Postal Ministry relied heavily on several other Ministries that controlled East German industry to produce the necessary technical equipment such as transmission towers or television receivers. The Television Centre, a studio complex at Berlin-Adlershof under the administrative supervision of the State Broadcasting Committee and, ultimately, the Department of Agitation and Propaganda, was responsible for developing the television programme. Finally, the National Front, and the Free German Trade Union Federation (FDGB) also played important roles in popularizing television in their respective community clubs and vacation houses over the course of the 1950s.[9]

Though the East German state emphasized central planning, these and other groups within the state bureaucracy rarely worked together and sometimes worked at cross-purposes. Postal Ministry technicians had difficulty getting permits to locate transmitters around Berlin intended to improve signals for Berliners and beyond, in large part because other agencies would not agree to it.[10] The Ministry's attempts to improve the transmission and reception of television signals were complicated by the inability of East German industry to build strong transmitters or fulfil their contractual delivery deadlines, in part because reparations agreements with the Soviet Union delayed the production of goods for domestic use.[11] Until 1952 for example, East German industry produced television receivers exclusively to fulfil reparations agreements. The tiny 'Leningrad T-2' sets were based on a Soviet design and shipped eastwards, severely limiting East German television reception into the mid-1950s.[12] Moreover, by the mid-1950s East German authorities had not yet imposed a single set of broadcast standards and newer transmitters often broadcast at different frequencies from existing ones.[13] The relative independence from one another of the responsible agencies only made the resolution of these problems more difficult.

It was events not in the GDR but elsewhere in the Eastern Bloc that spurred the Central Committee of the SED to press for greater centralization and control of television development. In February 1956, Khrushchev denounced Stalin's crimes at the Twentieth Party Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, initiating movements of liberalization across Eastern European regimes, especially in Poland and Hungary. On 4 November 1956, Soviet tanks rolled onto the streets of Budapest, sending a clear signal from the Soviets about the dangers of political experimentation. The fast-moving events and dramatic visual assertion of state power as tanks met demonstrators on the streets seemed made for television – or at least, the Central Committee of the GDR thought so. Yet, to their dismay, the DFF failed to report these events, while Western broadcasters provided audiences with both pictures and commentary on the situation. At an emergency meeting called on 5 November, the Central Committee demanded that the necessary measures be taken to improve both the technological foundation of the service and the topicality of its programme.[14] Thus, SED criticism of DFF coverage of the Hungarian

uprising was not about repressing information, but rather about trying to disseminate their own message and pictures, telling their side of the story. For the first time the SED saw television as a medium through which competing visions for a post-war German state could vie for the 'hearts and minds' of all Germans. At stake was nothing less than the prospect of reunifying Germany as a socialist state.[15]

The SED's fresh interest in the potential of television meant a greater attention to the technical problems of the GDR's television service, if not the resources to solve them. Where television service existed, basic problems of transmission and reception persisted, especially the problem of cross-border interference. East Germans on the periphery of DFF coverage complained of 'snowy' pictures due to interference from Polish, Czech or West German signals. Interference in the western areas of the GDR, largely the result of differing broadcast frequencies, was most troublesome for GDR authorities, although not perhaps for the reasons one might think. Postal Ministry officials worried that interference on East German frequencies would result in the loss of East German viewers to Western signals, but it was just as important for them that the same technical problems could hamper West Germans' reception of GDR programming.[16] In 1957, in an effort to ameliorate cross-border interference, improve the picture quality in the GDR and win viewers from the Federal Republic, 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, even paying for East Germans to convert their existing East German television sets to the new standard.[17] The GDR was the only Eastern European country to adopt the Western European standard in the post-war period. In the late 1950s then, GDR authorities were determined to get their programming out to the greatest number of Germans, both in East and West.[18]

DFF programming 'builds socialism'

The failed coverage of the Hungarian uprising had alerted the SED to the fact that television was an important battleground in the competition over Germany, but this had been clear to the leadership cadres of the DFF since at least 1954. Indeed, figuring out how to exploit television technology effectively for this purpose was a task that had occupied DFF managers over the course of the 1950s. It is important to remember that the medium of television did not have an innate purpose that was immediately clear to viewers or those who worked in the medium. Early West German television benefited from the expertise of the Anglo-American media and occupation authorities' desire to construct a viable service without delay; thus it is not a coincidence that the strongest of the West German television broadcasters, Northwest German Broadcasting (NWDR, later subdivided into WDR and NDR), emerged in Hamburg, in the British occupation zone. In East Berlin, by

contrast, few DFF workers were familiar with television experiments done in Nazi Germany, Moscow or London.[19] Moreover, in the 1950s television was still a rather limited medium compared to the existing media of film and radio. Film had familiarized audiences with moving images synchronized with sound, of course, but on a much bigger screen with much better resolution than television could offer. The screens of early GDR television receivers, on the other hand, were about the size of a postcard. Radio had accustomed audiences to understanding the home as a locus of reception, but radio broadcasting was much more widespread, and required a cheaper receiver that suffered less from signal interference than television. What then, made television different, and ultimately more significant than its predecessors? The novelty of television was the prospect of visual simultaneity; of watching images of events in the home, ostensibly unmediated and *as they were happening*. The possibility of visual simultaneity fascinated audiences and, for the most part, they did get live pictures in the first years of broadcasting, even if they were rather more mundane than earth-shattering.

Both the specific characteristics of the televisual medium and the conditions of early production shaped the DFF programme. Early television workers had to figure out how best to utilize 'live-ness' and topicality, the small screen and the element of private reception in the home. Yet those television workers who had previous media experience had come not from film but radio, which meant they had to learn to work with what was a primarily visual form of communication. Their broadcasts were also determined by the paucity of available resources. Studio space remained limited despite the construction of a centralized studio complex at Berlin-Adlershof. There were few television cameras available, and in the early years they could only be used in the studio setting; the service first acquired cameras capable of broadcasting from outside of the studio in 1955.[20] The technology required to record programming on videotape for transmission and re-broadcast did not exist anywhere in the world before 1957, and the East Germans were not able to acquire it until the 1960s. The service lacked other kinds of resources as well. In 1956 the DFF employed only three correspondents, responsible for covering domestic and international news and sport. Live feeds and reports from media partners, important components of television coverage in our own time, were not yet part of television programming.

DFF workers commanded few resources, but otherwise the conditions under which they worked closely approximated conditions elsewhere during the experimental period of television history, so we find that early East German programming was similar in form and style to that in West Germany, Britain and even the United States.[21] In all these countries, early television borrowed formats, plots and characters from radio, even replicating whole programmes for the new medium. Thus television programmes across the West looked relatively similar, initially broadcasting variety shows, game shows and current affairs type programming, followed by the

introduction of more complicated programming such as live sporting events, dramatic crime thrillers, 'family dramas' and so on. GDR television's similar form, if different content, is exemplified by the television crime thriller. The crime thriller was not an especially innovative form in the GDR *or* in the Federal Republic. In 1958 the West German crime thriller *Stahlnetz* went on the air, reproducing the American television show *Dragnet* for the West German audience. *Dragnet* had been popular with American audiences first as a radio show, then a television series. Within a year *Blaulicht* came to East German screens. Such programmes emerged because they were easy to produce, relatively popular and made good use of the televisual conditions of live-ness and intimate settings, so it is unsurprising to see them appear in the GDR as elsewhere.

But if East German television was similar in form to that of other countries, it was often quite different when it came to the world it presented. This distinction is most clearly seen in the narrative, plot and characters of East German programming of all genres. One early game show, for example, posed both German and GDR-specific questions to the viewers at home, asking them to identify such things as Cologne's cathedral or the East German Wartburg automobile, narratively situating the East German state in both a traditional Germanic heritage and the new historical conditions of the GDR. Another pitted three teams against one another, each representing a particular occupational group, such as schoolteachers or bricklayers;[22] in defining people by their occupation (and not their family, neighbourhood or region) the show could encourage East Germans to identify with their class interests. By contrast, one of the defining characteristics of the West German television programme in the 1950s was the central role of representations of the family, in so-called 'family series', but elsewhere in the programme as well.[23] The 'pilot' episode of the East German 'family series' *Heute bei Krügers* (October 1960–June 1963) on the other hand, focused less on the family than on their prosperity under socialism: it depicted three generations of an 'ideal' socialist family eagerly helping their elders move in to their brand-new 'Neubauwohnung.'[24] The escalating Cold War figured prominently in each episode of *Blaulicht*, which depicted crimes such as smuggling (of both goods and people) or *Republikflucht* ('fleeing the Republic'), ultimately educating viewers on the social and economic consequences of those crimes for the GDR; this was especially true in the period leading up to the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961. Thus if East German game shows and other programming were similar in form to Western programming, they were quite different in narrative intent, reflecting the ideological principles of socialism in the GDR. In both post-war German states, then, television functioned as an ideological mirror, reflecting the aspirations that underpinned the social order of each state.

By the late 1950s the communicative potential of television was unmistakable. The television service had resolved enough of its technical and conceptual difficulties to broadcast messages to a wide, even pan-German,

audience. The SED had realized that this could be a decisive medium in the dissemination of their political programme, and it became an integral component of the campaign to 'construct socialism' of the late 1950s.[25] This was a renewed ideological offensive that took shape during 1957 and was the main focus of the Fifth Party Congress of 1958. Central to this effort was the creation of a new, socialist culture that would demonstrate the superiority of socialism over Western capitalism and cultivate a new, socialist consciousness among East Germans. In this new socialist culture artists would bring art and culture closer to the people, both by creating art that was reflective of 'everyday life' and by making it accessible to the average person.[26] Inherent to this task was a rejection of the 'formalism' and aesthetic experimentation of modern art in favour of the naturalist representation of socialist realism. This was an ambitious campaign to transform social relationships by shifting consciousness in the GDR, and television was the ideal medium to accomplish this. Television had become important enough by the Second Bitterfeld Conference in 1964 for Walter Ulbricht to argue '(it) brings the most art to the people of [the GDR], especially in the countryside, to the millions of people who, have thereby a continuous connection to art and culture for the first time.'[27]

The principles of the SED's campaign to construct socialism helped to shape the programme of the DFF into the early 1960s. Integral to this was a greater emphasis on *aktuelle Berichte* ('topical reporting of current issues') and more attention paid to portraying the lives of people living under socialism in the GDR and elsewhere. The service increased the amount of topical programming as well as the entertainment portion of the television schedule, an important combination: after all, the television service noted, enthusiasm for the socialist project would not come from dry statistical reports of economic progress in the GDR and the Eastern Bloc, but from reports illustrating the lives of real people. The service stepped up broadcasts of the nightly news programme *Aktuelle Kamera* to five nights a week and began working on programmes that featured deeper investigative reporting. The greater focus on topicality required the DFF to expand its network of correspondents to five within the GDR, three in the Federal Republic, one in each of the Soviet Union and China.[28] But as we have seen, dramatic series such as *Blaulicht* or the 'family series' *Heute bei Krügers* also contributed to the 'construction of socialism', offering narratives of socialist successes.

In the early 1960s television worked toward the goals of the SED's political programme while retaining more freedom from the supervision of Central Committee than other cultural organs. In part this was due to the fact that the television programme generally did not contravene the aesthetic rules of socialist realism. Early television workers generally eschewed aesthetic experimentation in favour of developing an intelligible language of representation, which worked towards increasing the realism of the programme. Moreover, since 1954 the television service had been under the leadership of Heinrich

(Heinz) Adameck, a strict adherent of the SED who believed narrowly in the political function of television. For Adameck and those in his inner circle, television was not a medium of artistic expression, but an instrument of political agitation. The programme evolved accordingly: the DFF most closely supervised, but also provided more resources for, programming narrowly defined as 'political,' such as *Aktuelle Kamera* or *Schwarzer Kanal*. Finally, many of the programmes broadcast on television had originated somewhere else: some had been conceived for radio, some were adaptations of works of literature, and films from DEFA and even UFA also found their place in the programme.

Paradoxically, it was programming first broadcast elsewhere that brought the relative freedom of the DFF to an end. In celebration of the tenth anniversary of the DFF in December 1962, the service transmitted its first 'television opera', a version of the prize-winning East German radio play *Fetzers Flucht* (*Fetzer's Flight*), first broadcast in 1955. The central figure of the play flees the GDR, but must commit murder to do so and, living in the West, he is haunted by this act. The play condemns *Republikflucht*, but stirs sympathy for the plight of Fetzer in the process. East German media scholar Peter Hoff argues that the ambiguity of the play's pathos, acceptable in 1955, was untenable in December 1962, only 16 months after the construction of the Berlin Wall.[29] SED criticism of the play included accusations of formalism – it displayed a 'worship of Western modernism' and 'snobbishness' towards the people.[30] In a subsequent episode of *Kleines Fernsehforum*,[31] Adameck characterized the opera as an experiment that had failed because it provoked an immediate negative response from the audience: '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.' In reaction to the furore, the DFF shelved plans to air a second television play, *Monolog für einen Taxifahrer*.[32] Moreover, DFF director Adameck joined the Central Committee, a position he held until 1989, thus bringing television broadcasting more closely under the control of the upper echelons of the SED. The television service, previously subject largely to after-the-fact censorship (criticism of shows that had already been aired), now faced review of material before it was broadcast.

It seems, however, that it was not really experiments in form that had raised the ire of the SED, but rather an incremental, if ultimately fundamental, shift in the way dramatists had begun thematizing everyday life under socialism. The SED had appealed to artists to begin working with the conditions of socialist life, but it was getting works it had not expected, works that dealt with the theme of alienation. *Monolog für einen Taxifahrer* had pushed further in this direction, especially through the use of an interior monologue, spoken by an actor other than the one playing the role on-screen, a device that seemed to cleave the character of the taxi driver in two.[33] The scandal over *Fetzers Flucht* and *Monolog für einen Taxifahrer* effectively ended

aesthetic experimentation and reinforced naturalistic representation at the DFF. In its retreat from aesthetic experimentation, television was ahead of its time. By the 11th Plenum of 1965, where the Central Committee criticized the increasing representation of estrangement and alienation in DEFA films, television entertainment had become a role model for film and, to a lesser extent, radio.[34] Thus the much-lauded five-part television film *Dr. Schlüter* (1965) had overcome social alienation, depicting instead a utopian relationship between the individual and the state.

The achievement of *Dr. Schlüter*, warmly welcomed by the SED, ultimately undermined television drama's engagement with the lived conditions of socialism. For Hoff, 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.'[35] In his study of East German film, Joshua Feinstein has identified a similar discursive shift, exemplified by the transition from *Gegenwartsfilme* ('films of contemporary life') to *Alltagsfilme* ('films of everyday life'). *Gegenwartsfilme* evoked a society in transition from the present to the (in this case, utopian) future, while *Alltagsfilme* represented in fact not scenes from everyday life, but a world outside of time. For Feinstein, the increasing emphasis on *Alltagsfilme* after the 11th Plenum indicated that an increasingly conservative notion of the GDR that 'depended less on the future promise of universal emancipation and more on the cultivation of a collective identity' was presented on East German movie screens.[36] Television drama followed the same trajectory, though earlier and more irrevocably than film.

After 1962 television plays and films and other entertainment shows became increasingly escapist, but other programming remained much more grounded in the lived conditions of the GDR. Contemporary social commentary was the central concept behind one of the DFF's most popular and long-running shows, *Prisma* (1963–91). Gerhard Scheumann, the founder of the show, unabashedly modelled *Prisma* on the format of the first West German political TV magazine *Panorama*, reportedly going so far as to analyse the timing of the show with a stopwatch.[37] Once again however, the content differed dramatically: unlike *Panorama*, which dealt with 'big political events' and often confronted prominent public figures on air, *Prisma* delved into 'the real problems… with which socialist society is grappling' – the problems of everyday life.[38] The *Prisma* editorial department cast the programme 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.[39] DFF viewers actively participated in this project, posting letters to the editorial department with complaints, questions or comments on wide-ranging subjects, from work conditions, the environment, the availability of consumer goods, or life in the socialist home.[40] Viewer correspondence often asked *Prisma* to help expose the lived reality behind the triumphal rhetoric of socialist successes broadcast by shows such as *Aktuelle Kamera*.

Prisma was critical of the SED, at least in a limited way, but Party 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.[41] For Ina Merkel, though, the function of *Prisma* as a critical programme 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.' Though *Prisma* reporting challenged specific aspects of 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.[42] By the 1970s, though, increased political pressure to retract statements and sometimes whole reports tarnished *Prisma*'s reputation as a vehicle of constructive criticism of conditions in the GDR. Gradually the show began to focus primarily on economic-political issues and began to alienate some viewers with its increasingly pedantic tone.[43]

Another perhaps unexpected aspect of DFF programming was television advertising, introduced to the East German airwaves on an experimental basis in 1959 and in earnest in 1960. The longest running series, *Tausend Teletipps* (1960–76), consisted of commercial spots featuring both live and animated characters, interspersed with 'advice' films that promoted East German consumer goods including (but in no way limited to) cosmetics, clothing, foodstuffs, leisure goods or household appliances.[44] The SED leadership embraced television advertising 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.[45] Advertising could also close the gap between supply and demand within a state-planned economy by encouraging citizens to consume particular kinds of goods.[46] One of the viewers' favourite personalities was Rudolph Kroboth, a television chef who brought 'fish to every table'. During each show Kroboth would demonstrate the preparation of a new fish dish, often using ingredients that state officials hoped to encourage viewers to buy. The '*Fischkoch*' proved an effective means of encouraging East Germans to substitute fish for meat when meat was scarce. In another incident the *Fischkoch*'s use of canned herring from the Soviet Union sent the herring, previously a hard sell, flying off the shelves.[47]

Yet advertising, though understood by the SED as a means to sell not only GDR products but socialism itself, could not help but undermine the socialist project. Like Western advertising, GDR advertising defined viewers as consumers, sustaining and even stimulating consumer desire.[48] Managing this desire became increasingly difficult as time passed; by the 1970s the widening gap between consumer demand and the supply of goods was plainly evident. Tippach Schneider argues that in this context the use of animation in advertising, once acclaimed for its ability to stimulate viewers'

interest in and to personify consumer goods, became a means to avoid representing the difficult problems of supply and demand. The films' animated figures were entertaining but not realistic; thus the films could depict the fulfilment of consumer desire without provoking the ire of viewers who could not hope for the same in their own lives.[49] The persistent difficulty of providing particular consumer goods over the course of the 1970s led the number of goods advertised on the air to dwindle considerably until the DFF finally stopped broadcasting *Tausend Teletipps* in 1976.

Television in the Honecker era

By the end of the Ulbricht era, television seemed to have come into its own in the GDR. The DFF had produced some early 'hits' such as the crime thriller *Blaulicht*, *Prisma* or the children's bedtime programme *Unser Sandmann*, which was popular on both sides of the border. By 1970, approximately 82 per cent of East Germans regularly watched television programming.[50] Moreover, with the establishment of the State Committee for Television in 1968, television had become a fully-fledged organ of the state, no longer the lesser sibling of radio. Television's increased importance seemed to be underscored by the long-awaited completion of the Berlin television tower, built overlooking Alexanderplatz and the *Rotes Rathaus* in the heart of East Berlin in 1969. But the medium's increasing cultural significance was matched by an increasing burden of political responsibility. Indeed, the location of the tower in the heart of the city seemed to symbolize television's increasingly central role in the political strategy of the state.

By 1971 though, the role of television had changed along with the Party leadership. In the context of the 1958 campaign to construct socialism, Walter Ulbricht had charged television with the revolutionary task of transforming East Germans into socialist citizens. At the Eighth Party Congress in 1971, by contrast, Erich Honecker demanded instead that television be more entertaining. East Germans were bored, he claimed, and television needed to address that boredom.[51] In the aftermath of his address, the DFF established the department of *Heitere Dramatik* ('light drama'). The service also, in a dramatic departure from the programming of the 1960s, developed some variety programmes that looked quite similar to Western shows, and began to feature entertainment stars from outside the GDR, from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and especially from the Federal Republic.[52] The DFF also aired more television adaptations of literary works, presumably because they were less likely to be criticized or removed from the programme.[53] Programme reform came at the expense of 'journalistic' shows; *Aktuelle Kamera* shortened its broadcasts from 30 to 20 minutes, for example.

The DFF's greater emphasis on entertainment programming reflected not only the SED's changed view of television, but also the fact that by the 1970s the audience's view of television had shifted as well. Viewers increasingly

eschewed current-affairs programmes in favour of entertainment, dramatic series such as the crime thrillers *Polizeiruf 110* or *Der Staatsanwalt hat das Wort* or West German television. *Prisma* still found audiences in the GDR – in 1989 it ranked fourth among GDR programmes the population wished to see retained after reunification – but declining viewing figures over the 1970s and 1980s mirrored the sharply declining popularity and credibility of 'journalistic' shows, including *Schwarzer Kanal*, *Aktuelle Kamera* or the foreign-affairs programme *Objektiv*. By 1984, *Prisma* could capture only 9.5 per cent of the viewing audience, while 5.9 per cent watched *Objektiv*, 10.2 per cent watched *Aktuelle Kamera* and only 5.7 per cent tuned in to *Schwarzer Kanal*. By contrast, the variety programmes *Ein Kessel buntes* and *Aussenseiter-Spitzenreiter* could capture 45.8 per cent and 37.6 per cent of the audience on average, while episodes of *Polizeiruf 110* and *Der Staatsanwalt hat das Wort* won 43.3 per cent and 47.4 per cent of the audience on average.[54] The trend towards more entertainment programming intensified with the last major programme reform of the DFF in December 1982. This time reform had even less to do with winning viewers to the socialist project, rather it simply sought to win viewers to the socialist channels, away from Western programming.[55]

It is a well-worn truism that East Germans spent their evenings glued to the 'window in the Wall'. Cultural historian Helmut Hanke characterizes 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…'.[56] Certainly by the mid-1970s Germans across the GDR could receive Western signals, everywhere except in the Elbe river valley around Dresden, known as the *Tal der Ahnungslosen* ('Valley of the Clueless'). But it is not the case that East Germans simply preferred West programming, or that they got their information about the world from the West German *Tagesschau*. In the 1970s and early 1980s the majority of East Germans watched their own prime-time programming (33–40 per cent of all possible viewers, only 55–60 per cent of which would be sitting in front of the television at 8 pm), while a significant minority (not more than 25 per cent of the overall viewing audience on average) generally tuned into Western television.[57] Moreover, viewers generally watched the same kinds of programmes on both the East and West channels. Again, viewers eschewed educational or journalistic programming in favour of something more entertaining – feature films, crime thrillers or variety shows. Thus the German media war was fought not over a dearth of information as one might assume, but on the field of entertainment – if ARD or ZDF ran entertainment programming against *Aktuelle Kamera* or announcements from the *Volkskammer* they stood a good chance of pulling in East German viewers.[58]

The assumption that East German viewers watched disproportionately more West television than their own programming comes in part from the

normalization in popular memory of the rather anomalous context of 1989. Over the course of that year the DFF lost viewers as its programming became increasingly removed from the social and political realities familiar to many East Germans. As a rule, DFF programming had remained silent regarding major upheavals in domestic and foreign affairs, including the intensification of *Republikflucht* and the formation of extra-parliamentary opposition groups in the GDR, or the success of Solidarity in Poland and the opening of the border in Hungary. In the first half of 1989 viewership dropped to 33.7 per cent; it was 32.1 per cent that summer.[59] That September, East Germans had to tune in to West programming to hear the West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher announce that East Germans who had taken refuge in the FRG embassy in Prague would be allowed to leave Czechoslovakia unhindered. On 3 October 1989 5.6 per cent of the audience tuned in to *Aktuelle Kamera*, the smallest audience the programme had had since it went on the air.[60]

Yet this assumption that East Germans watched more West TV than GDR TV also demonstrates a willingness to dismiss the DFF as having never been anything more than a tightly controlled service for disseminating state-sanctioned information. Moreover, it understands the East German audience as a group that persistently looked westward, held West German ideals and sought 'real' information about the world. By the summer and fall of 1989 West television's heavy coverage of events in the GDR had become a crucial source of information for most East Germans and even helped crystallize opposition groups. But though this kind of coverage has come to typify post-war Western journalism in popular memory, it was not the norm. In fact, Western news coverage in the 1970s and 1980s often gave East viewers the impression '(that) for them, we're not even here.'[61] Even viewers who disliked the DFF had generally found it a better reflection of their lives than West television. West German advice shows, newscasts and political journalism represented a world that was completely different from their own and thus held little value in their own lives.[62] By the mid-1980s, for example, West German representations of the GDR were thick with stock images of people waiting in lines at shops with 'beggarly' display windows,[63] images that did not necessarily reflect the experience of East Germans.[64] Thus West television generally served an important function as a source of counter-information, but was understood as no less ideological than East television. The 'truth' for most East Germans lay somewhere in the middle.[65]

Conclusion

By the time of the Arsenal film screening in June 2002 the nuances of television's relationship to the SED and its audiences in the GDR had been wholly subsumed by the narrative of the 'golden West'. Were, then, those East German panelists and audience members who left that night quietly dissenting from this narrative simply unrepentant Communists or victims of '*Ostalgie*'?

Since reunification, the narrative of (West) German history has largely dismissed the East German television service as an institution of political repression: the most significant, and yet ultimately insignificant, organ of a propaganda machine. In this view, East German television 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. Though television certainly was bound up in the authoritarian apparatus of the SED, its history cannot be reduced to one of deep unpopularity and unrelenting repression of a largely uninterested public. Instead, television developed, often haphazardly, in response to television producers, the SED and the audience. Indeed, there were significant shifts in the function of television over the course of the GDR's history, from a medium of information and agitation that could help 'construct socialism' in the early 1960s, to a much more socially significant yet politically inert medium that, by the 1970s, had lapsed into an exhausted compromise with Honecker's 'real and existing socialism'.

In order to overcome the notion that socialist television was purely propaganda – and that conversely West television was ideologically uncontaminated – we need to abandon the notion that television can ever be a non-ideological medium. Ultimately, the power of television lies not in indoctrination, but normalizing and familiarizing a particular world view for its audiences. Television is only effective in so far as it can appeal to audiences; and audiences both resist overt propaganda and welcome programming that corresponds to their notions of the world they live in. East Germans did watch East German television; not because big brother spoke to them through their screens, but because it often spoke directly to their everyday experiences.

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Notes

1 West German actress Hannelore Elsner, featured in *Stahlnetz: Spur 211* in 1962, recalled on this evening (8 June 2002) that she had not owned a television at the time and, as a theatre actress, could not have cared less for it.

2 East German television, initially called 'German Television' (Deutscher Fernsehfunk, or DFF) introduced its 'regular programme' in June 1952, which survived until the service was dismantled and incorporated into the broadcasting system of the Federal Republic in 1991. Viewers received black and white programming from one channel until 1969, when the DFF introduced a second,

colour channel. Initially control over the DFF fell to the State Broadcasting Committee, which was primarily responsible for radio. In 1968 though, the SED's desire for closer control of the service led to the introduction of the State Committee for Television, which reported to the Council of Ministers. In 1972, reflecting the cultural demise of the SED's 'one Germany' policy, the DFF was renamed 'Television of the GDR' (Fernsehen der DDR).

3 The same kind of tensions emerged six months later at the NDR conference 'In geteilter Sicht: Fernsehgeschichte als Zeitgeschichte' held in Hamburg, 5/6 December, 2002.

4 See, for example, A. Schildt, *Ankunft im Westen: Ein Essay zur Erfolgsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik* (Frankfurt/Main, 1999); or K. Jarausch & M. Geyer (eds), *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories* (Princeton NJ, 2003).

5 Of course, the most important principle of the media system developed in the Federal Republic (FRG) by the Allied occupation authorities after the Second World War was broadcasting diversity. The regional system was based in large part on the model of Britain's public service broadcasting system with one important difference: it was supervised by state, not federal, governments. Several unsuccessful attempts by Adenauer's administration to 'rationalize' the media system by replacing this complex regional system with a Bonn-centred federal broadcasting system led the German Federal Court in 1961 to require advisory bodies made up of representatives from 'socially relevant institutions', including churches and citizens' groups, to help govern and administer the media, again to ensure broadcasting diversity. But the point I am making here is about ideology, not chain of command.

6 See M. Budd, S. Craig & C. Steinman, *Consuming Environments: Television and Commercial Culture* (New Brunswick NJ, 1999).

7 See Joseph Straubhaar's work on the importance of 'cultural proximity' in media environments: J. Straubhaar, 'Beyond Media Imperialism: Asymmetrical Interdependence and Cultural Proximity', *Critical studies in Mass Communication* 8 (1991), no. 3, pp. 39–59.

8 P. Hoff & H. Müncheberg (eds), *Experiment Fernsehen: Vom Laborversuch zum sozialistischen Massenkunst* (Berlin, 1984) pp. 14–15. For a short discussion of the GDR's participation in the Stockholm conference see SAPMO-BArch (DH) DM3 BRFII 1786, Ministerium für Post und Fernmeldewesen-Bereich Rundfunk und Fernsehen (MPF-BRF) (Fachgebiet Netzplanung, 1957).

9 The National Front was a state-mandated coalition of political parties and mass organizations that undertook a wide range of activities including the management of neighbourhood culture clubs in which many East Germans watched television for the first time. The vacation houses of the FDGB were another venue in which television was a popular draw.

10 See for example SAPMO-BArch (DH), DM3 BRFII 637, MPF-BRF, Abschrift from 6 Oct. 1952.

11 For example, SAPMO-BArch (DH), DM3 BRFII 633, MPF-BRF, 'Terminplan für Rundfunksender' (23 Apr. 1954); or documents on the plans for a television tower in East Berlin in SAPMO-BArch (DH), DM3 BRFII 637, MPF-BRF. For a good general overview of the first years of broadcasting see SAPMO-BArch (DH), DM3 BRFII 6341, 'Bericht über den Stand der Entwicklung der Technik auf dem Gebiete des Rundfunks, Fernsehens und Kommerziellen Funks auf der Grundlage des Beschlusses vom 23.2.1956' (1957).

12 SAPMO-BArch (DH), DM3 BRFII 604, MPF-BRF, 'Protokoll über die am 5.12.1952 im Hause des Ministeriums für Post und Fernmeldewesen durchgeführte Besprechung über Fernsehempfänger,' 5 Dec. 1952.

13 SAPMO-BArch (DH), DM3 BRFII 465 MPF-BRF, 'Technische Entwicklung von 1950–1955,' (1955), p. 5.
14 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 Nov. 1956, p. 3.
15 Reunifying Germany was the challenge of the 1950s. In 1952 the Soviet Union had called for the unification of Germany as a neutral state; by 1955, though, Khrushchev demanded that any reunified state must retain the advances won by socialism. H. Weber, *Geschichte der DDR* (Munich, 1999) p. 177. For all practical purposes this made German reunification virtually impossible, but it remained at the top of the SED's agitation programme until 1958 and more nominally until the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961.
16 SAPMO-BArch (DH), DM3 BRFII 465 MPF-BRF, 'Technische'.
17 SAPMO-BArch (DH), DM3 BRFII 924 MPF-BRF, 'Abschlußbericht über die Änderung des Frequenzabstandes der Bild- und Tonträger der Fernsehsender und Empfänger im Gebiet der DDR auf Grund des Beschlusses des Ministerrats Nr. 51/9 vom 24.1.1957,' 13 Feb. 1957.
18 Significantly, this conviction had faded a decade later when GDR authorities were faced with a similar decision, this time regarding the introduction of colour programming. Thus 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 importantly, East Germans would have to do the same for the more colourful West German television programme.
19 Political purges of both non-communist and SED personnel shaped the development of the DFF. Two consecutive DFF directors, Hans Mahle and Hermann Zilles, fell to the dictates of the Party by the early 1950s, as did a number of individuals who had spent the war in Anglo-American exile. Both Mahle and Zilles were experienced media personnel, having worked in radio and, in the case of Mahle, briefly in the Soviet television service as well. In any case, the communicative value of Nazi or early Soviet television had been unclear, in part because this was a period of transition from mechanical to electronic television. The Nazis broadcast simple variety shows and relied on an intermediate film technique to broadcast from outside the studio – technology unavailable to DFF staff.
20 Shots using pure television technology were not available until 1955; previously outdoor shots had to be shot on film, an expensive option for the DFF.
21 For an excellent work on early British television progamming see J. Jacobs, *The Intimate Screen: Early British Television Drama* (Oxford, 2000).
22 W. Stemmler, 'Bemerkungen über die Unterhaltungssendungen vom Beginn des DDR-Fernsehens bis zum Ende der fünfziger Jahre', in H. Riedel (ed.), *Mit uns zieht die neue Zeit* (Berlin, 1994), pp. 77–86, here p. 82.
23 Helmut Kreuzer et al., cited in P. Ludes, 'Programmgeschichte des Fernsehens', in J. Wilke (ed.), *Mediengeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Bonn, 1999), pp. 255–76, here p. 258.
24 Deutsches Rundfunk-archiv Deutscher Fernsehfunk, 'Heute bei Krügers: Die neue Wohnung,' Oct. 1960.
25 According to the report of the Central Committee television was a '*neuen bedeutenden politisch-kulturellen Faktor unseres Lebens*.' *Bericht des Zentralkomitees an den V. Parteitag der Sozialistischen Einheitspartei Deutschlands* (Berlin, 1958), p. 126.
26 Weber, *Geschichte*, p. 211. The SED had an ideal vision of what 'everyday life' should look like; this did not include representations of the shortcomings of life in the GDR, as we will see in a moment.

27 Ulbricht cited in P. Hoff, 'Das 11. Plenum und der Deutschen Fernsehfunk', in G. Agde (ed.), *Kahlschlag, Das 11. Plenum des ZK der SED: Studien und Dokumente* (Berlin, 2000), pp. 100–10, here p. 106.
28 SAPMO-BArch, DR 6 279, SRK, 'Bericht über den Stand der Programmarbeit…' 25 Apr. 1957, p. 5.
29 Hoff, 'Das 11. Plenum', pp. 101–2.
30 P. Hoff, 'Zwischen Mauerbau und VIII. Parteitag – Das Fernsehen in der DDR von 1961 bis 1971', in K. Hickethier (ed.), *Geschichte des deutschen Fernsehens* (Stuttgart, 1998), pp. 281–313, here p. 295.
31 The *Kleines Fernsehforum* was literally a forum in which Adameck and a moderator discussed the issues of the television service, frequently answering questions posed by viewer mail. Deutsches Rundfunk archiv DFF, 'Kleines Fernsehforum,' Dec. 1962.
32 Hoff, 'Das 11. Plenum' pp. 103–4.
33 Ibid., p. 104.
34 Ibid., p. 108; L. Haucke, 'Die Träume sozialistischer Massenunterhaltung in der DDR', in Agde, *Kahlschlag*, pp. 111–21, here p. 116.
35 Further, with the 11th 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, 'Zwischen Mauerbau und VIII. Parteitag', p. 302.
36 J. Feinstein, *Triumph of the Ordinary: Depictions of Everyday Life in the East German Cinema, 1949–89* (Chapel Hill, 2002), pp. 6–7.
37 S. Pollert, '"Wo Licht ist, fällt auch Schatten". Das zeitkritische Magazin 'Prisma' im Kontext der DDR-Fernsehgeschichte', in H. Heinze, *Zwischen Service und Propaganda: Zur Geschichte und Ästhetik von Magazinsendungen im Fernsehen der DDR 1952–1991* (Berlin, 1998), pp. 13–70, here p. 19.
38 Heike Hartmann cited in Pollert, ' Wo Licht ist'.
39 Ibid., p. 20.
40 For excellent examples of the letters received by the DFF see I. Merkel (ed.), *Wir sind doch nicht die Meckerecke der Nation! Briefe an das Fernsehen der DDR* (Berlin, 2000).
41 Pollert, 'Wo Licht ist', p. 37.
42 Merkel, *Wir sind doch*, p. 44.
43 Pollert, 'Wo Licht ist', p. 50.
44 S. Tippach-Schneider, *Messemännchen und Minol-Pirol: Werbung in der DDR* (Berlin, 1999), pp. 54–5.
45 S. Tippach-Schneider, *Tausend Tele-tipps: Das Werbefernsehen in der DDR* (Berlin, 2004), p. 15.
46 B. Ciesla & P. Poutrus, 'Food supply in a planned economy: SED nutrition policy between crisis response and popular needs', in K. Jarausch (ed.), *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR* (New York, 1999), pp. 143–62.
47 D. Rosenstein, 'Zuschauer als Partner: Ratgebersendungen im DDR-Fernsehen', in Heinze, *Service*, pp. 373–406, here p. 386. See also Tippach-Schneider, *Messemännchen*, p. 65.
48 A criticism noted even at the time by commentator Uwe Johnson. See Tippach-Schneider, *Messemännchen*, p. 44.
49 Ibid., p. 53.
50 M. Meyen, *Denver-Klan und Neues Deutschland: Mediennutzung in der DDR* (Berlin, 2003), p. 69.
51 Honecker's address on the subject of television entertainment is often cited: 'Our television, which can look back at good achievements, should intensify its effort

to improve programming in order to overcome a certain boredom, to take into account the need for good entertainment, to create more powerful journalism and meet the expectations of those parts of the working population, whose working day begins very early, and who therefore would like to see better television programmes.' Here cited after Rosenstein, 'Zuschauer', p. 306 (translation by the author.)

52 Rosenstein, 'Zuschauer', p. 306.
53 H. Müncheberg, 'Zur Geschichte des Fernsehens in der DDR', in N. Schindler (ed.), *Flimmerkiste: Ein nostalgischer Rückblick* (Hildesheim, 1999), pp. 31–46, here p. 41.
54 Meyen, *Denver-Klan*, p. 77.
55 Hoff, 'Die Fernsehkunst', p. 405.
56 Helmut Hanke cited in L. Naughton, *That Was the Wild East: Film Culture, Unification, and the 'New' Germany* (Ann Arbor, 2002), p. 80.
57 These are percentages of the entire viewing audience, not all of whom would be watching television during any given prime-time broadcast.
58 This discussion is based on the interesting work of media scholar M. Meyen, esp. *Denver-Klan*, pp. 73–8.
59 F. Wolff, *Glasnost erst kurz vor Sendeschluss: Die letzten Jahre des DDR–Fernsehens (1985–1989/90)* (Cologne, 2002), pp. 188–9, 276.
60 Ibid., p. 276.
61 Meyen, *Denver-Klan*, p. 63.
62 Ibid.
63 Paper given by P. Zimmermann, 'Deutsche Teilung und Wiedervereinigung in dokumentarischen Programmen der ARD und des DDR-Fernsehens' at the NDR conference 'In geteilter Sicht: Fernsehgeschichte als Zeitgeschichte', held 5/6 Dec. 2002.
64 I. Merkel, 'Consumer Culture in the GDR, or How the Struggle for Anti-modernity was Lost on the Battleground of Consumer Culture', in S. Strasser, C. McGovern & M. Judt (eds), *Getting and Spending: European and American Consumer Societies in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 1998), 281–300, here pp. 293–4.
65 Meyen, *Denver-Klan*, p. 64. See also P. Hoff, cited in Naughton, *Wild East*, p. 83.

10

Technical Innovation, Social Participation, Societal Self-Reflection: Televised Sport in (West) German Society

Judith Keilbach & Markus Stauff

> Sports are much too interesting to be left to those who calculate everything by centimetres and seconds.
>
> (Hanns Joachim Friedrich, sports moderator for ZDF)

The history of German television has been closely connected with sports since its very beginning. Following the official start of test services on 22 March 1935, the broadcasting of the 1936 Berlin Olympic games represents the first high point in the history of the young medium. With this first 'media event', sports coverage had already taken up the key position that it has occupied ever since in the history of television. In Germany today, just as then, technical innovations are symbolically staged and popularized mainly in the context of sports events – whether they be new image technologies like slow motion replay or 'virtual replay', or broadcast and recording technologies such as cable and satellite TV after 1984, the introduction of digital pay TV from 1996, or more recently the introduction of DVD and PVR. It is therefore no exaggeration to call sport a central element in the technical, economic and programming strategies of the television industry, and also in the formulation of state policy regarding the media.[1] Looking at the history of televised sport shows that the dovetailing of sport, technology and society that we know today has been a constant feature since the advent of the medium.

The Olympic Games 1936

Although broadcasting was still severely limited by technological shortcomings in the 1930s, the National Socialists nonetheless put the medium in the service of propaganda by gathering spectators together in public television viewing rooms. In this early stage, the broadcasting of the Olympic Games represented both an enormous technical challenge and a golden opportunity

to try out the latest media technology. While wireless VHF broadcast technology was in service in 1935 and the televised image could already be received within the greater Berlin area, the Olympic Games in 1936 created both the demand for and the possibility to introduce a specialized camera for external broadcasting. Previously, televised images were either pre-recorded films or broadcasts from a completely dark 'studio' (actually a booth which originally measured only 1.5 metres square), which were recorded with a mechanical camera. For the Olympic news reports, however, electronic cameras (initially called 'television cannons') were used, which were based on designs by Farnsworth and Zworykin.[2] The new technology did not yet work flawlessly and suffered from 'considerable shortcomings', especially during bad weather and 'competitions involving intense movement'. In November 1936, when another sports event – a national soccer match between Germany and Italy – was broadcast live as a trial for outdoor recording technology, the image quality was so bad that the ball could not be seen and the players could only be recognized due to their dark shorts. To make matters worse, the cameras also missed the first goal.[3]

Major sports events, however, demanded improvements and greatly facilitated the introduction of new television technologies that moulded the further development of the medium. As the television engineer Walter Bruch noted in 1956, 'The experience of the Olympic broadcast has advanced our work by two to three years. The necessity of using undeveloped and half-finished technology, and the singular opportunity of these first great public sports reports, forced us to make not only steps, but great leaps forward. The 1936 Olympics were therefore a great impetus for German television in the pre-war years'.[4]

The early live broadcasts from the Olympic Stadium to the television viewing cabins already demonstrated certain aspects of television-viewing that even today turn sporting events like the World Cup and the Olympic Games into special, quasi-ritualistic moments in television. The viewer could, for the first time, see the progress of the sports event as it unfolded in real time. While in newspapers and cinema newsreels sports events were presented with a temporal delay, television viewers (like radio listeners) could experience games as they happened. In 1936, approximately six hours of sports were broadcast daily in 28 public television cabins in greater Berlin, and the group of people who followed the Games on television was therefore limited to a relatively small number; 'private' television sets were only available to a few Party officials.[5] These public television cabins, however, were quite popular: an average of 10,000 spectators a day were recorded during the Olympic Games, and the cabins frequently had to be 'temporarily closed due to overcrowding'.[6] Indeed, it was 'at times more difficult to get tickets for the television cabins than for the Olympic stadium'.[7]

In accordance with National Socialist ideology, the television broadcast of the Olympic Games in Berlin was an image-laden project meant to enhance Germany's national reputation. If holding the Games was already

an 'international recognition of a commanding performance of German organizational capabilities and the German fighting spirit',[8] the introduction of television, according to the national television producer Eugen Hadamovsky of the Ministry of Public Education and Propaganda, was to demonstrate technical superiority and make the world aware that 'Germany stands in first place in the development of television'.[9] Above all, the technical possibility of potentially reaching the entire population held immense promise for propaganda: 'Band together everywhere and create television groups', urged Hadamovsky, 'work for the introduction of television and you are working for the final and definitive victory of the National Socialist idea! Take the image of the *Führer* to all German hearts!'[10] Even so, television was not used for propaganda purposes to the same degree as film or radio. Along with institutional disputes over respective areas of responsibility and the bad quality of transmission, the limited range of visual and content control of live broadcasts may also have played a role. In the end, National Socialism had 'little interest in propaganda with television', and much more in 'propaganda for television'.[11]

The broadcast of the 1936 Olympic Games nonetheless supported the introduction and popularization of the new medium and contributed its share to the 'divided consciousness'[12] of National Socialism, which, although ideologically favouring the traditional, was in practice committed to modernization. Although television hardly featured in everyday life at the time, even in these early stages it already served as a symbol of how modern society functioned and was understood. With television it was not only possible for the masses to view events themselves (as was already the case with film), but also, due to the ability of live broadcast to make a synchronic linkage between spatially separate spectator groups (those in the stadium and those in the television-viewing rooms), to generate a simultaneous community of experience – albeit one limited by the racial and political exclusions under National Socialism.[13] Moreover, the current debates over whether television should remain primarily a collective medium confined to public viewing rooms or rather geared towards private reception in the home touched on fundamental differences in how society and community were conceived. Whereas some still thought that a sense of community could ultimately only be generated through the experience of sharing actual physical space at a given time, others believed that the simultaneous reception of events by spatially separate individuals (made possible by the electronic media) was adequate for a technological society. Among the differing conceptions of society and community that competed for prominence in twentieth-century Germany, television quickly became a central feature of debates alongside the cinema and radio.

Sport and public television in the Federal Republic

After the Second World War, broadcasting in the four occupation zones was reorganized according to the various principles of the respective occupying

powers. There was, however, clear unanimity among the Western Allies that broadcasting should be independent of both the state and political parties as well as of private economic interests. In the years 1947 and 1948 these principles were legally established and laid the foundations for the public broadcasting system that monopolized West German airwaves until the 1980s: non-commercial and not directly bound to the state, and financed primarily through fees paid by television- and radio-set owners (though increasingly also through additional advertising income). To this day the individual federal states (*Länder*) of the FRG, not the central Federal Government, are responsible for broadcasting legislation.

In 1948 the British military government granted Northwest German Broadcasting (*Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk* or NWDR, later divided into NDR and WDR) a licence to establish a test television service. On 25 December 1952, official television programming was finally begun in West Germany. While the technical development of television was substantially carried out by the NWDR, programming services could not realistically be managed by a single broadcasting institution owing to the high costs, but could only be achieved in co-operation with other regional broadcasters. In 1953, the ARD (*Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* or Consortium of Public Broadcasting Institutions of the FRG) agreed on a co-operative implementation of television programming, in which the shares of the regional broadcasters were contractually determined. *Deutsches Fernsehen*, broadcast by the ARD, was for a decade the only television programme in West Germany. Only in 1963 was alternative programming introduced under the public but centrally organized *Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen* (ZDF). In 1984, during the course of cable television trials, commercial television stations were finally authorized. Since the introduction of these stations, entirely financed through advertising, public and commercial stations have existed side by side, an arrangement referred to as the 'dual system'.

Even during the NWDR's test programming (that is, the television broadcasts before the start of official programming in December 1952) there were numerous sports programmes. Boxing matches, tennis tournaments and soccer games were broadcast live from Hamburg and in 1952 there were daily one-hour reports on the Olympic Games,[14] for which film material shot on location in Helsinki was flown to Hamburg and presented by a moderator in the TV studio the next day.[15] This association of film, transport vehicles and television continued for many years, and in the self-historicizing of TV provides the material for countless adventure stories: 'Those were adventurous times, in which film material was transported by motorcycle couriers or helicopters from the stadium to the station. Once a pilot lost his way in the fog and had to set down in a farmer's field to ask for directions.'[16]

The 1954 World Cup victory by the German national team occupies a special place in the history of televised sport, for it not only strengthened Germany's national self-confidence (see below), but also placed soccer centre

stage in sports broadcasting. Despite the publicity this generated for soccer, live broadcasts of matches met with considerable criticism from the clubs when they noticed a decline in the number of spectators in the stadiums. At first, because television executives did not respond to the financial demands of the clubs, such live broadcasting was terminated. In the early 1960s, however, some games (or at least their highlights) were reported after their conclusion with the help of magnetic recordings.

With this development, the format of sports broadcasts began to change significantly. Alongside the continuing coverage of specific competitions that had prevailed in the 1950s (i.e. irregular sporting events that were not parts of routine programming), the weekly magazine-style programme *Sportschau* (ARD) was introduced in 1961 as a digest of the week's sporting highlights. This was soon followed by ZDF's weekly *Aktuelles Sportstudio* in 1963, which was strongly modelled on contemporary entertainment formats. For over two decades, these programmes dominated the broadcasting of routine sporting events in the Federal Republic. Once the commercial stations could compete to buy the rights for the *Bundesliga* (national soccer league) in the late 1980s, however, the result was an enormous increase in the cost of football broadcasting. Whereas the clubs received between 1,000 and 2,500 Deutschmarks (DM) per broadcast game in the 1950s, in 1987/88 ARD and ZDF paid 16 million DM for one year of the *Bundesliga*. RTL – as the first commercial station – paid 400 million in 1988/89; and in 1992 the commercial station Sat 1 paid 700 million DM for five years. Even though the public stations maintained the rights to the international matches and league cups, the 'institution' *Sportschau* in particular – but also the public broadcasting stations as a whole – lost relevance during this period. When the ARD finally regained the rights for the *Bundesliga* in 2003, thus resurrecting the status of *Sportschau*, this was celebrated with the slogan 'Football's Coming Home'.

Synchronization and participation: Historical lines of development in televised sports

Seen from a contemporary perspective, we can identify several lines of development in the roughly 70-year history of television that highlight the significance of sport in both its technological development and its wider social function. Among the most important of these is the enormous dynamic of innovation generated by the close interpenetration of technical and economic factors in televised sport. At least until the end of the 1990s, the economic value of television sports rose continually in line with the growing technical expenditures of programme production. This dynamic not only changed the shaping of televised images and the structures of their distribution and reception, but also the status and perception of television sports. At the same time, there occurred a basic change in the social definition and function of sport. As one commentator has recently put it, 'Sports are no

longer acts which are immediately understandable from their enactment, but rather have lost their independence from the medium [of television]'.[17] Accordingly, the social functions of televised sport cannot be derived from those of sport in general, since televised sport involves more than the participation in the rituals and emotions of sport, and is distinct from them as well.

The aesthetic changes encouraged by televised sport can be seen perhaps most clearly in the rising number of cameras used to broadcast a soccer match. Until well into the 1960s, matches were recorded by no more than three cameras, with the lead camera following the action on the playing field from a panoramic position, and only occasionally being supplemented by closer shots from two side cameras set up near the penalty boxes, whose narrower focus meant that the ball could be lost from view when it was kicked too fast or too suddenly.[18] By the 1970s at the latest, the visual field was becoming more and more fragmented with new camera angles. In addition, coverage of the 1978 World Cup saw the introduction of slow-motion capability for every camera signal (not merely selected cameras). Since the 1990s it has been customary for ten cameras to be used for even the regular *Bundesliga* matches, including movable cameras on the sidelines, mini-cameras in the goal nets, crane cameras behind the goals and a camera that captures the entire field from above. With this spatial (camera perspectives) and temporal (slow-motion) fragmentation of the field and the flow of the match, televised sports reports continually make more and more subtle incidents available for repeated viewing, to a degree that what we know about sports and what even qualifies as a decisive factor in sporting achievement has changed dramatically. At the very latest with the introduction of the so-called 'virtual replay' system for the 1998 World Cup, in which the course of individual scenes was digitally reconstructed even during the match, television has offered the promise of making sports entirely dissectible. Moreover, the sense of knowledge and transparency that this generates has been constantly enhanced since the 1960s by the increasing inclusion of information far away from the playing field. German television reports of the 1966 World Cup in England, for example, were supplemented with footage of training, reports on previous events, and interviews with the players.

Technical developments in televised sport not only resulted in visual changes, but also brought with them significant changes in broadcasting and reception technologies. One of the characteristics of sporting events is the fact that within a pre-given time frame at a specified place, outcomes are reached (i.e. who wins and loses) that are of interest in completely different places. This structure creates an enormous incentive to overcome time and space through communications media. In the 1950s, Europe-wide live broadcast was already possible through Eurovision, a union of western European television stations. One of the primary focuses of these Europe-wide collaborations was the broadcasting of sports competitions like international track and field, skiing, ice skating and of course international soccer matches.[19] Starting with the 1964 Olympics in Tokyo, live broadcasting via satellite

gradually superseded the time-delayed and therefore summary reporting that had characterized the previously dominant communication nexus of film rolls, airplanes and television scanning. Satellite technology provided for a global synchronization which in turn accentuated the quasi-ritual character of live sport, in as much as a specific event was expected at a certain time worldwide, even if its starting time was determined by 'extra-televisual' reality. The live broadcast of Muhammed Ali's boxing matches in the 1970s, for example, for which many spectators woke up in the middle of the night to share in the excitement, can be seen as paradigmatic in this regard. In a popular television history, a witness remembers how, as a child, he had sat trembling in front of the television with his mother at 3:30 in the morning:

> We were woken up at three in the morning so as not to miss anything. In five hours a normal school day would begin. […] That was 1974, the year of the "Rumble in the Jungle" in Kinshasa, Zaire. Muhammad Ali against George Foreman: it was to have been the fight of the century. No one who saw it would ever forget it. In Germany alone, thousands upon thousands of people like us sat in front of the TV at four in the morning, watching spellbound – and enjoying every second of it.[20]

What made this clash the fight of the century was arguably not only the match itself, but also the excitement of a diversion from normal television use and from the everyday programming schedule.

As this example makes abundantly clear, global synchronization through televised sports events produces highly artificial time structures. Not only did spectators in some parts of the world have to get up in the middle of the night to watch the Ali–Foreman bout, but also the scheduling of the competition was itself already an effect of television. The boxing match, which took place in Africa, was broadcast at a convenient television time for the US. The World Soccer Cup in the US in 1998 was similarly organized according to European broadcast times, just as the most important track and field events at the Olympic Games in Seoul in 1988 took place at prime time for US television. For German audiences, three different times were overlapping: the (itself historically artificial) prime-time definition of the US networks, the Korean time of day, which was recognizable through lighting conditions and was constantly commented upon by reporters, and the German time of day structuring the everyday life of the viewers. The symbolic charge of such a global synchronization, even if artificial, could be seen in Germany during the events preceding the World Cup in 2002 in Japan and Korea. The games were mostly broadcast around noon in Germany, which set off a discussion over the question of whether the work morale of Germans was being impaired. The chairman of the Media Commission of the German *Länder*, the Social Democratic politician Kurt Beck, even went so far as to request that employers give their employees the opportunity to watch at least the games involving the German team.

Temporal proximity to events through global synchronization by means of satellite technology has nowadays largely reached its limits, and can no longer be significantly increased. In recent years, however, newer technical innovations have been introduced that promise a further modification of the temporal and spatial parameters of broadcasting and to intensify our participation in sporting events. Since the middle of the 1990s, digital television as well as new recording technologies (above all PVR and DVD technologies) have aimed at multiplying the simultaneous viewing positions of a sporting event (a spatial increase in synchronization), as well as making a live event temporally flexible to the degree that the spectator does not miss anything (a temporal stretching of synchronization). Even in the 1960s, when an alternative to the single station *Deutsches Fernsehen* was created with the second public station ZDF, variety and flexibility served as an argument to promote the acquisition of a second television set in the household. With stereotypical gender role descriptions, the TV viewing family was promised that, with the help of a second TV, the man could enjoy sports programmes uninterrupted by his wife, who could watch her soap operas.[21] In the 1990s such generalizing descriptions were replaced with the idea of completely individualized access and ability to construct the sports programme itself. The first German digital pay TV offer, which went into service under the name DF1 in 1996, gave the spectator the ability to choose from several simultaneous parts of events, all broadcast live, for instance different games from a tennis tournament: 'Becker, Muster, Hingis all at the same time – and Sampras at a press conference? No problem: DF1 carries the US Open on four channels'.[22] All Formula 1 broadcasts are nowadays shown from four different perspectives, which can either appear as four small windows seen together or can be selected individually and watched full-screen. The decisive factor in these innovations is the combination of specialized perspectives that concentrate on specific aspects of the race (the area of pursuit, pit lanes, etc.) with a perspective that synthesizes all the important events and therefore offers a standardizing overview. For the 2002 World Soccer Cup, Premiere (as DF1 was re-named) advertised as follows:

> The Channel WM1 (*Weltmeisterschaft 1*) is showing the match between the Germans and Cameroon, trained by Winnie Schäfer. The winner will advance to the final sixteen. But the big question is: how will the Ireland–Saudi Arabia match, happening at the same time, turn out? Of course, we will be showing this important match on WM2. Anyone who would like to save themselves the trouble of channel-jumping back and forth will be set with WM3. Here Premiere is offering the television link-up between the two matches. So you don't have to miss anything.[23]

Additionally, re-broadcasts of the soccer games were advertised as a possibility to fit the event into one's own daily rhythm. 'You are now the programming

director. And tell the truth: is there anything better than coming home from the office or from school and just being able to sit down and channel-hop through the various matches of a World Cup?'[24] A similarly flexible adaptation of live broadcasts should be offered by the PVR technology, which – as the advertisements promise – records the event if the viewer is interrupted (for example, by a phone call) and can immediately continue without a gap after the interruption.

Along with this continual growth of technologically generated artificiality, the historical development of television sports has also tended to encourage a simultaneous increase in viewer involvement and participation. Above all, however, television has modified people's very sense of participation, along with their perceptions of synchronization and of events. As Lorenz Engell has shown, the temporal and spatial structure of television has been fundamentally transformed since the 1960s. Whereas from the 1960s into the 1980s it had generally tended to generate a sense of global commonality through setting an international news agenda and broadcasting singular events (e.g. the moon landing), from the late 1980s onwards television became much more stylistically and economically differentiated, and henceforth offered far more flexible and individualized access to specific fields of interest. From a viewer's perspective this meant a shift from participating in a collectively shared world to being able to 'imagine a world of one's own choice'.[25] This radical transformation of television, and the changing perception of the world that accompanied it, cannot be explained without reference to the central role played by televised sports, and in particular their unique ability to cater to both global participation and individual choice. Television sports are a strategic resource that gives plausibility and evidence to new technologies and new forms of reception.

It is therefore not surprising that the digitization of television has been driven above all by sports broadcasting. Much the same can be said of the growing integration of television with internet and cellular network communication. Just like the 1936 Olympic Games, the World Cup in Japan and Korea in 2002 turned televised sport into a media-technical experimentation field on which the popular acceptance of 'new media' could be tested. As the *Frankfurter Rundschau* put it:

> The World Cup in Japan and South Korea will serve as a test case for what efforts the customer is willing to make to get to his material. [...] Internet providers will finally get their first data as to where on the World Wide Web they could do business with soccer in the future.[26]

As part of the contemporary multi-media field, cellular phones and the internet contribute to new forms of viewer participation. Live bulletins which can be called up for the current sports results, additional background reports on a television station's home page, quiz questions which can be answered by

telephone, contests and ring-tones, not only demand active participation, but also support the involvement of the spectator in televised sports' world of data.

It is too simplistic to lump all of these developments under the headings of commercialization and emotionalization and to criticize them as an increasing misuse of sport for non-sport aims.[27] In the end, all of these technologies will generate new expectations and perceptions of sports that will be as popular as they are highly specialized. Although the producers of television sports are to some degree consciously emulating the spectacle aesthetic of Hollywood movies,[28] at the same time, more and more visual forms are finding their way into sports reporting with the goal of exact, scientific observation and measurement. For example, the split screen with which technicians can differentiate and compare various skiers in alpine skiing have been introduced at the behest of both television producers and trainers. The databank of the station Sat 1 and its weekly soccer programme *RAN*, which has acquired something of an 'institutional' status in Germany, has contributed significantly to popular knowledge about sports. Its statistics have not only underlined the proto-scientific character of soccer reporting since the beginning of the 1990s, but have also vastly expanded common knowledge about training concepts, doping, injuries and new tactics.

Social functions of television and societal self-reflection

Knut Hickethier has diagnosed how, in general, German television has made a decisive contribution to West Germany's modernization.[29] In the often restorative atmosphere of the post-war world, in which inherited cultural values are clung to as a means of orientation in a rapidly changing world, television has opened up points of view far beyond the conventional. This has been particularly true of televised sport, whose modernizing impulses – in the sense of rationalization, differentiation and individualization – have been especially powerful. Through televised sport, new techniques were brought into use that helped to mediate between the global and local, and new programme formats were developed that linked together 'entertainment' and 'information'. Yet arguably even more important than its specific contribution to general processes of social modernization has been the symbolic role of televised sport in the negotiation of national identity and social self-reflection.

The 1954 World Cup has a central meaning not only in German media history, but also in its wider social history. The unexpected victory of the West German team, which has entered the collective memory as the 'miracle in Berne' (where the final took place), was widely followed in pubs and shop windows and is thought to have decisively contributed to the regaining of self-confidence in German post-war society. In a television documentary from 2004, former chancellor Helmut Kohl still asserts that the victory in 1954 gave people the feeling that 'we are somebody again'.[30] Although this is probably exaggerated in hindsight, it is nonetheless worth emphasizing

that in West Germany, in which national symbolism was less present in public places than in other European countries, sports events provided a unique place for exhibiting and reflecting on national identity. Even if television in the 1950s aimed quite consciously at popular democratic education, entertainment, especially soccer, was important to the goal of winning over the largest possible number of spectators to this form of popular education.[31]

It was precisely the international character of events like the Olympics and the World Cup that created the background for the emergence of a new form of national identity in the Federal Republic. The very nature of major sporting tournaments, which for a few weeks change television programming and to some degree people's daily practices, gives them the character of important ceremonial events.[32] The fact that the structure of the competitions is nationally defined and visually appears as such in the form of opposing athletes or teams has two important consequences. On the one hand, it furnishes a stage for a liberal multiculturalism, a benign interest in all the peoples of the world (since the 1970s this manner of sports reporting has been accompanied by extensive and usually exoticizing reports about the countries of the hosts and winners). On the other hand, within this multiculturalism, the German nation is the unchanging focus. During the 1998 World Cup, the programme trailer, which was broadcast several times a day, consisted of a colourful sea of flags and patterns in which, through a kind of zoom, the focus then narrowed on to the German flag or the national playing strip.

Whereas the 'national' perspective and selection of programme content usually remains implicit in television news, in the case of sports reporting it is much more openly exhibited and reflected upon. Athletes become representatives of nations who quite obviously are preferred by 'us' to the representatives of other nations.[33] Televised sport is therefore doubly important for this media-supported sense of national belonging. It not only continually (and in a historically flexible manner) reaffirms the existence of a German community with shared emotions, but also, in so doing, stages its own social potential for shaping the national consciousness. 'Sport not only serves as proof of the successful integration of the society in front of the television set', argues Bartz, 'it also demonstrates the manner, specific to television, of individual participation in the incident'.[34] This is important because of the assurance that we viewers sitting in front of the television are not sharing a television experience with wholly anonymous others, but with spectators of the same nationality. 'Through sport, television can be explained as an instrument of complete inclusion'.[35]

In the course of the history of televised sport, the national perspective of television has increasingly come into conflict with the structure and logic of actual sporting events, not least due to the increasing internationalization of sports. For instance, during the 2004 Tour de France, a reporter from ARD expressed his astonishment that a German cyclist – Jens Voigt – made up time for an Italian athlete (who was riding with him for a Danish team) and in

doing so ruined the chances for the popular German cyclist Jan Ullrich, who was riding for a German team (which incidentally was sponsored by ARD). On the following day the cyclist was booed by German fans; in the end, the reporter had to apologize to the rider and explain to the public that it is patently obvious that a German rider, due to his work contract, would ride against Jan Ullrich and for the benefit of an Italian. Typically, however, Jens Voigt himself stated that he did not want to harm the chances of his compatriot, but it was his job. Here again sport provides the context for the modernization of national identity under the conditions of global economics.

While the semantic unity of the nation in (post) modern televised sport might be lost, the nation still remains the primary organizing principle for the selection and 'objectivity' of sport. ZDF called the Ukrainian boxers Vitali and Wladimir Klitschko, who speak German and who have lived in Germany for a long time, the most prominent 'German' boxers of the time. The backdrop for this is an economically 'exploitable' interest in boxing in Germany together with a simultaneous lack of 'native' German boxers. An ongoing symbolic Germanification seems to be necessary, for instance, in that the Klitschkos appear on talk shows on ZDF as admirers of the German boxing idol, Max Schmelling.

The social function of televised sport, however, is not limited to the broadcasting or the staging of sports events. As most of the examples cited here indicate, televised sport gains its meaning not least from the fact that it is a widely shared reference point for social communication and societal self-reflection. The immense popularity of sport and its inextricable financial and technological interconnections with the media make it a primary vehicle for discussions about the media in general, as well as about the wider socio-political issues to which they are related. Any consideration of the role of television in society or of the general workings of a highly medialized public sphere find in televised sport a central reference point – central because it guarantees both widespread comprehension and passion, and moreover because it (more than any other broadcast content) affects almost everyone in some form or another. For this reason debates about media coverage of sport are often representative of much wider issues about the future direction of television, and by extension society as a whole. Media sport possesses a social meaning and importance vastly greater than that of news or fictional programmes, however popular these might be. To put it pointedly, whereas the discontinuation of a television series outrages *fans*, the inaccessibility of a major sporting event is – or is widely perceived to be – a matter of national concern and of basic social entitlement.

Although one can never presume that a particular television broadcast is seen by the entire population of a country (or of a particular broadcast region),[36] sporting events generally come closest to achieving such 'universal' reception. The decisive factor is that this general (presumed) interest in sport does not require complete agreement, but rather offers the possibilities for different preferences. The fact that sports viewers do not necessarily watch the

same sports has historically provided immense potential for increasing the range and amount of sports programming, including the economically motivated inclusion of new kinds of sport ('trend' and 'fun' sports). Precisely through the differentiation of its audience, television sport delivers a tableau of subject areas and facts on which a society can establish its differences of taste, preference, milieus, etc. Yet at the same time as providing a palette for social difference, sport also furnishes a rich vocabulary for a collective communication in an increasingly individualized society. Sports terms – 'the chequered flag', 'foul', etc. – are also important communicative hinges in areas far removed from the track and pitch, not least in politics and journalism.

In contemporary society, televised sport often functions as a metaphor through which wider media-political and social-political questions can be discussed and illustrated. For example, when the increasing commercialization of televised sports is debated, what is really being discussed are processes of commercialization as a whole. This can already be seen in early conflicts over television advertising (or the so-called 'plug'). In 1962 Robert Lembke, then sports co-ordinator of ARD, complained in the programme magazine *Hör zu* of companies taking the opportunity of displaying advertisements in the sporting venues from which television was broadcasting. At first ARD and ZDF wanted to boycott these locations, and indeed the 1967 ice-skating world championship was not broadcast due to such unofficial advertising. In 1971, however, television itself took part in the marketing of advertising space, though the debate continued for several years.[37] Such debates are characteristic of the history of televised sport, in which the question is not about sport *per se*, but rather about television and its future development as a whole. In other words, television does not simply 'show sports'. Indeed, as Bartz has argued, it is equally true that 'sports show television. They not only bring to light the qualities attributed to television, they produce them'.[38]

The symbolic character of televised sport can be most clearly seen in the debates that arose in the course of the 1980s and 1990s – that is, with the introduction of the 'dual system'. In 1985, when for the first time a commercial broadcaster (Sat 1) carried the finals match of a tennis tournament with the most prominent German athlete of the time, Boris Becker, this predictably led to a broad public discussion because Sat 1 could only be received over cable or satellite, to which at the time only a minority of the population had access. Similarly, when RTL, the largest commercial station, bid in 1989 for the rights to televise the Wimbledon tennis tournament for five years, this led to vehement criticism that a significant portion of the population would thereby be excluded from watching this important event. And even in 1992/93, when the *Bundesliga* went to Sat 1, public criticism led to a symbolic act in which the station gave 1,000 satellite systems to hospitals, nursing homes and the under-privileged.[39] In the summer of 1996, when it was finally made public that the broadcasting rights for the 2002 and 2006 World Cups had gone to an enterprise of Leo Kirch, who at the same time was trying

to establish his pay TV station DF1, a renewed discussion began in Germany over whether it was really legitimate to make the games of a World Cup accessible only through paid channels. The stakes in these debates were, and were perceived to be, extraordinarily high, for they carried implications not only for sport on television, but ultimately for the entire national public and for notions of social democracy itself. The member of parliament and 'media expert' for the SPD, Peter Glotz, called the closing of the DF1 contract a signal for the 'privatization of the public' and warned that something similar could soon happen with wars and political press conferences.[40] The development of sport on television appeared then as a sensor for the general development of the media industry and public itself. It was the vehemence of these debates that prompted the (rash) reassurance from Joseph Blatter, the general secretary of FIFA, that 'live broadcasts will take place on free TV. […] Our goal is the wide-scale transmission of the World Cup, not the maximization of profits'.[41]

In the following years two important decisions in media law that by no means concerned sports alone were discussed through the example (and on the occasion) of televised sporting events. The first was the 1997 confirmation by the Federal Constitutional Court of the right to short reporting (that is, reporting of up to 90 seconds without invoking rights of use). The other was the definition in 1998 by the chief ministers of the federal states (in accordance with EU guidelines) of a list of events that must be broadcast in a manner accessible to all. In both cases it was largely a question of determining what constituted events of 'general social interest', and in both cases, soccer coverage was the test case on which the 'social interest' was debated and decided. One could take this simply as an exaggerated valuation of sport, which was given preference to supposedly more important media content. It appears, however, that both these cases illustrate the fact that sport has taken on a function in German television history that could not be fulfilled by any other subject area. The entire history of television in Germany is marked by journalistic, political and juridical debates that use sport to establish definitions not only of what television should and can do, but also of what society represents and how it should function. Indeed, such discussions about what is appropriate and correct for televised sports are arguably of far greater social relevance than the actual sports broadcasts themselves.

Acknowledgement

This chapter has been translated from the German by Daniel Hendrickson.

Notes

1 L. Mikos, 'Freunde fürs Leben. Kulturelle Aspekte von Fußball, Fernsehen und Fernsehfußball', in J. Schwier (ed.), *Mediensport: Ein einführendes Handbuch* (Hohengehren, 2002), pp. 27–49, here p. 28.

2 See K. Winker, *Fernsehen unterm Hakenkreuz: Organisation, Programme, Personal* (Cologne, 1996), pp. 124–5. Technical development was carried out then, as it still is today, through international exchange and was based on the business interests of multinational concerns, by which the legend of the German origin of television is refuted. See W. Uricchio (ed.) *Die Anfänge des Deutschen Fernsehens: Kritische Annäherungen an die Entwicklung bis 1945* (Tübingen, 1991).
3 Winker, *Fernsehen*, pp. 127 and 131.
4 Cited after K. Hickethier (with Peter Hoff), *Geschichte des deutschen Fernsehens* (Stuttgart, 1998), p. 42.
5 As with the situation in Great Britain, television in Germany was initially conceived as a medium for collective reception. Pressure from the small appliance industry, however, led to a distancing from communal television and in 1939 the first 'home television sets' went into production. Due to the beginning of the War, however, these were never delivered and production was again discontinued.
6 Hickethier, *Geschichte*, p. 42.
7 Winker, *Fernsehen*, p. 136.
8 G. Gebauer & C. Wulf, 'Die Berliner Olympiade 1936. Spiele der Gewalt', in G. Gebauer (ed.) *Olympische Spiele – die andere Utopie der Moderne: Olympia zwischen Kult und Droge* (Frankfurt/Main, 1996), pp. 247–55, here p. 247.
9 Cited after Hickethier, *Geschichte*, p. 37.
10 Cited after ibid., p. 38.
11 E. Reiss, *'Wir senden Frohsinn': Fernsehen unterm Faschismus* (Berlin, 1979), p. 51.
12 H. D. Schäfer, *Das gespaltene Bewußtsein: Über deutsche Kultur und Lebenswirklichkeit 1933–45* (Munich, 1981).
13 The German Olympic Committee excluded some Jewish athletes from participation in the Games; German Jews were not permitted to enter the television-viewing rooms.
14 H.-F. Foltin & G. Hallenberger, 'Vom Sport im Fernsehen zum Fernsehsport. Zur Geschichte und aktuellen Situation der Sportsendungen', in H.-D. Erlinger & H.-F. Foltin (eds), *Unterhaltung, Werbung und Zielgruppenprogramme* (Munich, 1993), pp.113–41, here p. 114.
15 Hickethier, *Geschichte*, p. 86.
16 S. Simon, 'Football's Coming Home. Wieder Bundesliga-Fußball in der "Sportschau"', *ARD-Jahrbuch 2003* (Hamburg, 2003), pp. 102–7, here p. 103.
17 L. Rademacher, *Sport und Mediensport: Zur Inszenierung, Pragmatik und Semantik von Sportereignissen im Fernsehen* (Siegen, 1998), p. 108.
18 D. Leder, 'Jubel per Joystick', *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 9 June 2000.
19 Hickethier, *Geschichte*, p. 137.
20 R. Knof, 'Der Ball ist rund – doch wo ist Behle?' in N. Schindler (ed.), *Flimmerkiste: Ein nostalgischer Rückblick* (Hildesheim, 1999), pp. 219–30, here p. 219.
21 The fact that women in the meantime have been recognized as spectators by sports editors can be seen among other things in the radio advertising for *Sportschau*, in which women were addressed during the 2004/05 national soccer league season as competent soccer fans and passionate *Sportschau* watchers. The fact that women were waking up to watch Muhammad Ali's boxing match even in the 1970s is verified by Knof's memory, cited above, of watching television with his mother.
22 *DF1 Magazin: Zeitschrift für das digitale Fernsehen* 2 (1997), no. 9.
23 *Premiere World: Programmzeitschrift* June 2002.
24 Ibid.

25 L. Engell, 'Tasten, Wählen, Denken. Genese und Funktion einer philosophischen Apparatur', in S. Münker, A. Roesler & M. Sandbothe (eds), *Medienphilosophie. Beiträge zur Klärung eines Begriffs* (Frankfurt/Main, 2003), pp. 53–77, here p. 74.
26 *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 30 Apr. 2002.
27 See for example Mikos, 'Freunde fürs Leben', p. 28.
28 The ARD boxing commentator Andreas Witte, for example, reported at a colloquium at Humboldt University in Berlin that the American feature film *Ali* (directed in 2001 by Michael Mann) instantly set aesthetic standards for television reporting on boxing.
29 See also Hickethier's essay in this volume (Chapter 8).
30 This configuration experienced a repetition as farce during the 1990 World Cup, which the newly 'reunited' Germany had won. The trainer Franz Beckenbauer announced at that time that Germany would now be unbeatable 'for years to come' due to the integration of East German players. Cited here after: www.faz.net/s/RubFB1.
31 C. Bartz, '"Das geheimnisvolle Fenster in die Welt geöffnet" – Fernsehen', in A. Kümmel, L. Scholz & E. Schumacher (eds), *Einführung in die Geschichte der Medien* (Munich, 2004), pp. 199–223.
32 D. Dayan & E. Katz, 'Performing Media Events', in J. Curran, A. Smith & P. Wingate (eds), *Impacts and Influences: Essays on Media Power in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1987), pp. 174–97.
33 For the 1950s see Hickethier, *Geschichte*, pp. 165–6.
34 Bartz, '"Das geheimnisvolle Fenster"', p. 208.
35 Ibid., p. 207.
36 N. Luhmann, *Die Realität der Massenmedien*, 2nd edn (Opladen, 1996), pp. 183–90.
37 A. Geh, 'Banden und Reiter. Werbung in der Sportberichterstattung', *Medium* 4 (1988), pp. 45–6.
38 C. Bartz, 'Sport – Medium des Fernsehens', in I. Schneider, T. Hahn & C. Bartz (eds), *Medienkultur der 60er Jahre. Diskursgeschichte der Medien nach 1945,* 2 vols (Opladen, 2003); vol. 2, pp. 35–49, here p. 36.
39 Foltin, Hallenberger, 'Vom Sport im Fernsehen'.
40 *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 13/14 July 1996.
41 Bartz, '"Das geheimnisvolle Fenster"', p. 36.

Part Three

The Print Media: From Reading Culture to Mass Culture

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11

Industries of Sensationalism: German Tabloids in Weimar Berlin

Bernhard Fulda

On 9 November 1918, Reich Chancellor Prinz Max von Baden decided to force events and, without consulting Wilhelm II, announced that the Kaiser had abdicated. Fifteen minutes later, newsboys of the Ullstein publishing house roamed the streets of Berlin, selling copies of *BZ am Mittag* announcing the sensational news. It was a scoop in which the publishers were to take pride for decades to come.[1] The end of the Wilhelmine era, however, also saw the end of the near-monopoly which Ullstein had held on the Berlin tabloid market. In January 1919 a competitor was launched, *Neue Berliner Zeitung/Das 12-Uhr-Blatt*. On the very first day of its appearance, *12-Uhr-Blatt* managed to beat the Ullstein tabloid to the latest sensation, being the first to report on the murder of the Communist leaders, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht.[2] The following month, in early February 1919, *BZ am Mittag* re-established its claim on being 'the fastest newspaper in the world'.[3] Friedrich Ebert was making his way up the stairs of the Weimar National Theatre to give the opening speech to the first session of the newly elected National Assembly when newsboys offered him the latest edition of *BZ am Mittag*. As for Ebert's speech, including his appeal for national unity and the slogan of transition 'from imperialism to idealism' – Germany's first tabloid had covered it all, even prior to the actual event.[4] Fourteen years later, it was another Ullstein tabloid, *Tempo*, which managed to beat a now much fiercer competition to the news that Hitler had just been appointed Reich Chancellor.[5]

It is often forgotten that German contemporaries after the First World War experienced both the rise and the fall of the Weimar Republic primarily through the pages of their daily press. Throughout the 1920s, newspapers were the predominant medium of mass communication in Germany. Radio broadcasting was only beginning to take off, with 3.5 million registered listeners by 1930.[6] Even when families of those registered listeners are taken into account, the occasional radio audience of nine or ten million was not even half the figure of the total daily circulation of the German press, at well over 20 million copies in the early 1930s – and of course, newspapers tended to be read by more than one person, making the total newspaper audience

considerably larger.[7] Significantly, newspapers were not just bought for the political news they provided, but also for the entertainment they offered. Almost all accounts of mass culture in Weimar Germany ignore the fact that newspaper reading was – at least quantitatively – the most popular spare-time activity and an important cornerstone of mass entertainment in this period. Film has attracted more scholarly attention, but even in a record year like 1929 when some 350 million cinema tickets were sold, at least twenty times as many newspaper copies were consumed by readers.[8] If the 1930s were to become the decade of film and radio in Germany, the 1920s were undoubtedly the decade of the press. More specifically, the era of the Weimar Republic was the golden age of the *Boulevardpresse*, the tabloid press, which was widely perceived as the most modern face of newspaper publishing. At the same time, although tabloids appeared throughout Germany, nowhere did they flourish as they did in Berlin. This essay analyses the rise of tabloids, their politicization, and the change in political culture they brought about in the Reich's capital.

The rise of tabloids

Part of the reason why tabloids in the 1920s were so closely associated with modernity was the slow headway they had made in the pre-war period, in contrast to their rapid multiplication after 1918. Traditionally, sales of German newspapers had exclusively relied on weekly or monthly subscriptions and home delivery. In 1871, there were less than 20 individual newspaper retailers in all of Berlin, almost all of which sold their wares in railway stations, not on the streets.[9] The situation started changing in the late 1890s, when Monday papers founded specifically for street sales, together with illustrated weeklies and satirical magazines, provided street vendors with a steady income stream on different weekdays.[10] But it was only in 1904, with Ullstein's *BZ am Mittag*, that the first daily *Boulevardzeitung* was successfully launched. Other Berlin publishers soon realized the advertisement value of selling a limited number of their subscription dailies through their own street vendors, but despite the unusually great success of *BZ am Mittag* they shied away from publishing a proper *Strassenverkaufszeitung* themselves. The main reason for this reluctance was the commercial challenge of this particular form of retailing. Sales figures could vary wildly, with increases of more than 200 per cent in the case of great sensations, and – more often – decreases of more than 50 per cent on quiet and rainy days.[11] The conflict between street vendors and publishers about the price for returned copies added further complexity to the tabloid business.[12] Without a firm subscription basis, a tabloid paper had to acquire its readership anew every day, and thus relied heavily on attractive headlines and a certain amount of sensationalism. The only newspaper to follow the example of *BZ am Mittag* was the flagging national-liberal subscription paper, *National-Zeitung*, founded in 1848, which in July 1910 turned its evening edition into a tabloid

called *8-Uhr-Abendblatt*. After decades of quaint political journalism, the first front page of the new paper came as a considerable shock to many of its traditional readers: 'Suicide Attempt by Frau Weber – Sent to Madhouse' ran the headline across the entire page.[13] Not surprisingly, this sensationalism encountered the supercilious disdain of many bourgeois contemporaries. 'Certain newspapers in the big city', criticized one observer, 'cultivate sensation as a genre and thereby paint a picture of life that does not correspond with reality.'[14] The intrusion of sensationalist headlines into the public sphere was widely condemned for disquieting metropolitan citizens.[15]

The outbreak of war in 1914 changed the situation dramatically. Readers did not want to have to wait to find out about the latest developments. One Berlin daily provided a vivid depiction of the new quality of newspaper consumption: 'New reports come. The shrill screams of the newspaper sellers pierce the quiet air. The newspapers are torn away from the vendors. Feverishly one reads them.'[16] Readers everywhere developed an insatiable demand for the latest 'news', and publishers accommodated this demand with a multitude of high-circulation special editions sold exclusively on the street. At a time of falling advertisement income, sales income played an increasingly important role. Bold headlines, pictures, boxes and bars changed the layout even of traditional subscription newspapers, which now sold well over 10 per cent of their circulation on the street.[17] War did not just result in a politicization of sensations, it also sensationalized politics. Politicians, who had previously deplored the profit-orientation of allegedly non-political, sensation-mongering newspapers, slowly began to change their views. Even Social Democrats recognized the need for a certain amount of sensationalism to sell politics. Subscription figures of SPD papers had fallen by nearly 50 per cent since the outbreak of war, mainly because the families of drafted Social Democrats had switched to bourgeois papers. As Otto Braun pointed out at the 1917 party conference:

> We like talking among ourselves condescendingly of the need for sensation of the great masses. But let us be honest: every human being has the need for a bit of sensation. The more eventful the time, the more this need becomes apparent, and the daily press which completely ignores this human weakness would soon appear without a reading public, because nobody goes to the newsvendor to buy sleeping pills.[18]

But despite the recognized need to modernize layout and content, political editors struggled to change their tune. The party press, it was felt amongst Social Democrats, was above all an instrument for the political fight: 'It does not exist to foster and satisfy a vulgar demand for sensations. Its most noble duty has to be the education and influencing of the masses along the lines of socialist *Weltanschauung*.'[19] This attitude was symptomatic of the traditional political press in Germany generally. Relentlessly partisan in nature, these

newspapers were conceived primarily as political enterprises. Throughout the 1920s, political broadsheets remained torn between their political doctrine and the need to appeal to a wider audience, particularly women, who mostly decided which paper a family subscribed to. Political editors grappled with the question why readers obviously preferred allegedly 'non-political' mass papers to their own products. One prosaic reason suggested was that these *Generalanzeiger* simply offered more paper and that readers did not care whether their wrapping paper contained editorial text or advertisements.[20] This was not entirely facetious: in the absence of plastic bags, newsprint was a crucial element in any household and value for money was not only measured in terms of content.

Tabloids, however, also outsold political broadsheets despite generally offering less paper than the latter: content was obviously important, too. The weakness of the political press, one Social Democratic editor observed, lay in the excessive coverage of politics at the expense of local coverage: 'The overwhelming majority of people gets more excited by local events and interests than by high politics.'[21] Entertainment mattered, too. An attractive serialized novel could raise circulation by several thousand. But political papers failed on this front. Social Democrats, for example, admitted that their feuilleton was sometimes 'grotesquely one-sided and boring'.[22] Many newspaper readers considered this failure to deliver entertainment the decisive weakness of the traditional political press. Although there is a general lack of archival evidence for media reception, we are lucky to have a valuable source for the first half of the 1920s. In 1924, KPD propagandists conducted a reader survey in Berlin to find out why workers were refusing to buy the Communist Party newspaper, *Rote Fahne*. The concluding report, 'What do workers think about *Rote Fahne*?', contained frank replies and amounted to a devastating critique of the party press.[23] It consists of over sixty responses, sometimes summarized but often verbatim, from a wide range of individuals. Many of those asked about their views complained about the rabble-rousing in the Communist Party organ.[24] Its prose was heavily criticized, and one worker pointed out that it was 'more a paper for party functionaries than for the masses.'[25] The complaint which appeared most often was that the party organ was 'not entertaining enough'.[26] Women in particular did not hold back with their criticism. As one Communist's wife explained, other papers contained much more entertainment: 'After all, I don't want to be reading about politics all the time, that is something for men. I want to read something amusing off and on, like a travel report, what it is like in the *Sommerfrische*, about winter sports and such things. If one cannot go there oneself, at least one wants to imagine what it is like.'[27] Men, too, wanted diversity instead of the excessive coverage of politics. One non-Communist spelt out his expectations: 'I […] want to hear something about the natural sciences, about politics, about literature, about crime, in short I want to feel the pulse of life, […] not always politics, politics, and more politics.'[28] Readers demanded local news and

court-room news, they wanted illustrated supplements and entertaining serialized novels, 'bourgeois' sports coverage (particularly of football), and many more advertisements. Even KPD party members felt they were better served elsewhere. 'When I open up, say, the *8-Uhr-Abendblatt'*, one comrade explained, 'I can read it from cover to cover without getting too bored. Every page has something interesting and gripping. I sure can't say that about the *Rote Fahne*.'[29] The KPD party organ was obviously failing to satisfy the demands of a rising consumer society.

Like *Rote Fahne*, all traditional partisan political newspapers generally struggled to satisfy this popular demand for diversity and entertainment. Tabloids, on the other hand, were all about diversity and entertainment. From 1918, they started appearing outside Berlin, too. That year saw the launch of *8-Uhr-Blatt* in Nuremberg, which also featured a Munich edition; *Der Mittag* appeared in Düsseldorf in 1920, *Hamburger 8-Uhr-Abendblatt* in 1921, and *Allgemeine Zeitung* in Munich in 1924. The subtitle of *8-Uhr-Blatt* in Nuremberg – *'mit Allgemeiner Sportschau'* – was indicative of the emphasis all these tabloids placed on sport. Like *BZ am Mittag*, which had pioneered coverage of professional sports in the daily press, they devoted careful attention to horse racing, boxing, motor cycle, car and bicycle racing, football, and the like. The public demand for sports news was huge. In 1919, one contemporary observer counted more than 15 different specialized sports publications on display at a Berlin newsvendor.[30]

But tabloids did not only tap into an existing popular enthusiasm for sport, they also played a crucial role in popularizing mass spectator sports. In 1908, *BZ am Mittag* was already sponsoring an around-the-world, New York–Paris automobile race, and assigned a travel reporter to cover it. It proved a phenomenal success; tens of thousands of Berliners watched the race pass through Berlin.[31] Some twenty years later, *BZ am Mittag* sponsored the first-ever Grand Prix of Germany and turned the winner, Rudolf Caracciola, into a sporting hero.[32] Boxing, too, benefited from the media attention devoted to this – previously illegal – sport. It was no coincidence that the first thing that Max Schmeling did after returning from his successful world championship fight in the USA in 1930 was to visit *BZ am Mittag*'s sports editors.[33] Before Schmeling, the heavyweight champion Hans Breitensträter had been turned into a national media celebrity in the early 1920s.[34]

By the mid-1920s, tabloids had managed to establish sport as an important area of newspaper coverage throughout the German press. Traditional publishers did still complain about the *'Sportrummel'*, the fuss about sport, fabricated in the daily press, but even provincial SPD papers felt they had to extend their sports section to attract new readers.[35] For politicians, the media creation of sporting celebrities meant they had to put up with new – and often genuinely popular – rivals in the public sphere. They adapted to this change only grudgingly. In 1929, one conservative Reichstag deputy deplored the 'aberration that nowadays world record breakers get celebrated as if they were the saviours

of Germany.'[36] This sensationalism, as cultural phenomenon, it was felt, had been brought about particularly by the tabloid press.[37]

Ironically, elite criticism of the sensationalist *Boulevardpresse* was more widespread than the tabloid press itself. Despite their proliferation after 1918, tabloid newspapers were published in only a handful of German cities. Even where they appeared, the need for rapid retailing limited distribution, which remained largely concentrated on a narrow geographical region. Düsseldorf's *Mittag* tried to reach out to the growing urban landscape in Western Germany, but with a circulation of only around 50,000 it did not exactly swamp the Rhineland newspaper market with tabloids.[38] Similarly, Nuremberg's *8-Uhr-Blatt*, though the most visible paper in the city's public sphere, ran at a circulation of only just over 30,000 in the late 1920s – not even half the circulation of its competitor, the subscription-based *Nürnberger Zeitung* which dominated the wider Franconian region.[39] Contemporaries were able to buy *BZ am Mittag* at newsvendors in the bigger cities throughout the country, but only in Berlin's closer vicinity was the paper available shortly after its original publication time; ultimately, this *Boulevardblatt* was conceived as a Berlin paper.[40] In fact, the Reich capital was also the capital of tabloid reading: by the early 1930s, more tabloids were published in Berlin than in the rest of Germany taken together. From 1922, the socialist tabloid *Welt am Abend* and Scherl's *Nachtausgabe* competed with *BZ am Mittag, 8-Uhr Abendblatt* and *12-Uhr-Blatt* for readers; in the late 1920s these were joined by Goebbels's *Angriff* and Ullstein's *Tempo* – and this was not even counting the many Monday papers exclusively sold on the street, like *MontagMorgen, Montag, Welt am Montag,* or *Berliner Montagspost*. Not only did this result in a cut-throat competition for publication times, it also meant that tabloids literally inundated the streets of Berlin.[41] Total tabloid circulation shot up from around 350,000 in 1925, to over 670,000 in 1927, and to nearly a million in 1930.[42] This abundance of tabloid newspapers in Berlin stood in marked contrast to the traditional, subscription-based newspaper markets in provincial towns like Hanover, Ulm or Heidelberg.

The transformation of the metropolitan public sphere brought about by this explosive growth of the tabloid press is still traceable in some of this period's great literary legacies. Erich Kästner's Berlin novel, *Fabian*, published in 1931, opens with the protagonist sitting in a café browsing through the sensationalist headlines of the evening papers.[43] As Peter Fritzsche has pointed out, tabloids also infiltrate the pages of Alfred Doeblin's *Berlin Alexanderplatz*, which first appeared in 1929.[44] In its opening passage, tabloids again serve to set the metropolitan scene: released from Tegel prison into a new and confusing life, Franz Biberkopf boards streetcar no. 41 where his fellow passengers obscure his sight reading *BZ am Mittag* and *12-Uhr-Mittagsblatt*.[45] In fact, it is worth noting the connection between public transport and tabloid consumption. Ernst Jünger, in his seminal study on contemporary workers, published in 1932, described how newspaper-reading by workers on public transport

signalled a new character of working-class life.[46] In his history of Berlin, Walther Kiaulehn describes how every second passenger on a Berlin bus was reading *BZ, Nachtausgabe* or *8-Uhr-Abendblatt*.[47] Kiaulehn, who worked for *BZ am Mittag* from 1930 to 1933, claims that Berlin's tabloid press would never have acquired its prominence without the existence of modes of public transport such as subway and bus. The Ullsteins, he recounts, once considered founding a tabloid paper for Munich. The idea was dropped after examining the local conditions. 'A city without a subway', one of the publishers is purported to have said, 'cannot sustain a *Boulevardblatt*'.[48] Munich publishers actually shared this view. In 1930, the people behind the flagging *München-Augsburger Abendzeitung* explained the poor street-sale figures with the fact that Munich, in contrast to Berlin, had no proper evening rush hour.[49]

Tabloids and politicization

However, the extraordinary diversity of tabloid newspapers in Berlin in the Weimar Republic cannot simply be explained by cultural phenomena such as mass enthusiasm for sports or the existence of a specific urban infrastructure, such as Europe's best public transport system. Crucially, the amazing array of tabloid newspapers in Berlin was the result of politics, and a symptom of the deeply divided political landscape of the Weimar Republic. Berlin, as both Reich and Prussian capital, was in many ways the centre of political decision-making and conflict: no other German city featured the same density of parliaments, political parties, pressure groups and associations. After 1918, it was the overlap between Berlin as political capital, and the city as Germany's foremost media centre, which triggered the proliferation of tabloids. They are evidence for the continuous existence of a highly fractured newspaper market in Berlin, in which political sub-groups (*Teilöffentlichkeiten*) remained shut off from each other despite the emergence of a consumer-oriented mass press. The fact that politicization contributed to the growth of modern mass media is something almost never mentioned in studies dealing with the growth of mass culture. Ever since the Frankfurt School provocatively pronounced that mass consumption acted as the new opiate of the masses, research has concentrated on the depoliticizing mechanisms of the market.[50] Mass culture, it is argued, had overcome traditional, social and political boundaries and had contributed to mass democratization.[51] Peter Fritzsche, for example, in his otherwise excellent *Reading Berlin 1900* argues that the popular press of Berlin helped create a local identity that transcended class boundaries, and which contributed to 'the emergence of an emphatically urban and increasingly democratic polity'.[52] There is good reason to dispute this somewhat simplified account of the political effects of the mass media in this period. It is only by ignoring the political section of the mass papers under analysis, and the existence of separate political newspaper audiences, that it is possible to construct the image of a homogeneous, urban consumer society.

Historians of mass culture have not been the only ones to exaggerate the allegedly unpolitical nature of mass entertainment. At a time of falling circulation figures for the traditional political press, many contemporary bourgeois observers deplored the commercialization and alleged depoliticization of the German press, brought about by the sensationalism of modern mass newspapers. The right-wing newspaper baron Alfred Hugenberg in particular struggled with fellow DNVP Protestant puritans who considered his *Nachtausgabe* an immoral enterprise aimed at titillating the masses. 'Naturally this Hugenberg night plant carries similarly shameless pictures of semi-nude girls like any other *Asphaltblatt*', one critic complained. 'Naturally, it carries the same adverts (night clubs, ambiguous cabarets, etc.). Naturally, its columns are filled with the same musty but modern offerings of short stories which deal with adultery, amorous adventures, seduction and similar things.'[53]

But despite his own puritan lifestyle, Hugenberg was unwilling to leave this field to his competitors. 'The profits of this paper fund the party', he allegedly replied to such criticism.[54] Hugenberg was also aware that there was a limit to the reach of his other two papers, *Tag* and the *Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger*. Even the latter had a predominantly bourgeois or petit-bourgeois readership.[55] As early as 1919, the right-wing star columnist Adolf Stein had pointed out to Hugenberger the political limits of his then newspaper enterprise: 'Through our nationalist newspapers we do not reach the masses who read social democratic or democratic papers.'[56] *Nachtausgabe*, founded in 1922, was Hugenberg's attempt at wooing a metropolitan, predominantly working-class readership. This was not simply a commercial move, but one driven by political motives, as Hugenberg declared when he defended himself in front of his nationalist colleagues in April 1930. In all the big cities of the world, he explained, a tabloid relied on a particular lay-out and composition – it was not meant to be a traditional '*Sonntagsblatt*': 'Otherwise these city dwellers *[Großstädter]* simply don't buy it. They buy it because of the sensation that it carries – and they swallow the politics which is contained in between.'[57]

Hugenberg's pragmatic approach to politicizing a metropolitan mass audience was mirrored by that of the Communist Willi Münzenberg, nicknamed the 'Red Hugenberg'.[58] Münzenberg's position as the KPD's most talented propagandistic manager had been firmly established through his organization of the *Internationale Arbeiter Hilfe*, which from 1921 developed into a comprehensive propaganda concern with a huge publishing output.[59] Apart from the overall management, Münzenberg took charge of a monthly illustrated magazine called *Sowjet-Russland im Bild,* changed to *Sichel und Hammer* in late 1922, and to the *Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung* in January 1925.[60] Because *AIZ* was published by Münzenberg's own publishing house, it could be tailored to appeal to the taste of a metropolitan readership, independent of dogmatic party intervention. *AIZ* contained many photos and illustrations, articles written by and for women and juicy revelations about the ruling class. A circulation of over 200,000 copies per edition by 1927 proved that this mixture sold well.[61] With

this background in publishing, it was not surprising that Münzenberg's first foray into the world of daily newspapers would be based on a tabloid.

Founded in 1922, *Welt am Abend* was a leftist evening tabloid which had failed to acquire a larger readership: it had a circulation of 3000 copies when sold to Münzenberg in November 1925.[62] Similar to Hugenberg, whose *Nachtausgabe* aimed at enlarging the limited audience exposed to nationalist politics, Münzenberg aimed at reaching many more readers than just Berlin's KPD party members. Münzenberg hired non-Communists as editors, tapped into Berlin's big reservoir of left-wing intellectuals like Kurt Tucholsky and successfully avoided being seen as under Moscow's thumb.[63] By January 1926 circulation was over 20,000; 80 per cent of the readership were allegedly non-Communists.[64] By 1929, circulation had grown to over 200,000, making *Welt am Abend* the Communist newspaper with the highest circulation in Germany. Not all Communists were equally impressed with this development, and those responsible for the successful tabloid repeatedly had to convince their colleagues in the flagging party organ, *Rote Fahne*, that they were not competing for the same readership. At a Reich conference of Communist editors in Berlin in September 1927, the chief editor of *Welt am Abend*, Otto Heller, pointed out that the Communist tabloid was not run or branded as a party organ. He emphasized the difference by explaining how the presentation of the news was tailored to appeal to the petit-bourgeois attitude of many workers:

> Every day we monitor street sales graphically in a curve. […] [W]e can then find out which newspapers were of greatest interest; also whom they interested most, according to city district and segment of the population. Twenty per cent of our headlines, we openly admit, are absolutely non-serious, but they guarantee our customer pool. Thirty per cent are half-serious, 50 per cent are watertight *[hieb- und stichfest].* Of course, an [official] party organ cannot do the same.[65]

Just why such sensationalism had to be untenable for a party organ remained unclear. No-one reading *Welt am Abend* in the late 1920s and early 1930s was left in any doubt that this paper was a staunch supporter of communism, and its mass impact was considerably greater than that of *Rote Fahne*. By 1930, the party organ had lost over half its readership and sold only around 18,000 copies – not even a tenth of the circulation of Münzenberg's *Welt am Abend.*[66] Even KPD party members did not always choose to buy *Rote Fahne* if they could have *Welt am Abend,* as the party publishing house complained to Berlin's Communist district leadership.[67] This problem did not only affect the Communists. Party newspapers generally were on the decline, one journalist declared in 1928:

> The working population of Berlin is reading the lively and well-edited papers whether they are produced by the publishing houses Mosse,

> Ullstein, Hugenberg or Münzenberg; they don't generally bother about the party line. [*die Parteitendenz ist ihr dabei meerschtenteels wurscht*] […] The working population […] wants a quick and precise news service, wants pictures and demands a certain tickle. It does not want to be lectured, but to be informed, and to be slightly sensationalized (*sich leicht ansensationalisieren lassen*). That explains the smashing success of the *"Boulevardblätter"* […].'[68]

However, other commentators doubted the claim that tabloid readers did not generally distinguish between the various political backgrounds on offer.[69] According to the editors of *Welt am Abend*, for example, their readership overlapped with that of the *BZ am Mittag, Vorwärts*, *Berliner Morgenpost* and *8-Uhr-Abendblatt*.[70] In this group of liberal and left-wing publications, Hugenberg's right-wing *Nachtausgabe* did not feature. The Communist reader survey of 1924 corroborates this assessment: from over sixty mainly working-class newspaper readers only two referred to a Hugenberg paper, while all others preferred liberal Ullstein or Mosse papers.[71] Apparently, Hugenberg's papers were too openly anti-socialist to be palatable to a working-class readership with a strong socialist disposition.

For traditional political papers the increasing loss of market share to tabloids meant that they had to adapt to the new style of metropolitan journalism in order to consolidate their existing readership. Eye-catching headlines, photos and caricatures became increasingly common after 1925.[72] Shortly before the Reichstag elections in 1928, the SPD attempted to jump on the tabloid bandwagon and turned the evening edition of its party organ, *Vorwärts*, into a tabloid-style paper called *Der Abend*. Some critics made fun of the attempted modernization. 'Despite the new façade', one *Weltbühne* journalist scoffed, 'on the inside it is the same old stale fug (*Mief*).'[73] Others, particularly on the political right, exaggerated the extent of sensationalization of the Social Democratic paper. 'As a sensationalist paper, *Abend* can easily compete with the worst products of sensation-journalism', the agrarian *Deutsche Tageszeitung* proclaimed, 'and deserves all those accusations which [*Vorwärts* chief-editor] Stampfer has made by way of untenable generalisations against the bourgeois press.'[74] The truth lay somewhere in between: *Abend*'s lack of sensationalist coverage of non-political crime, accidents and catastrophes betrayed its origin as a party organ; on the other hand, it clearly represented a considerable sensationalization of politics. And this sensationalism was not simply a question of style and packaging, but also had the potential of influencing the course of political events.

The press and political scandal

In spring 1929, for example, *Abend* played a crucial role in exacerbating the confrontation between police and Communists on 1 May. On 29 April, *Abend* ran a headline announcing '200 dead on 1 May? Criminal plans by

Communists.'[75] It reported on a KPD executive meeting which had allegedly planned violent clashes with the police that could result in some 200 dead, which Communist propaganda could then exploit. The fact that *Rote Fahne* pointed out that this meeting had never taken place was irrelevant.[76] Even if there was little veracity in the original claim, *Abend* succeeded in alerting the mass press to a sensation in the making.[77] The prospect of imminent violence proved a mass-marketable product: Ullstein's *Berliner Morgenpost* condemned the 'heinous' Communist scheme; Ullstein's *Tempo* dramatized the pending clash between the Communists and the police.[78] Hugenberg's *Nachtausgabe* devoted considerable space to the police preparations to defend the streets.[79] Foreign newspapers reported on a 'psychosis of fear' in Berlin and predicted great bloodshed.[80] Not without justification did Münzenberg's *Welt am Abend* castigate the Social Democratic newspaper for creating a 'mood of pogrom'.[81] The violent polemics of the Communists, and the scandal-mongering of the rest of the Berlin press, prepared the scene for a heavy-handed police response that often stood in no relation to the actual threat encountered on the streets. Over the first three days of May 1929, 32 civilians, among them seven women, were shot by the police. In not a single case could the police prove that the victims had been participating in demonstrations.[82]

Contemporaries were well aware of the political significance of the increasing sensationalism within a partisan press. In September 1929, one of the leading media researchers of his time, Emil Dovifat, observed that the *Strassenverkaufspresse* had 'rubbed off on the great political press' and forced it to adapt a more 'sensationalist' and 'gripping' approach.[83] Just how accurate Dovifat's observation was became clear only two weeks later when the Sklarek scandal hit the front-pages. The Sklarek scandal of autumn 1929 was the Weimar Republic's most damaging political scandal.[84] And it was due to the dynamics of the Berlin press market that a local municipal corruption affair could be turned into a press story which then resonated throughout the republic. Cut-throat competition among by now seven Berlin tabloids and the abundance of other mass and political newspapers created a media culture of intense political and business rivalry which lent itself to the adoption of increasing sensationalism.[85] In essence, the transgressions that came to light in the course of the Sklarek affair were not particularly spectacular. But a scandal-mongering media, ready to fuse and sensationalize facts, rumours and suspicions, served a compelling and sensational story of political corruption to a scandalized audience. The media provided an abundance of colourful detail about the corruption of local politicians and municipal managers, which provided the affair with the local dimension as well as the entertaining human-interest element necessary to gain maximum attention from readers.

The Communist Party organ, *Rote Fahne*, was at the forefront in bringing a new sensationalist and gripping approach to the coverage of the affair. Despite its low circulation, it became the most dynamic political driving force, setting the agenda for almost all other Berlin newspapers. Starting a series of

sensationalist 'Sklarek revelations' in early October 1929, it presented a mish-mash of rumours, unfounded accusations and kernels of truth which presented the entire local government as thoroughly corrupt.[86] The tabloid press also realized the potential of the corruption affair, and started its own campaigns. Particularly Ullstein's *Tempo*, with a languishing circulation, established itself as one of the most vociferous prosecutors and attracted a lot of attention through its sensationalist exposure of alleged local corruption.[87] Less interested in political responsibility, *Tempo* sold its investigations as a crime story focusing on the Sklareks' helpers and patrons within municipal authorities.[88] The fact that the state prosecution was in possession of a secret list of people who had benefited from the Sklarek's self-serving magnanimity fuelled speculations further.[89] Allegations abounded, and reached a climax with the news that Berlin's Lord Mayor, Gustav Böss (DDP), had apparently also been one of the beneficiaries.[90] Böss, who was then touring the United States, was informed by his deputy that there was 'no newspaper copy without [mention of the] Sklarek case'.[91] For once, the heavily fragmented Berlin press focused on the same issue, providing the affair with a mass audience that far surpassed the usual *Teilöffentlichkeiten*.[92] Another novel phenomenon was that speakers in the Prussian parliament discussing the affair did not only quote the traditional political papers, but also tabloids like *Tempo* and *8-Uhr-Abendblatt*.[93]

Social Democrats, against whom most of the polemics were directed, took this new press dynamics as evidence that the entire affair was a media invention, a *'Presseskandal'*.[94] They blamed the scandal squarely on *'Sensationsmacher'* and on a *'Hetzpresse'*, and felt justified pointing an accusing finger at the fusion of the sensationalism of Berlin's tabloids with the electioneering of the right- and left-wing press.[95] This Social Democratic defence misfired badly. Their self-stylization as victims led to a strategy of defensive complaints and apparent denial of the obvious evidence for municipal mismanagement, which only reinforced accusations that Social Democrats were unwilling to investigate transgressions within their own ranks.[96] In fact, the Social Democrats were simply slow to adapt to the new rules of sensationalist mass media politics brought about by Berlin's tabloid press. The new quality of political life manifested itself in the streets, too. Upon his return from America, Lord Mayor Böss was welcomed by several hundred riotous demonstrators at *Bahnhof Zoo* and in front of his home.[97] The mood in the streets, one liberal broadsheet noted, had been incited by a sensationalist press.[98]

In a novel published in 1931, set in 1929 Berlin, there is a telling section on political journalism. In response to an older journalist's complaints about the absence of conscientious analysis in political journalism, his younger colleague notes, 'What for? Scandal-mongering earns more.'[99] Indeed, especially for those newspapers on the front-line of daily revelations, the benefits were considerable. *Rote Fahne* claimed it had gained 5,000 new readers, temporarily halting its constant decline; Ullstein's *Tempo* increased circulation by over 20 per cent, and the income from street sales of Hugenberg's *Berliner*

Lokal-Anzeiger and *Nachtausgabe* reached a new record level.[100] But clearly, the new sensationalism was not simply based on profit motives, and it did not lead to a depoliticization of newspaper content. On the contrary, Goebbels' *Angriff* is the best case in point. Having just switched to appearing twice a week, Mondays and Thursdays, *Angriff* devoted almost all front pages in October 1929 to the Sklarek scandal. Headlines such as 'Secret safe in Slarek's villa', or 'Pheasants, champagne, caviar, lobster!' demonstrated that Goebbels knew how to combine human-interest stories with sensationalist politics.[101]

This was also obvious in his campaign against Berlin's Deputy Police President, Bernhard Weiss. Continuing in the tradition of Hugenberg's press campaigns against Erzberger and Stresemann, Goebbels brought tabloid methods to politics by choosing a local representative of the democratic system as a target, in line with the *Angriff*'s strong emphasis on Berlin affairs.[102] 'Berlin needs its sensations like a fish needs water. The city thrives on it, and all political propaganda which fails to recognize this will miss its aim', Goebbels described his political style.[103]

Angriff, founded in 1927 as a Monday paper, clearly followed a tabloid pattern. It was not aimed at appealing to what Goebbels described as the 'educated public': '*Angriff* was meant to be read by the masses, and the masses usually only read that which they understand.'[104] The advertisement campaign preceding the launch of *Angriff* clearly reflected an emphasis on sensationalism. In early July 1927, red posters appeared throughout Berlin asking *'Der Angriff?'*, soon followed up by posters stating *'Der Angriff erfolgt am 4 Juli'*.[105] Goebbels took delight in the rumours triggered by this poster campaign about a pending Communist coup and the press attention thus created, before solving the riddle with the ultimate poster announcing *'Der Angriff – das deutsche Montagsblatt in Berlin'*. In terms of tabloid marketing, this campaign set new standards. The Ullstein publishing house copied Goebbels's advertisement strategy a year later when launching its evening tabloid, *Tempo,* in September 1928.[106] But in other respects, *Angriff* struggled to reach the standard set by the papers of the big publishing houses. There was no choice but to market the inability of *Angriff* to compete in terms of news provision as a distinct strength of the paper. As a novel type of 'fighting newspaper', Goebbels explained in 1932, *Angriff* was not in the business of providing information but motivation.[107]

However, *Angriff*'s disregard for hard news, its unrelenting partisanship, and its concentration upon polemic was by no means a unique feature distinguishing it from other papers of the time.[108] All political papers emphasized opinion over news, and the news provided was generally highly selective, biased and edited in a way which would repeatedly amount to a distortion of the truth. Journalists had no qualms about pushing their own political views. 'It would be false to assume that the primary purpose of the press is to provide information', the chief editor of Ullstein's prestigious liberal broadsheet, *Vossische Zeitung*, explained in a speech in 1924.[109] 'What the newspaper wishes to provide is views. It wishes to bring order into things which the reader

sees before and around himself every day; it wishes to bring the events in the world to the attention of the reader from a definite point of view.' The foreign editor of Ullstein's tabloid *BZ am Mittag* recalled in his memoirs that the 'starting point was the correspondent's *Weltanschauung*, and the political philosophy of the paper for which he worked. His job was not to report the news and facts […], but to use facts as pretexts for venting his opinions and passing oracular judgements. 'Facts', a famous German editor was once quoted, 'are not fit for the reader when served raw; they had to be cooked, chewed and presented in the correspondent's saliva.'[110] In fact, even Ullstein's *BZ am Mittag*, which throughout the 1920s had been the least openly partisan of all tabloids, became more radically pro-democratic with the appointment of Franz Höllering as chief editor in 1929, whom Ullstein had poached from Münzenberg's successful Communist weekly, *Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung*.[111]

There were other similarities between *Angriff* and the rest of the Berlin press. From early on, *Angriff* had to offer at least to some extent content that Berlin newspaper readers had come to expect from their papers, such as theatre, film, radio and book reviews, a women's and a youth's supplement, and the like.[112] Its layout, in particular, owed everything to the tabloid press.[113] In its early years, *Angriff* could not afford photo reproductions, and the bulk of its images was provided by a cartoonist from Hugenberg's tabloid, *Nachtausgabe*, Hans Schweitzer. For almost five years, Hans Schweitzer provided both tabloids with cartoons.[114] Under his Nazi *nom-de-plume* 'Mjölnir', Schweitzer was to become the National Socialists' most important illustrator and visual propagandist, hailed after 1933 as 'the Third Reich's graphic artist'.[115] Schweitzer's *Angriff* ideal types of tall, blonde, male Aryans, aggressive and determined, with jutting jaw lines and muscular bodies, were more openly propagandistic (and his cartoons generally more anti-semitic) than most of the drawings he produced for *Nachtausgabe*; still, the fact that Schweitzer published anti-republican cartoons on a daily basis for Hugenberg's tabloid demonstrates the degree of politicization of the tabloid press in this period. Less than a decade after the demise of the Weimar Republic, this fact was still widely appreciated. All tabloids prior to 1933, a German PhD from 1941 emphasized, were 'more or less party political-oriented newspapers'.[116] Goebbels certainly felt that Berlin's tabloids with their mass circulation were a major political challenge. Attacks on the 'Jewish press' became a trademark of *Angriff*, and in a regular column devoted to Berlin's press tabloids became his main targets.[117] This was not just because these were the papers *Angriff* readers were most likely to encounter, but also because tabloids such as *Welt am Abend, 12-Uhr-Blatt* and especially Mosse's *8-Uhr-Abendblatt* were at the forefront in attacking the National Socialists.[118]

Tabloids and politicians

Politicians of all parties felt increasingly overwhelmed by the challenge of a thoroughly partisan, sensationalist tabloid press. The fact that such tabloid

papers were largely limited to Berlin reinforced especially right-wing politicians' conviction that this was evidence of an extreme degeneration of the German press. The defence mechanisms they developed, however, applied to the entire press. After the Reichstag elections of 1930, for example, Ullstein's tabloids had picked up and sensationalized Communist rumours about a pending Nazi putsch.[119] The subsequent media scare and the slump of the German Young bonds in New York were enough to convince Brüning that the Reich government needed means of preventing such sensationalist reports which artificially created a 'mood of panic'.[120] Civil servants were instructed to work out legislation with which such an 'irresponsible press' could be banned.[121] Triggered by tabloid sensationalism, the subsequent emergency decree of 17 July 1931 – 'against excesses in the press' – allowed for increasingly authoritarian state intervention in the German press in general.

Of course, state attempts to control the media had a long tradition in Germany.[122] But what was new was the specific sensitivity of governments to tabloid coverage of politics. In autumn 1931, for example, the Brüning government applied strong pressure on the Ullstein publishing house resulting in the dismissal of the chief editor of *BZ am Mittag*, Höllering, for a report on the existence of a private Nazi airforce.[123] Faced with the threat of newspaper bans in a difficult economic climate, Ullstein made a concerted effort to depoliticize its tabloids in December 1931. 'It is not the task of either *BZ* [*am Mittag*], or *Tempo*, or *Montagspost* to actively engage in the political struggle', stated an Ullstein directive to all leading editors.[124] But sometimes it was not necessarily the partisanship, but the nature of tabloid coverage to which politicians primarily objected. In July 1932, for example, von Papen had *8-Uhr-Abendblatt* banned for a cartoon showing the von Papen family having dinner, and the wife asking what emergency decrees they had issued today.[125] The cartoon accompanied a human-interest story on the wives of members of the new von Papen cabinet. It was probably this intrusion into the private sphere, as much as the cartoon itself, which triggered the ban. And after 30 January 1933, Hitler's and Goebbels's annoyance about the 'increasingly impertinent tone of the Jewish gutter press' led to an emergency decree in early February which allowed for even more draconian censorship.[126] 'Now we also have a lever against the press', Goebbels gloated in his diary, 'and now bans will pop up like crazy. *Vorwärts* and *8-Uhr-Abendblatt*, all those Jewish organs which caused us so much trouble and grief, will disappear with one stroke from the streets of Berlin.'[127] This was not an empty threat. Apart from KPD and SPD organs, tabloids were a prime target of the new rulers. Mosse's *8-Uhr-Abendblatt* and Ullstein's *Tempo* were banned repeatedly in February and March 1933.[128]

Press freedom in Germany was finally liquidated by the Nazi version of the *Republikschutzgesetz*, the decree 'For the Protection of People and State' issued immediately after the Reichstag fire.[129] For many tabloids, *Gleichschaltung* of the press brought the end. *Welt am Abend* was banned on 28 February 1933;

Ullstein's *Tempo* ceased publication in August 1933; *8-Uhr-Abendblatt* suffered from steadily falling circulation figures and eventually folded in September 1937.[130] But there were continuities, too. The tabloid press continued to force change upon the subscription press. In the late 1930s, the business manager of Hugenberg's Scherl concern stated that the time of subscription papers appearing with two daily editions was over, largely due to the 'advance of the tabloid press'.[131] By 1944, Hugenberg's *Nachtausgabe* had the highest circulation of any non-Nazi daily newspaper in Germany.[132] And politicians remained weary of the tabloid press. Amann's press decree concerning the 'Elimination of the *Skandalpresse*' in 1935 showed that National Socialists were continuing to seek instruments to regulate the media dynamics inherent in modern tabloids.[133] As was the case during the Weimar Republic, the perceived need for such regulation was the result of the tabloids' inherently political character.

The rise of an urban consumer society, of course, formed the essential basis for the emergence of a tabloid press in Germany in the early twentieth century. But historians need to explain why the existence of a vibrant consumer culture in other urban and economic centres of this period, such as Hamburg, Cologne, Frankfurt, Leipzig and Munich, did not result in a similarly strong trend towards tabloid journalism. One possible explanation that this article puts forward is that tabloids were not simply providers of unpolitical sensations and entertainment to an increasingly homogeneous group of literate urban consumers, as some cultural historians would like us to believe. The proliferation of tabloids in Berlin after 1918 was primarily driven by political concerns. Berlin, as Reich and Prussian capital, was a unique political hotspot, especially after the expansion of democratic mass franchise. At the same time, its population size was such that it could accommodate a whole range of political milieux, which were themselves large enough to sustain mass papers. Finally, the city benefited from the historical development of street-sale retailing structures, which made possible the quick proliferation after 1918. In short, tabloids were shaped by the intense media and political competition which characterized Berlin in the 1920s; and because of their locality, they were in turn critical players within the political culture of the Weimar Republic.

Notes

1 G. Kauder, ' "Bezett-Bezett am Mittag!" ', in *50 Jahre Ullstein: 1877–1927* (Berlin, 1927), pp. 208–9; H. Ullstein, *Rise and Fall of the House of Ullstein* (New York, 1943), p. 128.
2 'Liebknecht erschossen!', *Neue Berliner Zeitung*, no. 1, 16 Jan. 1919.
3 See 1913 advertisement, reproduced in *50 Jahre Ullstein,* p. 201.
4 'Eberts Eröffnungsrede in Weimar', *BZ am Mittag,* no. 25, 6 Feb. 1919; Kauder, ' "Bezett" ', p. 200.
5 'Hitler Reichskanzler', *Tempo*, no. 25, 30 Jan. 1933.
6 K. C. Führer, 'A Medium of Modernity? Broadcasting in Weimar Germany, 1923–1932', *Journal of Modern History* 69 (1997), pp. 722–52, here p. 731.
7 Newspaper circulation calculated to be 25 million for 1932 in E. Georgii, 'Zur Statistik der deutschen Zeitungen', in *Handbuch der deutschen Tagespresse* (Berlin,

1932), p. 20; estimated at over 20 million for 1931, in H. Kapfinger, 'Die Struktur der katholischen Presse', in J. W. Naumann (ed.), *Die Presse und der Katholik* (Augsburg, 1932), p. 218.

8 Figure on cinema tickets from K. C. Führer, 'Auf dem Weg zur Massenkultur? Kino und Rundfunk in der Weimarer Republik', *Historische Zeitschrift* 262 (1996), pp. 739–81, here pp. 746–7.

9 O. Nahnsen, *Der Strassenhandel mit Zeitungen und Druckschriften in Berlin* (Essen, 1922), p. 37.

10 Ibid., p. 39. See also 'Wie der Zeitungsstrassenhandel in Berlin begann', *Zeitungs-Verlag*, no. 13, 28 Mar. 1931.

11 'Der Zeitungsabsatz in den historischen Septembertagen', *Zeitungswissenschaft*, no. 12, 1 Dec. 1938.

12 K. Bücher, 'Der Zeitungsvertrieb', in K. Bücher, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Zeitungskunde* (Tübingen, 1926), pp. 196–7.

13 *8-Uhr-Abendblatt/National-Zeitung*, no. 301, 1 July 1910.

14 Cited after P. Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge MA, 1998), p. 179.

15 Ibid., pp. 179–80.

16 Cited after J. Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914: Militarism, Myth and Mobilization in Germany* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 73.

17 H. Kriegk, *Die politische Führung der Berliner Boulevardpresse* (Diss., Berlin, 1941), p. 8; A. Blau, *Der Inseratenmarkt der deutschen Tageszeitungen* (Berlin, 1932), pp. 59–60; O. Groth, *Die Zeitung: Ein System der Zeitungskunde* (Mannheim, 1928–30), vol. 3, pp. 142–3; Bücher, 'Zeitungsvertrieb', p. 207.

18 Cited after K. Koszyk, *Zwischen Kaiserreich und Diktatur: Die sozialdemokratische Presse von 1914 bis 1933* (Heidelberg, 1958), p. 100.

19 Adolf Schulz at SPD party conference June 1919, quoted in ibid., pp. 129–30.

20 W. Sollmann, *Wir und die Leserwelt* (Berlin, 1926), p. 7. Indeed, the *Rote Fahne* reader survey mentioned below contains various references to the amount of paper that different newspapers provided.

21 Ibid., p. 12.

22 Ibid., pp. 11–12.

23 Bundesarchiv Berlin Lichterfeld (BArch BL), RY1 KPD, I/2/707-134, fol. 30–54.

24 The term used is 'Hetze' or 'Hetzerei', BArch BL, RY1 KPD, I/2/707-134, fol. 31, 33, 34, 44, 48.

25 Ibid., fol. 52.

26 Ibid., fol. 51.

27 Ibid., fol. 47.

28 Ibid., fol. 34.

29 The Berlin dialect of the original cannot be rendered in English: 'Wenn ick mir z.B. det Acht-Uhr-Abendblatt vornehme, so kann ick vorne anfangen und hinten aufhören, ohne det se mir so sehre langweilig wird. Jede Seite bringt mir etwas Interessantet, Packendet. Det kann ick aber von der 'Roten Fahne' beileibe nicht immer sagen'. Ibid, fol. 45.

30 W. Heidelberg, 'Die Entwicklung und Bedeutung des Zeitungsvertriebs durch Strassenhandel in Berlin', *Zeitungs-Kunde*, no. 12, 30 June 1919, p. 4.

31 Fritzsche, *Reading*, pp. 79–81, 224–6.

32 F. Wirth, 'Sport und Massenpresse', in W. J. Freyburg & H. Wallenberg (eds), *100 Jahre Ullstein. 1877–1977* (Berlin, 1977), vol. 2, pp. 353–4.

33 F. Becker, 'Die Saga vom BZ-Sport', in Freyburg & Wallenberg, *100 Jahre,* vol. 1, p. 265.

34 Wirth, 'Sport und Massenpresse', pp. 353–4, Becker, 'Saga vom BZ-Sport', p. 274.

35 'Zum Thema "Sportrummel"', *Zeitungs-Verlag*, no. 45, 12 Nov. 1927; H. Klemm, *Zur Geschichte sozialdemokratischer Regionalorgane – Volksblatt, Halle, und Volksstimme, Magdeburg, 1925–1933* (Diss., Leipzig, 1990), p. 13.
36 Hans Schlange-Schöningen (DNVP), 15 Mar. 1929, in *Verhandlungen des Reichstags, Bd. 424. Stenographische Berichte IV: Wahlperiode* (Berlin, 1928–30), p. 1484.
37 Reply to Schlange-Schöningen by Reich Chancellor Hermann Müller (SPD), in ibid., p. 1490.
38 See E. Wagner, 'BZ am Mittag und BZ', in Freyburg & Wallenberg, *100 Jahre,* vol. 2, p. 48. Circulation in the first quarter of 1937 was given as 'over 48,000', in *Handbuch der deutschen Tagespresse* (Leipzig, 1937), p. 144.
39 *Jahrbuch der Tagespresse* (Berlin, 1930), pp. 37–8.
40 Ibid., pp. 47–8. See also Kauder, 'Bezett – Bezett am Mittag!', p. 199.
41 P. de Mendelssohn, *Zeitungsstadt Berlin: Menschen und Mächte in der Geschichte der deutschen Presse* (Berlin, 1959), pp. 268–9.
42 See Table 1.1, in B. Fulda, 'Press and Politics in Berlin, 1924–1930' (unpublished diss., Cambridge, 2003), p. 34.
43 E. Kästner, *Fabian: The Story of a Moralist* (London, 1990), p. 5.
44 Fritzsche, *Reading*, p. 146.
45 Ibid., p. 17.
46 E. Jünger, *Der Arbeiter: Herrschaft und Gestalt* (Hamburg, 1932), p. 267, picking up a theme first raised by G. Simmel in his classic essay 'Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben' (1903), reprinted in English translation in J. Farganis (ed.), *Readings in Social Theory: The Classic Tradition to Post-Modernism* (New York, 2000), pp. 149–57.
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48 Ibid.
49 See P. Hoser, *Die politischen, wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Hintergründe der Münchner Tagespresse zwischen 1914 und 1934,* 2 vols (Frankfurt/Main, 1990), vol. 2, p. 937.
50 See M. Horkheimer, T. W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York, 1996 [1944]).
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55 V. Dietrich, *Alfred Hugenberg: Ein Manager in der Publizistik* (Berlin, 1960), p. 54; K. Wernecke & P. Heller, *Der vergessene Führer: Alfred Hugenberg. Pressemacht und Nationalsozialismus* (Hamburg, 1982), pp. 108–9.
56 Bundesarchiv Koblenz (BArch K), N1231, Nr. 27, fol. 317, Letter Stein to Hugenberg, 14 May 1919.
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59 R. Surmann, *Die Münzenberg-Legende: Zur Publizistik der revolutionären deutschen Arbeiterbewegung 1921–1933* (Cologne, 1982), pp. 34–61.
60 Ibid., pp. 54–6.
61 Ibid., pp. 101–10; 258.
62 B. Gross, *Willi Münzenberg: Eine politische Biographie* (Stuttgart, 1967), p. 175, but giving the wrong date: see 'Der Streit um die "Welt"', *Vorwärts*, no. 539, 11 Nov. 1925. See also Communist planning for *Welt am Abend* throughout 1925, in BArch BL, RY1 KPD, I/2/707-139: *Welt am Abend*, 1924–28, 33, fol. 1–34.

63 Mendelssohn, *Zeitungsstadt*, pp. 264–5.
64 See BArch BL, RY1 KPD, I/3/1/2-96, fol. 94.
65 BArch BL, RY1 KPD, I/2/707-116, fol. 141, Minutes of editors' conference of 24 Sept. 1927 in Berlin.
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71 BArch BL, RY1 KPD, I/2/707-134, fol. 46, 51.
72 See M. Mende, *Sensationalismus als Produktgestaltungsmittel* (Cologne, 1996).
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80 'Ruhe bewahren!', *Berliner Morgenpost*, no. 104, 1 May 1929.
81 'Letzte Rüstungen', *Welt am Abend*, no. 100, 30 Apr. 1929.
82 Schirmann, *Blutmai*, p. 13. See also Fulda, *Press*, pp. 169–83.
83 Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz Berlin-Dahlem (GStA), I. HA, Rep. 92, Nachlass Dovifat, no. 2176, unpaginated, Emil Dovifat at 8th Meeting of the *Deutscher Richtertag*, 14 Sept. 1929.
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86 The series started with 'Sklarek-Magistrat vertuscht Sklarek-Skandal', *Rote Fahne*, no. 197, 5 Oct. 1929.
87 C. Engeli, *Gustav Böss. Oberbürgermeister von Berlin* (Stuttgart, 1971), pp. 245–6.
88 'Sklarek-Hintermänner', *Tempo*, no. 233, 5 Oct. 1929.
89 E.g. 'Heraus mit den Namen der "Anzug-Liste"!', *Tempo*, no. 233, 5 Oct. 1929; 'Her mit der Liste!', *Welt am Abend*, no. 235, 8 Oct. 1929.
90 Fulda, *Press*, pp. 192–3.
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99 G. Tergit, *Käsebier erobert den Kurfürstendamm* (Berlin, 1992 [1931]), p. 8.
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104 Ibid., p. 198.
105 Ibid., p. 196.
106 The poster series 'You lack *Tempo!*', 'You will soon have *Tempo*', and '*Tempo,* the new daily evening newspaper' clearly drew on *Angriff*'s launch campaign. See 'Glosse vom Tage – "Tempo" ', *Rote Fahne*, no. 214, 11 Sept. 1928.
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111 M. Eksteins, *The Limits of Reason: The German Democratic Press and the Collapse of Weimar Democracy* (Oxford, 1975), pp. 235–6.
112 Lemmons, *Goebbels*, pp. 32–4.
113 See Plieninger, 'Die Kampfpresse', p. 67.
114 See Bertihard Fulda, 'Die vielen Gesichter des: Hans Schweitzer: Politische Karikaturen als historische Quelle', in Gerhard Paul (ed.) *Visual History: Ein Studienbuch* (Gottingen, forthcoming).
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116 Kriegk, 'Boulevardpresse', p. 62, and pp. 121–4.
117 Fulda, *Press*, pp. 52, 209, 215, 222, 228, 230–1.
118 Ibid., pp. 219–24.
119 Ibid., pp. 226–7.
120 'Regierung erklärt: Keine Putschgefahr!', *8-Uhr-Abendblatt*, no. 220, 20 Sept. 1930; 'Die Kursstürze in New York', and ' "Unverantwortliches Tun" ', *Nachtausgabe*, no. 220, 20 Sept. 1930; 'Weltalarm um Deutschland. Die Wirkung der Putschgerüchte', *Vorwärts*, no. 441, 20 Sept. 1930.
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123 'Finanz-Bolschewisten', *Völkischer Beobachter*, no. 177, 27/28 July 1930; Eksteins, *Limits*, pp. 235–7.

124 BArch BL, N2193 Carl Misch, Nr. 13, fol. 70, Letter of 8 December 1931.
125 'Die neuen ersten Damen', *8-Uhr-Abendblatt*, no. 169, 21 July 1932; 'Das Verbot des *8-Uhr-Abendblattes*', *8-Uhr-Abendblatt*, no. 170/173, 26 July 1932.
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131 BArch K, N1231 Hugenberg, No. 201, fol. 136, 138, Letter from Klitzsch to Hugenberg, 9 Nov. 1937.
132 The circulation figure was 413,000. Mendelssohn, *Zeitungsstadt*, p. 413.
133 See Koszyk, *Deutsche Presse 1914–1945*, p. 391.

12

Reading, Advertising and Consumer Culture in the Weimar Period

Gideon Reuveni

Following the First World War, perceptions of the state of reading were dominated by a sense of crisis affecting sales. While some attributed the causes of this crisis to structural problems within the publishing industry, a more widespread view blamed the crisis on the decline of reading culture, seeing it as an expression of social changes affecting Germany in the wake of the First World War, primarily as manifested in the disintegration of the bourgeoisie. Thus, for example, the famous Jewish liberal publisher Samuel Fischer noted in 1926: 'People practise sports, dance, spend their evening hours by the radio, in the cinema, and, outside working hours, everyone is so busy that nobody has time to read […].'[1] He claimed that the War and the subsequent economic suffering had impoverished the bourgeoisie and destroyed its social fabric, which had been the bedrock of German intellectual and cultural life.[2] The crisis of bourgeois associations which had represented the interests of various groups within the middle classes, organized cultural and leisure activities, and generally acted as a central component in social communication, was identified by him as one of the key processes which had changed the face of German society following the First World War. He thus interpreted the loss of interest in reading as a clear reflection of these changes. The literary associations, evenings of readings, libraries and drama associations were more than mere means of disseminating culture and knowledge: they were, according to Fischer, responsible for creating a 'feeling of shared German culture' (*ein Gemeinschaftsgefühl deutscher Kultur*), and it was these associations which made reading a social event forging bonds between people.

But did the years following the First World War really witness a crisis of 'reading' *per se*? It should be emphasized that by 'reading' Fischer – along with most other bourgeois observers – meant primarily the reading of books. Yet the same developments that had helped to turn books into mass-distribution products over the course of the nineteenth century – namely, the perfection of printing technologies and the expansion of literacy – also encouraged the expansion of other forms of reading among a public interested in more than just books. The cultural significance of this proliferation

of reading material should not be underestimated. Indeed, the popularity of journals and newspapers in particular, which reached new circulation records during the Weimar Period, represented for many contemporaries the transition of German society from a book-reading bourgeois society to a newspaper-reading mass society. It was argued that the emergence of a mass commercial press depended upon a specific set of consumer-oriented values becoming acceptable and comprehensible among sufficient groups for its vastly increased sales to be made. Given the heavy reliance of commercial newspapers on advertising revenue, it was also argued that newspaper-reading helped to reinforce thinking in terms of supply and demand, buying and selling, and a market economy operating under conditions of free competition to attract the attention of an anonymous mass audience. While newspaper- and magazine-reading were thus closely associated with the creation of a levelled mass society and an unbridled obsession with consumption, book-reading was perceived as something pure and unique, relatively untainted by the pursuit of material gain. Transcending the banality of daily needs and concerns, it was regarded as a core element of a distinct (and embattled) bourgeois culture.

The present chapter will explore this alleged transformation of German society by focusing on the close relations between newspaper-reading and advertising. It will show that the discourse on reading was shaped not only by feelings of decline of the educated bourgeoisie and its cultural authority, but was also part of the wider reaction to processes of commercialization and the attempts to organize and tame the emergence of a new consumer culture in Germany.

Newspapers and advertising

The desire for a means of keeping abreast of events and conveying information to as many people as possible constituted the common basis for the development of advertising and newspapers alike, as well as their increasing intermingling over time. Newspapers had published assorted advertisements from the very earliest stages of the press in the sixteenth century.[3] Up to the beginning of the nineteenth century, such advertisements generally appeared in the form of texts, by which private individuals or official bodies sought to promote various interests. At this time newspapers carried a wide range of advertisements for products and services offered by craftsmen, musicians, doctors, or even university lecturers. During this period, however, when newspaper readerships were severely limited both socially (by widespread illiteracy) and geographically (by the lack of distribution capabilities), these were mostly casual advertisements of a manifestly personal and regional nature. Generally the various products advertised in newspapers were not on sale in the local markets, but were offered on a one-off basis only. Even the appearance of advertisements, including the size and shape of the letters, was uniform, and there was no difference in terms of graphics between ads and other parts of the paper.

Beginning in the 1820s, both the nature and the look of advertising started to change. The first shifts came in the expansion of different sizes and forms of lettering. Over the course of the nineteenth century illustrations began to creep into advertisements, so that by the 1890s they had became far more complex spectacles combining textual and visual elements. In the post-First World War period, primarily under the influence of the 'truth in advertising' principle, the use of photography increasingly came to influence the graphic design of advertisements.[4] This visual revolution not only showed that pictures were the most effective way of conveying messages quickly, it also turned advertising into a dynamic field of experimentation which used a whole range of approaches to attract the reading public's attention by any and all means available.

This qualitative change in the nature and design of advertising was also bound up with a quantitative change in the number of advertisements and the frequency with which they appeared in the press. During the nineteenth century there was a constant increase in the number of advertisements in newspapers, as well as in the numbers of newspapers and magazines themselves.[5] This development culminated in the creation of a new form of newspaper centred around advertising – the so-called '*Generalanzeigerpresse*', or advertising press. The *Generalanzeigerpresse* papers began to appear in Germany in the 1880s, operating on the basis of the mass-production principle, which enabled the cost of individual issues to be slashed in proportion to the newspaper's print run.[6] Although such attempts involved increased printing costs, with a concomitant increase in the economic risks associated with publishing the paper,[7] this was a calculated risk since the paper was now targeting a wider readership as well as more advertisers than in the past. Increasing circulation figures was not only intended to increase profits from sales, but also from advertising. The larger a paper's circulation, the higher the price the newspaper's owners could demand for its advertising space. Hence a dependency developed between the papers and the advertisers, with the 'text acting as an advertisement that increased print runs and the print run acting as publicity for the advertisement.'[8]

This tendency was even more marked in the realm of magazines. The light entertainment papers (*Unterhaltungsblätter*), and in particular the illustrated weeklies which began appearing in Germany in the 1890s, were published in unprecedented print runs, opening up whole new horizons for advertisers. Thanks to increasingly sophisticated printing and photographic techniques, graphic quality improved vastly. Advertisers were swept away on a wave of enthusiasm, enjoying the ability to publish advertisements covering entire pages and to try out new methods of graphic representation in their publicity campaigns.[9] The entire range of distribution methods was applied to the illustrated weeklies as well, guaranteeing them large-scale readerships. In addition, many publishers resold back issues of their weeklies in the form of bound volumes, an activity which also extended these publications' life span.

But advertising not only cut the cost of publishing newspapers and encouraged their mass distribution, it also helped make it possible to increase the actual numbers of newspapers and magazines themselves. Newspaper publishing became a profitable line of business that attracted large numbers of entrepreneurs. At the same time, political parties, trade union groups, companies, associations, and various other interest groups all began issuing their own publications.[10] In the span of one hundred years there occurred a 19-fold increase in the number of magazines and newspapers, from 371 in 1826 to 7,303 in 1930. The bulk of this increase occurred from the end of the nineteenth century onward, with every year following 1900 seeing the founding of around two hundred new journals in Germany, a tendency which continued after the Great War.[11] This constant growth in the number of magazines and newspapers led to a steady expansion of the advertising space available through the press.

As a result of these developments, the differences between various newspapers and magazines and their respective influence became a matter of keen interest to advertisers, who naturally wanted to know where they should place their ads in order to achieve maximum impact.[12] Advertising therefore had to adapt itself to the different types of newspapers in accordance with each paper's specific style and target audience, and in the process it became an inseparable part of the paper's image. In fact, from the end of the nineteenth century onward there were practically no newspapers or magazines which did not carry advertisements. Even the political and religious press, subsidized by the parties and churches respectively, could not avoid publishing advertisements. This is even true for papers published by the Social Democratic Party (SPD) although it acted as a fierce critic of capitalism and regarded itself as a revolutionary political force, fighting for a socialist society. In 1863, Ferdinand Lasalle, one the party's founding fathers, called for an advertisement-free left-wing press, but in 1892, the party leader August Bebel stated at the party conference in Berlin that it was no longer possible to charge low prices for the party's publications without accepting commercial advertising.[13]

In fact, from the end of the nineteenth century onward individual newspapers were effectively unable to survive without advertising. In 1908, it was estimated that income from advertisements in daily newspapers amounted to some 185,846 million RM, and 226,456 million RM in magazines.[14] In 1930, it was estimated that the sales turnover of advertising space in the daily press was around one billion Reichsmarks (RM), and two billion RM in magazines. Hence advertising was a vital source of income for newspapers, in certain cases comprising up to two-thirds of their revenue. In view of the importance of advertising as a source of income for newspapers, it is easily understandable why newspaper owners invested great effort in combating the notion – still prevalent in the 1920s – that a solid and respectable business did not need to advertise in newspapers. Despite the widespread disparagement

of advertising as 'market crying' and 'swindle', from the turn of the nineteenth century onwards the mutual dependence between advertising and newspapers had become a fact of economic life.

Reading and commercialization

The harsher economic climate during the years after the First World War not only sharpened competition between advertisers, but also, somewhat paradoxically, encouraged a more general acceleration of pre-existing tendencies toward commercialization. In many ways the aforementioned sense of a crisis of reading during this period can be seen as a reaction to this wider 'economization of life'.[15] Many critics feared that reading culture would diminish because of the rapid advance of commercialization, and thus regarded this process as a threat to the very lifestyle and position of the *Bildungsbürgertum* in society.

These critics would undoubtedly have been surprised to discover that the revenue that newspapers derived from advertising was actually in decline during the immediate post-war period. The income figures for one prominent south German daily indicate that whereas the ratio between advertising income and sales revenues was 73:27 in 1913, by 1922 the situation had reversed to 28:72, with most of the paper's income coming from sales. Later in the 1920s the advertising-to-sales ratio stabilized, with about half of most newspapers' income being generated by advertising. Contemporary commentators linked this tendency primarily to the inflation and economic hardships of that period, which significantly increased newspapers' advertising costs and adversely affected readers' purchasing power. However, even if newspapers' revenues from advertising during the post-war period were down on figures from the pre-war years, recognition of the importance of advertising as a vital source of income for the press actually grew. During these years even public bodies such as the railway company and the postal authority began to rent out advertising space. Advertising also began to gain a foothold in the cinema. Unlike in England, France, Austria and Switzerland, German governments also allowed commercial advertisements on the new medium of radio.[16]

Newspaper owners therefore found themselves fighting on two fronts: increasing popularity of the new media amidst general economic adversity. This situation prompted a wave of 'self-advertising' by newspapers, which used both advertising and editorial pages for this purpose.[17] The economic hardships of the early 1920s even led some papers to charge payment for publishing reviews of theatre and concert performances in the editorial pages. In many newspapers we find not only ads geared towards urging readers to buy certain products, but also ads addressed to potential advertisers themselves, propounding the effectiveness of using space in their paper for publicity. The growth of so-called 'insurance papers' (i.e. papers that offered subscribers some kind of insurance as an additional attraction) was also part

of this development, showing the extent to which the period was dominated by economic patterns of thought. The facts of life that engulfed the German press in the wake of the Great War forced it to try out a broad range of approaches in order to survive in the context of increasingly cut-throat competition and economic adversity. Importantly, these steps reinforced the process of commercialization of the press rather than obstructing it.

In this situation, readers not only had to come to grips with the wide choice of newspapers and magazines on offer, but also to distinguish between advertising and editorial material. In this way they also learned to identify themselves as consumers. As a result, the marketing of information and entertainment via newspapers, magazines and commercial advertisements helped to strengthen this perception of readers as consumers.

These developments inevitably affected how newspapers were consumed. Reading them was not only a purposeful activity with the goal of obtaining information; it also became an activity capable of arousing readers' curiosity and stimulating their imaginations.[18] Both the editorial and the advertising pages used a wide range of approaches in their attempts to attract readers' attention. This was the reason, for example, why the graphic appearance of the editorial pages, which furnished the paper's signature image and constituted its distinguishing commercial characteristic, became more important. The *Generalanzeiger* papers, for example, some of which continued to publish their advertising columns before the editorial pages as late as the 1920s, reversed the order in which the different parts of the paper appeared, bringing entertainment and 'lighter' matter more to the fore. Various efforts were also made to inject new life into the appearance of newspapers in order to make them more eye-catching and reader-friendly. Many papers even encouraged readers to play an active role in the actual composition of the paper. Readers' letters are perhaps the most striking example of this tendency, becoming a highly successful feature of the local press[19] and even spawning imitations in the realm of advertising. A number of newspapers in Germany and Austria ran competitions in which readers were asked to choose what they considered the most attractive and effective advertisements. Some advertisers even involved readers in the creation of new ads by running competitions in which a cash prize was promised for the best brand name or slogan for a particular product.[20] Such slogans, catchphrases and rhymes (*Reklamegedichte*), which were extremely popular at the beginning of the twentieth century, bear further testimony to the ongoing commercialization of reading, and clearly demonstrate the ways in which this process permeated readers' daily routines.

Hence the synergy between advertising and newspapers not only contributed to the growing consumption of newspapers and the products and services they publicized. It marketed consumption itself as a new lifestyle befitting a modern society. Reading became a form of 'consumption through the eyes'. In this sense, leafing through the pages of a newspaper or an illustrated magazine became a form of flâneurie. In essence it was similar to window-shopping,

which played a significant role in transforming consumption from a purposeful activity to a purpose or end in its own right.[21] Thus the women's magazines, for example, not only presented the latest fashions in words and pictures but also distributed paper patterns, which became extremely popular, particularly among less affluent circles and during periods when people could not afford to buy fashionable ready-made clothes. In this way the fashion magazines encouraged the consumption of clothing and various fashion items, while at the same time marketing the fashions themselves. But even if 'just looking' was not always, as in department stores, a prelude to 'just buying,' newspaper- and magazine-reading was an activity through which readers learned to be consumers.[22] Consequently, any attempt to tackle the issue of sources of knowledge about the act of consumption or about the ways in which consumer culture came to permeate daily life cannot and must not ignore the place of reading, especially newspaper-reading, in this process.[23] In other words, if the press played a key role in creating the 'public sphere' in the course of the eighteenth century, it played no less significant a role in the creation of modern consumer culture from around the last decade of the nineteenth century onward. This process did not escape the keen eyes of contemporary observers, many of whom (as already mentioned above) vehemently criticized this commercialization and regarded it as a major and direct threat to the pyramid-shaped social order at whose apex stood the male, educated *Bürger*.

Criticism of reading and consumption

Criticism of the newspaper/advertising alliance had an openly moralistic character. From church circles to newspaper owners themselves, there were continual complaints about misleading or deceptive ads, and above all about advertising which was in bad taste and violated moral values.[24] The separation of editorial and advertising pages removed – so one of the arguments went – the responsibility for the contents of advertisements from the newspaper owners, so that it became possible to publish large numbers of indecent and deceptive advertisements (*Schmutz- und Schwindelinserate*). The Newspaper Owners' Association and the Advertisers Association reacted to such criticism by calling on their members to increase control over the ads they published. Yet in spite of these efforts, the commercial press was widely perceived as being willing, out of avarice, to print any ad that was paid for. It was frequently argued that the publishing of advertisements had actually become the *primary* purpose of the press, to which even the editorial pages were subordinate. Walter Benjamin, who studied the commercialization of the press in depth, went even further, stating that it 'is practically impossible to write about the history of information without referring to the history of corruption in the press.'[25] The commercialization of the press was, therefore, perceived as a process that adversely affected both its freedom as well as its duty to serve the public interest.[26]

The separation of responsibility for the editorial and advertising pages and the discussion about their relationship to each other was shaped by – and itself helped to reproduce – the widely held view among educated Germans that culture and economics (i.e. mind and matter) were two wholly separate and mutually antagonistic spheres. The newspapers were required to determine the guiding principle that underlay their operations: either the economic or the cultural. The emergence of this dilemma – a paper's economic capital versus its cultural capital – also constituted the background to the oft-repeated demand that responsibility for publishing advertisements should be shifted from the newspapers to the control of the local communities or the state. Max Weber, Karl Bücher and Werner Sombart were just a few of the 'team' of critics who warned against the process of commercialization of the press and raised their voices in support of the idea of a monopoly over advertising as a means of blocking this commercialization. The accusation that the press had sacrificed its cultural ambitions in the pursuit of filthy mammon was just one dimension of this criticism. Other points of criticism included newspaper readerships and the very nature of newspaper reading itself.

As the renowned *Zeitungswissenschafter* Karl Bücher wrote in 1923, in Germany's large cities it had become a custom (*Sitte*) to spend every single free moment reading the paper. At cafés, in doctors' or lawyers' waiting rooms, in trams – all that was to be seen were people's heads buried in the pages of a newspaper.[27] People became so dependent on the paper, added his colleague Hans Traub, that many of them were afraid not to read one.[28] In his view, this condition was nothing short of pathological, though the specific form of addiction varied from one person to the next. While some would skim the entire paper, others would read certain parts only, and yet others would read the whole paper from cover to cover. Walter Benjamin connected this development to the changed textuality of modern newspaper layout, noting that 'the newspaper is read more in the vertical than in the horizontal plane, while film and advertisement force the printed word entirely into dictatorial perpendicular.'[29] According to this view, newspaper-reading became an activity in which the eyes automatically fed the brain, instead of the brain directing the eyes when reading. The result was a 'mechanization' of reading, which was itself seen as a primary catalyst in the manipulation of readers.

Addiction, mechanization and manipulation were thus perceived as the primary characteristics of newspaper-reading. In this light, it is no wonder that those who were considered to be the primary victims of this kind of reading were women, workers and youth. These groups supposedly possessed none of the sovereignty of the educated male individual, and were regarded as naïve, impressionable and thus particularly vulnerable to the harmful influence of consumer culture. It is worth noting that a 1927 study of the intensity of newspaper reading conducted by Rudolf Seyffert, Professor of Business Studies at the University of Cologne, furnished some support for this patriarchal view. In a sample of 1,732 respondents (1,331 men and 401 women)

35.2 per cent read the advertising pages regularly, 56.2 per cent occasionally and 8.6 per cent never. However, this study also showed that of the 15 different vocational groups into which the survey respondents were divided, manual workers read the advertising pages with the greatest intensity, with 62.8 per cent reading them on a regular basis.[30] Admittedly this survey was not statistically representative; it was only after the Second World War that German social scientists finally incorporated the methods of representative opinion surveys that had been developed in the USA in the 1920s. Their samples were largely the result of coincidence, which helps explain why results varied considerably. Nonetheless, for what it is worth, a similar 1934 survey of 65,000 newspaper readers across Germany found that 81 per cent 'regularly' read the ads in newspapers, whereas only 5 per cent never did.[31] Although this data was not categorized according to social group, and although its findings are no more precise than those of the Cologne study, it nonetheless leaves no doubt that most readers in Germany perceived the ads as an important and interesting section of the newspaper.

Of all social groups it was clearly women who were identified by contemporary research as the most devoted to advertising. Among advertisers there was broad consensus on the importance of women as consumers, and not just in the area of female items. Since women did the bulk of shopping in every family, it was often suggested that advertisers pay more attention to their specific 'needs' and special 'psychology'. Newspapers appeared to be an ideal medium for such efforts. As the advertising guru Victor Mataja explained, newspaper advertising was particularly effective among women because many of them felt uncomfortable in the public domain, preferring to peruse advertisements in the privacy of their own homes rather than looking at posters in the streets. In his eyes, this was one of the reasons why newspapers had retained their status as an extremely effective means of advertising, despite the popularity of the new media.[32] Both the First World War, which increased dependence on the newspapers as a means of conveying information, and the introduction of women's suffrage afterwards, encouraged more women to read daily newspapers than in the past. In other words, the post-war period marked the end of the days when it was the male householder's role to read the paper and update the members of his household on the latest news. The party political press in particular tried to attract women readers. Many newspapers – even party-political organs – began offering supplements designed specifically for women, conveying not only useful household tips and information about new products, but also plenty of what one contemporary observer called 'the star and prominence system'.[33] It was conventionally argued that this new female readership wanted more advertising, more stories and fewer erudite articles and politics in the daily press.[34]

Discussions about newspaper reading were therefore part of a contemporary discourse about the process of the making of a new mass society, perceived as a process in which the male or bourgeois subject, who assumed full

responsibility for how he lived his life, disappeared, to be replaced by the female or working-class *Massenmensch* – the common man or woman, mere gullible objects at the mercy of fads which determined their way of life for them.[35] In support of this argument, Otto Groth remarked in his famous book on newspapers, *Die Zeitung*, that he was constantly astonished anew to discover the lack of discernment on the part of readers. In 1931, Karl Jaspers summarized this view as follows: 'In order to make sales, the instinct of millions must be gratified: the upshot of sensationalism, dullness for the mind, avoiding making any demands on the reader is a situation where everything is trivialized and brutalized.'[36]

According to this approach, readers were a mindless mass, addicted to cheap sensation and manipulation. Yet at the same time, many critics of the German press in the years of the Weimar Republic saw the matter very differently: it was the readers who ruled supreme since journalists and editors were mere objects of their follies, bound by the need to avoid anything that might prompt a reader to cancel his or her subscription. In 1927, Kurt Tucholsky, arguably one of Weimar Germany's most important democratic writers and never one to shy away from harsh words aimed at those in power, called the 'self-censorship' (*Selbstzensur*) carried out by German newspaper journalists the 'most severe form of censorship'. In his view, the whole editorial staff of the average German daily was constantly 'trembling in fear' that readers might take offence at the paper's political stance. In consequence, more often than not the reportage of current events was therefore toned down and moulded to meet a non-descript 'moderate' line. Tucholsky's description of his colleagues could hardly have been more damning: they were little more than dogs 'on a leash'.[37] Other contemporaries similarly complained about this so-called 'dictatorship of the readers.'[38]

Interestingly, these two seemingly opposing views were not irreconcilable. Indeed, at a basic level there seemed to be something of a consensus about these matters among Germany's intellectual elite, stretching across the entire political spectrum. To take the two examples cited above, in many ways Tucholsky's left-wing critique was not all that dissimilar from Jaspers' cultural conservative arguments. Both view the new 'mass' reader as the dominant factor in the equation, albeit for different reasons. Whereas Jaspers criticizes an alleged willingness of newspapers to cater to readers' primitive instincts and the abject failure to 'educate' them to higher things, Tucholsky describes the same putative process in the political realm, where newspapers timidly avoid any risk of putting off readers through voicing politically controversial views. In both cases the readers are criticized for their lack of taste and discernment, and the journalists castigated for their cynical opportunism in fulfilling readers' base desires instead of uplifting or confronting them.

This schizophrenic attitude was not only a characteristic of discourse about newspaper-reading: it was also one of the manifest characteristics of discourse about modern consumption, whose simultaneously emancipatory

and repressive aspects have long been noted by observers.[39] The close connections between reading and consumption become even more evident when we consider the ambiguous status of publishers, caught as they were between two worlds. It was the publishers who propelled forward the process of commercialization of reading, and it was they who enjoyed its financial fruits. Some of them did indeed maintain an optimistic attitude to consumption, in the hope that increasing demand for reading material would also pave the way to an improvement in most readers' reading list. However, many of them subscribed to the view that 'culture' lay beyond all economic or commercial considerations, and thus tended to regard their readers as a faceless mass whose taste was to be moulded. This ambivalent situation constituted the backdrop to the emergence of a distinctly hierarchical understanding of reading, distinguishing clearly between newspaper-reading and book-reading. In other words, newspaper-reading was intimately bound up with the creation of a faceless, mass society and the promotion of an unbridled addiction to consumption, and it symbolized the victory of economic patterns of thought over cultural values. In contrast, book-reading was perceived as an expression of self-restraint, refinement and cultivation that underpinned the patriarchal role of the educated middle-class male.

We still know far too little about the social role of the German press in the Weimar years to judge definitively how accurate these contemporary observations were. What is evident, however, is that the contradictory consequences of modern consumption were clearly reflected in discussions of the press and reading during the Weimar era, which highlights the centrality of newspapers and magazines – the most important mass media of the age – within the wider process of making a consumer society.

Notes

1 S. Fischer, 'Bemerkungen zur Bücherkrise', in F. Pfäffin (ed.), *Der S. Fischer Verlag von der Gründung bis zur Rückkehr aus den Exil* (Marbach, 1985), pp. 357–60, here p. 357.

2 For a late formulation of the thesis of the collapse of the bourgeoisie, which is really a form of the theory of Germany's 'special path' in history, see particularly H. Mommsen, 'Die Auflösung des Bürgertums seit dem späten 19. Jahrhundert', in J. Kocka (ed.), *Bürger und Bürgerlichkeit im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 1987); K. H. Jarausch, 'Die Krise des deutschen Bildungsbürgertums im ersten Drittel des 20. Jahrhunderts', in J. Kocka (ed.), *Bildungsbürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert. Politischer Einfluß und gesellschaftliche Formation* (Stuttgart, 1989), pp. 180–206; H. Möller, 'Bürgertum und bürgerlich-liberale Bewegung nach 1918', in L. Gall (ed.), *Bürgertum und bürgerlich-liberale Bewegung in Mitteleuropa seit dem 18. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1997), pp. 243–342.

3 P. Ruben (ed.), *Die Reklame. Ihre Kunst und Wissenschaft* (Berlin, 1914); H. H. Meißner, *Das Inserat in den großen deutschen politischen Tageszeitungen von 1850 bis 1870* (Diss., Leipzig, 1931); H. Born, *Das Anzeigengeschäft der Tagespresse*, (Diss., Freiburg i.Br, 1929); A. Blau, *Der Inseratenmarkt der Deutschen Tageszeitung*

(Berlin, 1932); F. Scharf, *Umfang und Rhythmus der Werbung durch Anzeigen* (Diss., Heidelberg, 1937); K. Reumann, 'Entwicklung der Vertriebs- und Anzeigenerlöse im Zeitungsgewerbe seit den 19. Jahrhundert', *Publizistik* 13 (1968), pp. 226–71; K. Koszyk, 'Geschichte des Anzeigenwesens', in E. Brand, P. Brand & V. Schulze (eds), *Die Zeitungsanzeige* (Aachen, 1990), pp. 21–31; F. Redlich, *Reklame: Begriff – Geschichte – Theorie* (Stuttgart, 1935); V. Mataja, *Die Reklame: Eine Untersuchung über Ankündigungswesen und Werbetätigkeiten im Geschäftsleben* (Munich, 1926); E. Paneth, *Entwicklung der Reklame von Altertum bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich, 1926), pp. 91–5; J. Schmiedchen, *Geschichte der deutschen Wirtschaftswerbung* (Tübingen, 1953); R. Seyffert, *Werbelehre* (Stuttgart, 1966); D. Reinhardt, *Von der Reklame zum Marketing: Geschichte der Wirtschaftswerbung in Deutschland* (Berlin, 1993).

4 S. Haas, 'Die neue Welt der Bilder: Werbung und visuelle Kultur der Moderne', in P. Borscheid & C. Wischerman (eds), *Bilderwelt des Alltags* (Stuttgart, 1995), pp. 78–90.

5 O. Groth, *Die Zeitung. Ein System der Zeitungskunde (Journalistik)*, 3 vols (Mannheim, 1930); vol. 3, p. 227.

6 H. W. Walter, *Generalanzeiger – Das Pragmatische Prinzip. Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte und Typologie des Pressewesens im späten 19. Jahrhundert* (Bochum, 1981); E. Dovifat, 'Die Anfänge der Generalanzeigerpresse', *Archiv für Buchgewerbe und Gebrauchsgraphik* 56 (1928), pp. 163–84.

7 K. Bömer, 'Die allgemeinen Rentabilitätsgrundsätze der deutschen Zeitungswirtschaft', in F. Bertkau & K. Bömer, *Der wirtschaftliche Aufbau des Deutschen Zeitungsgewerbes* (Berlin, 1932), pp. 101–45.

8 W. J. Naumann, 'Die Tageszeitung, wie sie ist', in W. J. Naumann (ed.), *Die Presse und der Katholik*: *Anklage und Rechtfertugung* (Augsburg, 1932), p. 118.

9 O. Löffler, *Der Inseratenmarkt der illustrierten Zeitung* (Diss., Heidelberg, 1935); W. Haacke, 'Das Magazin, ein unentdeckter Zeitschriftentypus', *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 90 (1971), pp. 429–48.

10 Thus newspapers became a key element in structuring a distinct identity of different social and political groups. On this see B. Laurel, B. Bell & D. Finkelstein (eds), *Nineteenth-Century Media and the Construction of Identities* (Basingstoke, 2000).

11 G. Menz, *Die Zeitschrift* (Stuttgart, 1928), p. 57; G. Muser, *Statistische Untersuchungen über die Zeitungen Deutschlands 1885–1914* (Leipzig, 1918); E. Umlauf, 'Der deutsche Buchhandel bis 1930', *Europa Archiv* 2 (1947), p. 168; O. Michael (ed.), *Handbuch Deutscher Zeitung 1917* (Berlin, 1917), p. xxii; E. Georgii, 'Zur Statistik den deutschen Zeitung', in *Handbuch der deutschen Tagespresse 1932* (Berlin, 1932), p. 20; R. Pape, *Handbuch der Fachpresse* (Berlin, 1926), p. 12; F. Bertkau, 'Die stofflichen Grundlagen und methodischen Voraussetzung für eine Untersuchung der deutschen Zeitungswissenschaft', in Bertkau & Bömer, *Aufbau*, p. 48; H. Kapfinger, 'Der Werbfaktor der Deutschen Zeitungs-Industrie', *Die Reklame* 23 (1930), pp. 622–5.

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K. C. Führer, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Rundfunks in der Weimarer Republik* (Potsdam, 1997), pp.119–35.

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21 A. Freidberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (Berkeley, 1993).

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29 Cited after J. Ward, *Weimar Surfaces: Urban Visual Culture in 1920s Germany* (Berkeley, 2001), p. 138.

30 R. Seyffert, *Allgemeine Werbelehre* (Stuttgart, 1929), p. 387.

31 'Das Publikum wurde gefragt', *Zeitungs-Verlag* 35 (1935), pp. 712–13.

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13

Living Pictures: Photojournalism in Germany, 1900 to the 1930s

Habbo Knoch

Modern photojournalism in Germany has commonly been seen as a technical, institutional and aesthetic invention of the late 1920s and early 1930s.[1] This view is based on the dramatic increase in the number and circulation of illustrated magazines, the emergence of the 'photo-essay' as a narrative composed largely or exclusively of photographs, and a new generation of prominent journalist-photographers like Erich Salomon. Yet compared to the United States, where photography and photojournalism in particular are widely celebrated as a mirror and motor of technological progress and democratic values, in Germany it has never achieved similar fame or recognition – either from contemporaries or historians.[2] Modern historiography, long shaped by a traditional bourgeois veneration of classical art and 'Bildung', has only recently discovered visual sources beyond their illustrative capacity.[3] The area of mass media, illustrated magazines and journalism has been widely ignored and left to specialists of modern media studies who, in turn, have restricted themselves mainly to analyses of media content.

This tendency to ignore photography as a mass medium is rooted not only in conservative bourgeois notions of what constitutes 'art' (and is therefore worthy of study), but also in a specifically German academic tradition.[4] Two of the most well-known texts about photography, Walter Benjamin's 'A short history of photography' and Siegfried Kracauer's 'On photography', both written at the end of the 1920s, were highly critical of the contemporary rise of illustrated magazines and mass photography, though not from any conservative standpoint.[5] Though both texts include a positive vision of photography's past development and future potential, they nonetheless reflect a fundamentally sceptical attitude towards its present manifestation in the 1920s: above all a loss of the early 'spiritual' dimension of the photograph, as well as superficiality in production and reception. This general critique of 'mass culture' reflected in photography was a common position in Germany, especially during the Weimar years, and not restricted to the work of Benjamin and Kracauer.

From its beginnings, the idea that photojournalism and mass photography in Germany started first in the 1920s was historically and historiographically

tied to a sense of scepticism towards it. Yet as this chapter will demonstrate, the ambivalent reception of photography was to a large extent a consequence of its previous development during the 1890s and 1900s. What was new in the 1920s was above all the institutionalization of popular photography not only as a technique but also as a core element of a rapidly expanding ensemble of modern mass media. Once firmly established, photography was deliberately instrumentalized for specific political purposes. At the same time, however, press photographers began to develop both a professional ethos as observers of the human condition and a decidedly 'humanitarian' visual style that still strongly influences photography today.

Press and photography before 1914

While histories of photography generally focus on the 1920s as the birth of modern photojournalism, more recently the decade before the First World War has been discovered as an important period of transition.[6] In Germany as elsewhere, the two decades around 1900 saw the development of the primary elements of modern photojournalism – though not yet their formal institutionalization. The preconditions for this change were the growth of daily and weekly periodicals and the vast technical improvement of photography which, in turn, was encouraged by a growing interest in more realistic, detailed and 'live' photographs. When August Scherl founded his leading illustrated magazine *Die Woche* in 1899, he appointed the photographers – all of them autodidacts or amateurs – to take 'living pictures', a revolution in photographic technique when compared to the static and staged photographs hitherto predominant.[7]

Around 1900 photography became accepted by a growing readership as a medium to present both important events and trivial incidents at the same time. Photographic realism as a 'second reality' and mass consumption of 'news' and 'information' went hand in hand once the technical limitations were surpassed after the 1880s. The 1890s and 1900s witnessed the important transition from intermittent pictorial news of certain events like wars towards a constant coverage of public life, including certain areas of social life which became (or were) the stuff of popular entertainment. A growing number of illustrated magazines – beneficiaries of the 'halftone revolution' which displaced the older reproduction technologies before and during the First World War – served as an outlet for photographers as well as a network for their increasing professionalization. Among the bulk of aesthetically poor pictures of this period, a number of photographs and picture essays stand out as pioneers in the principles of modern photography, above all through their use of the intrinsic capacity of the medium to get closer to an event or emotional situation and even to penetrate the private sphere for this purpose.

Of course, a 'photographic' way of seeing and painting is, at least in part, much older than the medium itself. Realistic painting, details and cuttings,

or the central perspective are central elements of modern European art history. In part, early photography was legitimized precisely through its optimization of these very characteristics of 'high' art. Although photography was used as a tool by many painters during the nineteenth century, it was nonetheless seen as a diminished form of art. From mid-century onwards, illustrated magazines published line drawings based on photographs, sometimes embellished with more lively scenes and dramatic situations. *Harper's Weekly* or *Die Gartenlaube* made ample use of engravings after portrait photographs, which reflected both the technical limitations of photography and its use as a means of social representation by the upper classes. Photography succeeded economically after the 1850s mainly because it provided wealthy individuals and families with a prestigious instrument for circulating images of their success and greatness.[8] 'Visiting card photography' continued this function after the 1870s and reflected the ever-expanding use of photography, which grew cheaper and more accessible. Landscape and design photographs also became more common. Nonetheless, technical limitations and social conventions ensured that studio photography remained the dominant form of 'mass' photography around the turn of the century.

But 'spectacular realities', as Vanessa Schwartz has argued for Paris, were the dominant element of a growing popular mass culture around 1900. Everyday experience was increasingly transformed into a spectacle as the result of the growth of newspapers and public entertainments in Europe's rapidly expanding modern cities.[9] In Germany, Berlin was at the centre of this development. New press products like the *BZ am Mittag*, produced for street sale and immediate use, fed a growing expectation to receive ready-made information about recent events.[10] Media entrepreneurs and journalists adopted an investigative approach in stark contrast to the reservation of the traditional press. Breaking taboos and illuminating the shadowy parts of society furnished the titillation and 'scandal' that lay at the heart of the commercial press.[11] They also prompted numerous attempts by traditionalists and state authorities to limit the rise of sensationalist reports as a 'poisonous plant' endangering German society.[12] Yet such attempts to control the tone of the press could achieve only limited success in view of the rising demand and the continuous improvement of production and distribution techniques of an ever-expanding commercial popular culture.

Apart from the proliferation of picture-postcards after the 1880s, which in some ways represented the first mass photography of public life,[13] public or press photography became more and more dependent upon these regularly appearing magazines and newspapers.[14] Two important technological breakthroughs were the invention of halftone reproduction in the 1880s and its combination with the rotary press in 1901. Though a couple of years behind their British or American counterparts, German magazines like the *Leipziger Illustrirte Zeitung* (founded in 1883) or the *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung* (founded in 1893) gradually replaced wood engraving. Even before newspapers began

to use autotypes, commentators saw in this 'Autotypitis' – commonly associated with 'American' press practices – the end of illustrations of substantial artistic value.[15] Scherl's *Die Woche* was consciously modelled on American styles of photo-rich publishing, though it remained 'petit-bourgeois' in content.[16] Based on this and other highly successful periodicals, Scherl built one of the strongest press groups in imperial Germany. Even more successful were the activities of Ullstein in this field. The *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung* was systematically developed as an illustrated magazine with its own staff, archive and picture production unit. By 1904, ten years after its founding, the *BIZ* had a circulation of 220,000; by 1915 its circulation more than doubled to 530,000.[17] The spread of the photograph in the German press is clear in the statistics: in 1914, the twenty most popular illustrated magazines in Germany achieved a combined circulation of around 1.5 million copies, or 1.7 million including the 12 illustrated supplements to daily newspapers.[18]

In the face of such impressive numbers, it is important to recognize that the growth of press photography had a decidedly local dimension. Next to Berlin and Leipzig, Munich also had its illustrated magazine with the *Münchner Illustrierte Zeitung*. Only the *BIZ* was perceived as a 'national' magazine; the close relation between the growth of press photography and local city journalism is obvious though largely unresearched. In particular, early photo-essays like those of the Munich photograph Philipp Kester appealed to the viewer with their local character. At the same time, however, success depended on the expansion of (visual) horizons, and these illustrated magazines also printed pictures from distant and exotic places and persons. A desire for both *Ferne* (distance) and an anchoring in the *Heimat* were two sides of this modern imagery.

The expansion of press photography was further intensified by the ability to take an early kind of 'snapshot'. The invention of the fast gelatin dry plates and slit-shutter cameras in the early 1880s allowed for radically shortened exposure times. Photography became more spontaneous and less noticeable, especially when even plate cameras were reduced in size. The transition to 'instantaneous' photography is noticeable on a number of pictures of this time (for example those of Heinrich Zille)[19] in which the people do not look into the camera and seem not have noticed the photographer. Motion, momentary movements and street scenes were discovered as a new subject after the 1890s. 'Authenticity' was the new ideal, despite its limitation by technical factors.

Indeed, 'authenticity' became not only the standard of expectation among press entrepreneurs and editors, but also a central theme of manuals for 'self-taught' photographers. Addressed to autodidacts and amateurs, they offer an interesting view of the early stages of professional photojournalism. In 1913, the photographer Paul Knoll provided his readers with instructions about the photograph standards of illustrated magazines and newspapers. Since they were interested in authentic and correct information, a press photographer not only had to avoid boring subjects but also to document his pictures in

order to give the editor suggestions for the captions. A photographer was to work 'conscientiously and dutifully', and was expected to handle all of the technical demands of modern instantaneous photography, which was much more difficult in terms of organization than the older studio tradition.[20]

Not even the most ambitious of these 'illustration photographers' could make a living on photography alone. Philipp Kester, for example, was a photographer and organized his own photo agency, and Heinrich Zille kept his modern photographs private. His camera work included street scenes and popular events like fairs, as well as images well beyond what was considered 'art', such as garbage dumps and photo essays of proletarians (like his famous brushwood-collecting women). Although some photographers developed a new aesthetic standard in the new field of social or street photography, and although the 'photo-essay' had been around before 1914, the quality of *Momentfotografie* did not develop beyond its infancy until the 1920s. This was due partly to lack of professional training, but also to a lack of legal protection. Before the introduction of the 1907 copyright law in Germany, every copy of a photograph which was not signed could be printed without limitation or further costs. The press photographers were neither seen as artists nor as full employees of the newspapers, which many of them indeed were not. Thus the early photo agencies like Keystone, founded in 1891, and other companies like the *Korrespondenzbüros* (news agencies) which distributed news around the world, became increasingly important as purchasers of photographs, many of them produced in the twilight between the semi-professional sphere of magazines and the amateur realm of everyday photography.

Press photography was part of a complex discourse on the production of art and scientific images. Around 1900 it was in a continuous tension with contemporary notions of 'art', despite a first exhibition of 'art photographs' taking place in 1899.[21] Its obvious affinity with 'art' (whether or not one formally bestowed the title upon it) meant that traditional standards of aesthetic judgement strongly influenced the evaluation of press photography in Germany, and indeed also shaped the choice of pictures for illustrated magazines. Many of the photographers used techniques of natural art and were attracted by the ideals of the German *Heimatschutz* movement.[22] The choice of subjects for publication was further moulded by a general avoidance of social criticism. Although the new camera techniques allowed for street scenes, far more common were pictures which mitigated the harshness of social realities. After 1908 these subjects were omitted completely.[23] Instead, most leading magazines like the *BIZ* – and especially Scherl's *Die Woche* – represented the social and political elite in a favourable way. Wilhelm II was a monarch who used the modern media enthusiastically, and *Die Woche* answered this interest with extensive prints of portraits and scenes of aristocratic life.

At a general level, the years between 1900 and the outbreak of the First World War witnessed a number of important developments in press photography: the pictures in illustrated magazines became larger, the reader could

increasingly find whole pages of photographs with only short textual comment, front covers were frequently composed of single pictures (1891 for the first time in Germany) without much further ornamentation. But still, title and photo were not integrated, the covers of the different magazines varied widely in style, and the pictures chosen were generally newsworthy but not dramatic, descriptive but not emotive. Although modern forms of press photography pioneered in the 1920s were still a good way off, press photography before the First World War was already highly developed in terms of institutions and techniques, and already possessed certain conventions in terms of content: it was a socially affirmative style which supported the existing social order and transported readers into exotic dreamlands, while the social dynamics of the modern city were translated into an entertaining spectacle.

Illustrated magazines and popular photography in the 1920s

The First World War and its aftermath marked a turning-point in the use of photography.[24] Shortly before the war began, official censorship rules limited the thematic scope of photographers although no consistent press policy existed. Pictures of military relevance were forbidden, and the market for press photographs became strictly nationalized. At the end of 1914, rules were applied for permission to photograph the war. Only those photographers who were expected to support the national cause were accepted. It was expected that they would contribute to the official image of civilized warfare directed against Belgian and French claims of German atrocities against civilians during the first stage of the war.[25] By 1917, the *Zensurbuch für die deutsche Presse* (Censor Manual for the German Press) contained more than 2,000 regulations on 'pictorial representations of military value', including the suppression of pictures that contradicted the official image.[26]

Nevertheless, foreign publications made ample use of pictures showing destroyed buildings in civilian places. In turn, this led to an increase in propagandistic photographs on the German side, among them picture postcards showing a German soldier feeding a French child. The *Illustrierte Kriegs-Kurier* was an attempt to influence foreign public opinion through the frequent use of official photographs, often staged photos of comradeship and mourning. By 1916, however, when it had become clear that this war was different from any known and expected before, the style of photographs became more realistic. Officials could not help but notice that the photographs of laughing soldiers and harmless situations behind the front led to distrust of the media.[27]

After the end of the War, German photographers found a challenging occupation during the revolution of 1918/19. Illustrated magazines granted generous space for extensive photographic reports about the struggles and demonstrations. But just as during the War, photography was frequently infused with political messages and meanings. Within the mainstream liberal media the political disturbances were depicted as an anarchic threat opposing

the aims of a liberal republic. On the nationalistic and on the socialist side, photographs were used to discredit the nationalistic opposition and vice-versa. Some techniques which were fully implemented at the end of the 1920s were already developing immediately after the War: hidden photography (though forbidden, some reporters took pictures of the trial of the Rathenau murderers in 1922), sensational uncovering of a politician's private life (a famous and much-disputed picture showed President Ebert in a bathing suit), and instantaneous photographs of (political) street events from different perspectives.

Optimists proclaimed that the 'age of images' was already dawning. In 1919, over 3,000 of the more than 7,000 magazines in Germany used photographs.[28] Such optimism was, however, soon dampened by the economic limitations of the early 1920s and the increasing insularity of German photography (the international market was no longer very interested in events in Germany). In daily newspapers photographs were still rare, mainly for technical reasons, but also because of the traditional understanding of journalism as a matter of words. During the inflation, and especially the hyper-inflation of 1922–23, a large number of illustrated magazines closed down.

Their 'golden age' truly began in 1924. Within two years their number had doubled from 3,374 to 6,739, and continued to expand to 7,652 in 1931.[29] The *BIZ*, by far the largest German magazine with a circulation of 800,000 in 1914, grew to 1.8 million copies in 1928 (although it lost 300,000 during the economic crisis of the early 1930s). Following the *BIZ* in terms of circulation were the *Münchner Illustrierte Presse* (founded in 1923 as a counterpart to the *BIZ*) with 50,000 copies in 1924, 600,000 in 1926 and 700,000 in 1928; and the *Deutsche Illustrierte* with 250,000 copies in 1925 and 600,000 in 1932. In 1931 the combined circulation of all illustrated magazines reached 5.3 million, twice as many copies as in 1925. Supplements to newspapers added a further 9 million.[30]

Most of these magazines reflected a middle-class worldview, celebrating German cultural institutions like theatre, concerts and schools in a 'realistic' mode of presentation.[31] At the forefront of this movement was the editor of the *BIZ*, Kurt Korff, who offered photographers and their essays generous space. He insisted on the value of the photograph as a message as such and saw their distribution as a means to democratize society. The selection of photos should not be based on the importance of the event, but 'on the allure of the photo itself'.[32] Photographers – still working on their own or with agencies and classified as manual workers rather than as journalists – were supposed to develop a specific kind of 'pictorial viewpoint'. Nonetheless, as before 1914, editors complained about the lack of quality and exactness. Photographers, they said, knew little about journalism and were handing in arbitrary feature photographs. The competition among the growing number of magazines required more interesting and less provincial pictures. Thus, the expanding American and English agencies increasingly filled German magazines with their pictures of international events (although as early as 1907 picture telegraphs

had connected German and Anglo-American agencies). By the end of the 1920s all of the important foreign agencies like *Keystone, Associated Press Newsphotos* and *International News Photo* had established their own bureaus in Berlin. The competition with cinema and radio, which were both able to convey current events relatively quickly, enhanced the desire to use sensational or extraordinary pictures.

Beyond illustrated magazines, however, the German press was still very reluctant to follow American and British publishers in their extensive use of press photographs in many daily newspapers in the 1920s. German publishers generally lacked their own archives, published photographs only in a very small size, and were arguably more hesitant to present events in a sensational manner. The editors were strongly influenced by a 'narrow, ethnic understanding of culture as high culture'.[33] Many of them were especially careful when pictures came from foreign agencies and demanded German photographs on German topics. Even if photographs were not used to support an explicit political position, in the daily press (which was largely organized along political lines) they served a 'cultural mission' with unmistakable anti-American sentiments.[34]

German news agencies like *Deutscher Photodienst* (Dephot) and *Weltrundschau*, founded at the end of the 1920s and following similar attempts of photographers to organize their own agencies before 1914, were seen as viable instruments to limit the influence of the foreign agencies. At the end of the 1920s the use of photographs in newspapers was still disputed but nonetheless a fact of life: a fifth of Germany's 4,000 newspapers made use of the new medium.[35] In particular, boulevard papers like *Tempo* or the *8-Uhr-Abendblatt* stood at the crossroads between traditional newspapers and magazines. They transferred American styles of a more flexible and challenging design into the realm of journalism. While the daily newspapers began to publish more photos on current events, the profile of illustrated magazines evolved into a general 'infotainment'.

At the same time, there was an ever-closer connection between art photography and press photography. During the international exhibition of the modern press in Cologne in 1928, among the most noteworthy features were El Lissitzky's giant photomurals in the Soviet pavilion. The *Werkbund* exhibition 'Film und Foto' in the following year presented a pathbreaking collection of art photographs in the *Neue Sachlichkeit* style. Important books by Albert Renger Patzsch, 'The World is beautiful', or Germaine Krull, 'Metal', offered a fundamentally new perspective on the use of photography to represent reality. The raw factuality of reality was thought to be preserved by the medium; forms and ornaments were no longer to be applied to nature but to be found within it. This kind of art photography, which focused on reality itself, constituted a thin line between the documentation of life and its transformation into 'art'.[36]

This new attitude was expressed by Paul Renner at the opening of the international *Werkbund* exhibition 'Das Lichtbild' in 1930. New photography 'has

given up trying to achieve artistic effect by mimicking' former art techniques. It 'does not want to be anything but itself'.[37] Two years earlier, Hugo Sieker had stated that photography only recently had 'grown conscious of its own laws' due to its capacity for an 'absolute realism' and even 'super-realism'.[38] Albert Renger-Patzsch saw photography as the only medium to grasp the structure of the modern world. Only photographs could offer 'the magic of experience'.[39] In a 1929 article on the 'Photographic *Weltanschauung*', Wolfgang Born argued that a viewer could be moved by reality only by means of a secular religiosity, 'a spiritual way of seeing that implies a hidden meaning behind the appearance of things'.[40]

While Born was optimistic that even press photography finally would be able to present the 'truth' and to distinguish itself from the inauthentic emotions of 'Kitsch', other contemporaries were, as is well-known, much more pessimistic in their outlook on modern photography. For Siegfried Kracauer 'the invention of illustrated magazines is one of the most powerful means of organizing a strike against understanding'.[41] The world, he speculated, becomes equated with the picture which creates a wall of ignorance between the common text and the reader. Photographs were producing a new superficiality and thoughtlessness. Similar scepticism was expressed by Walter Benjamin about the seductive power of images and their power to destroy the auratic dimension of art. Reproduction as such brought to an end the difference between the unique and the everyday, defined in terms of the picture press. In 1931, Axel Eggebrecht, a well-known journalist after 1945, highlighted the fact that people were getting used to pictures due to overtiredness and stress. 'Our path towards primitivity leads from life [...] towards flatness, towards dispassionate excitedness.'[42]

The coexistence of such praise and criticism reflects a period of transition, even crisis, in modern German photography. On the one hand, this was the period in which the most prominent German photographers of the 1920s gained their national and international reputation: Erich Salomon, Otto Umbehr and Alfred Eisenstaedt used their photographic abilities to find an outlet and income during this period of rising unemployment.[43] On the other, in the mid-1920s professional photographers were still rare. Step-by-step the growth of magazines after 1925 made the profession more attractive. At the end of the decade the status of the photographer had improved. They profited from the rising demand for visual impressions. The more the illustrated magazines presented the press photographer as a trustworthy individual and his photographs as authoritative picture essays, the more he was seen as an equivalent to the regular journalist. In order to enhance the image of the press photographer the magazines published background stories about the production of photographs and praised the modern photographer for his ingenious ability to immortalize eventful moments of life.

Nonetheless, in 1930 the majority of Germany's 130 press photographers were still autodidacts and only loosely tied to magazines.[44] Only a few could

rely on medium-term commitments of a magazine to purchase stories and pictures. Whereas work for a photograph agency afforded the photographer no influence on the placement of the pictures, an agreement with a specific magazine set up a two-sided contact. In this way, picture editors like Kurt Korff or Stefan Lorant from the *Münchner Illustrierte Zeitung* set certain topics and influenced the style of photography. Editors – in particular Lorant – were interested in well-narrated picture stories, almost akin to film. Thus photographers had to offer series within which a number of pictures had to fulfill certain criteria, for example for the cover and for the opening article. Whether a series of pictures was accepted or rejected was judged by the quality of the main picture. This, in turn, increased the selection of pictures and the need to compensate for differences in quality by means of layout and typography. Here, illustrated magazines profited from the new typography of the *Bauhaus* and in particular from the innovations of Laszlo Moholy-Nagy.[45] Typographic elements were used to enhance the dramatic and sensational effect of the picture; the value of a magazine came to lie more and more in the 'extraordinary and distinctive arrangement' of the photographs.[46]

The most prominent photographer around 1930, Erich Salomon, published 250 series in German and a further 80 series in international magazines between 1928 and 1933.[47] He was one of a new generation of photo-reporters who had no experience with the plate camera and began immediately with much smaller cameras like the Ermanox, produced since 1924, with a light-sensitive lens and, from the end of the 1920s, the Leica with a 36-exposure roll which allowed for quick picture series. Photographs became more immediate, more contingent and more self-reflective: like all other mass media, photography was used to represent its own presence in reality. Its growing importance, for example in politics, became a matter of public display – for instance in Salomon's famous picture story 'Belauschte Staatsgeheimnisse. Enthüllungen eines Photographen', published in the *BIZ* in 1929.[48] A number of photographs showed European statesmen at tables, in dialogues or on the phone, in quite intimate and unstaged moments. Although this story represented in some ways a transposition of the pre-war tradition of photographs of monarchs and sovereigns to the realm of international politics in the democratic era, the critically investigative and somewhat irreverent tone introduced a new element into the equation. The investigative competence of Salomon was underlined twice by the captions of the pictures, quoting from Salomon's notes about what was said at the moment when he took the picture. Modern political events, so the text asserted, deserve a photographer who is a journalist at the same time.

Polarization: Photography and politics

If photography during the First World War served the creation of images of the external enemy, the 1920s saw the photographic construction of enemies

from within, along with different media strategies to express fundamental differences with the political establishment. Photography helped to recast modern politics since it could help reduce political argument to emotional messages. German social documentary photography was rooted in a political polarization that remained obvious after 1918/19. The famous quote of Bertolt Brecht, 'photography in the hands of the bourgeoisie has become a cruel weapon against the truth',[49] reflected a fundamental scepticism with the liberal outlook of the leading illustrated magazines. Thus, the immanent potential of photography as a political weapon was used and developed partly as a result of the political struggle, not merely as a consequence of mass consumer demand. In fact, the use of photographs as a means of transmitting a political message was a very German tradition that ironically grew out of a deep-seated hesitation towards the new medium.

The perceived political value of photography was based on an almost undisputed acceptance of its character as a document of reality. The technical innovations of the 1920s made cameras and pictures a much more common element of public life than before. Likewise, photography in its partisan use by different political camps and social milieus answered a post-war need for orientation; specific visual styles signified and promised a sense of belonging. The explicitly political illustrated magazines, most notably the *Arbeiter-Illustrierte-Zeitung* and the *Illustrierte Beobachter*, were less important in quantity (both were founded in the mid-1920s and reached about 50,000 copies each in the first years) than in terms of a qualitative transition. Both aimed at the construction of a visual reality different from that of the bourgeois periodicals, and combined text, typography, photographs and photomontage towards this end.[50]

Social-documentary photography as such can be traced back to the late nineteenth century when John Thomson in London and Jacob Riis in New York depicted proletarian quarters in order to evoke a willingness for charity or social policy measures. This explicitly political tradition was reinvented in the 1930s by the project of the Farm Security Administration (FSA) in the United States, which employed photographers to document the plight of people in the countryside. Pictures were expected to bring statistics alive as an additional support for social policy programmes. At the same time, European photographers like Henri Cartier-Bresson or Andre Kertesz perfected street photography with smaller and faster cameras. Cartier-Bresson became the leading figure of a new photographic style which blended art prerogatives and photographic technique. His philosophy of the 'decisive moment' was in itself a critique of the quick magazine photos lacking aesthetical quality. After 1936, the international documentation of the Spanish Civil War brought about a demand for dramatic pictures in the French and even more so in the British press.[51] The combination of these different developments gave a decisive boost to the development of what might be called the 'humanitarian' genre of photography – a genre that was (and is) always a potential resource for political instrumentalization.

The period between the First World War and the aftermath of the Second marked a high point in both the political instrumentalization and the professionalization of photography. Its political use has to be viewed in the context of increasing attention to censorship and propaganda, especially – though by no means exclusively – in times of war. In some ways the propagandistic use of photography about the First World War never fully ceased after 1918, but was continued throughout the 1920s as the representation of the war was used to establish politically biased narratives of the German nation. While war movies produced during and immediately after the war used documentary sequences to support the authenticity of their own narrative, movies like *Im Westen nichts Neues* or *Westfront 1918* adopted a semi-documentary style, blended with many iconographic elements from classical tragedies, in order to convey a pacifist message. Less successful, but much more graphic and dramatic was the pacifist visual account of Ernst Friedrich's book *War against War* in 1924, which used photographs originally taken to demonstrate the success of modern surgery.[52] On the other side of the political spectrum, photo books like Franz Schauwecker's *So war der Krieg*, published in 1928 with hitherto unknown pictures from the official war archives, claimed to offer an undistorted view of the war as an argument against pacifism. Photographs even of dead soldiers were no longer hidden, and the image of the war was 'de-mythified' in order to built up a more realistic sense of the need to strengthen the military will.[53] Similarly, Ernst Jünger's anthropology of the modern soldier was based on the idea of a photographic gaze that soldiers had to adopt as a 'second consciousness', distancing themselves from the psychic impacts of violence.[54]

This blending of documentary exactness and political messages was utilized by the Nazis as a means of first acquiring and, after January 1933, consolidating power. The quality of photographs was less important than the visual impact of confrontations, dramatizations and secular religious presentations of the *Führer*. Rooted in a longstanding tradition of visual self-representation by monarchs, which was transferred into the photographic age during the imperial period, the praise of Hitler was a core aim of the *Illustrierter Beobachter*. Propaganda translated a personality cult and the sacral connotations of photography into a successful message of prophecy and promise.[55]

The forced emigration of German photographers and editors after 1933 furnished the press scene in the United States and Great Britain with a highly developed technique for visualizing contemporary life. Although photographs gained recognition earlier there than in Germany, the 1920s witnessed far less innovation than in Germany. The leading American illustrated magazines, the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Collier's*, were still based on text though one-third of the *Post* consisted of photographs and *Collier's* extended the use of illustrations to 1.2 per page.[56] The influence of the *BIZ* editor Kurt Korff on the foundation of *Life* in 1936 was enormous. He is credited with having 'developed the American's awareness of visual impact, of what makes a photograph

exciting'.[57] He made suggestions about format and layout, and pointed to photographers like Arthur Eisenstaedt and Martin Munkacsi, but he died too soon in 1938 to witness the success of his ideas. Similarly, Stefan Lorant, formerly responsible for the *Münchner Illustrierte Zeitung*, was important for the development of the *Picture Post* as the leading photo magazine in Great Britain. Both magazines managed to increase their popularity during the Second World War when the dominance of photos seemed ideally to meet the needs of a broader readership.

Conclusion

The widespread reservations about photography in Germany did not hinder technologically forward-looking political groups from employing this medium for their own purposes. On the contrary, the implementation of photography as a political instrument, which simultaneously utilized and further reinforced modern styles of illustration and illustrated magazines, was introduced into the sphere of German politics above all by extremist parties, the Nazis and the Communists alike. Alongside the relative poverty of images in 'serious' dailies and bourgeois magazines, the rapid growth of the pictorial press and visual media, encouraged by both the far Right and far Left, represented a new social division and marked an increasing polarization of the media landscape.

To what extent did the Nazi takeover mark a new phase in the history of photography and the illustrated press? Certainly the bulk of autobiographical accounts by emigrants such as Gidal have emphasized discontinuity: in this view, the press and photography lost much of their aesthetic and technical quality after 1933. Although this conclusion seems in many ways appropriate, in other ways it clearly is not. During the 1920s and 1930s the use of photographs for visual reportage and for organizing and conveying more general news and political information became a matter of everyday experience and expectation for readers. In this regard the Nazi years did not witness a pronounced change *vis-à-vis* the period before 1933. Indeed, the success and meaning of the Nazis' deployment of photography and visual images were firmly rooted in the developments of the Weimar era. The technical and aesthetic standards of reportage photography that had been established before 1933 were further elaborated and deliberately used for the political self-representation of the regime – and perhaps even more successfully for constructing an image of the 'national community' (*Volksgemeinschaft*). Millions of the photographs produced under the Nazis served not so much propagandistic aims in a narrow sense, but rather as a subtle and ubiquitous form of emotional management through the propagation of specific styles, gestures and body language. Although certain themes remained highly politicized in the wake of the immense polarization of images before 1933, many others were considered to be free of the taint of 'politics'. The abundant representations of 'exotic' scenery, for example, played directly into the

hands of National Socialist racial ideology, *without* explicitly pursuing racist aims. In this way there emerged certain 'grey areas' in which suitably packaged political messages could penetrate the realm of supposedly 'unpolitical' entertainment. By virtue of its usefulness as a political weapon and conveyor of seemingly 'direct' experience, photography became an integral part of political and public life after 1933. But no less important was its omnipresence in the sphere of entertainment, whose infiltration with political values and messages was hardly noticed, let alone controversial.

Illustrated magazines, a core part of an emerging visual culture, served as the primary vehicle for popular and entertaining pictures. Collectively they became a broad field of reference for a plethora of messages, iconographic models and political orientations that were consciously tied to everyday values and notions of style. This field of visual symbols, though cleared long before 1933, was one that the National Socialists assiduously ploughed after acquiring power. At the same time, however, the Nazis also displaced the previously rationalizing character of photography (which Benjamin and Kracauer had criticized) with a new visual style of reverence, adoration, even worship, which became a cornerstone of the Nazis' new edifice of secular religiosity.[58] It is well worth noting that many photographers who were involved in this during the 1930s and 1940s denied any participation or responsibility afterwards. Though such denials are perhaps unsurprising in themselves, the reasons underlying them are nonetheless of considerable interest. For apart from the usual suspicions of disingenuousness, it is quite possible that many photographers lost or indeed never possessed the ability to perceive this subtle insertion of politics into the imagery of entertainment and information – even long before some of them produced the mendacious pictures legitimating discrimination and exclusion, and hiding the devastating violence of the National Socialist regime towards which most of them had become blinded as the first spectators of their own images.[59]

Notes

1 T. N. Gidal, *Deutschland: Beginn des modernen Photojournalismus* (Luzern, 1972). However, a recent publication has documented numerous examples of the long tradition of photojournalism before the 1920s: B. von Dewitz & R. Lebeck, *Kiosk: Eine Geschichte der Fotoreportage 1839–1973* (Göttingen, 2001). See also M. L. Carlebach, *The Origins of Photojournalism in America* (Washington, 1992).

2 Apart from Gidal's earlier work, no in-depth-study has analysed this period of the history of photography as such in its relations to social and political life. There are, however, a few articles and edited volumes that address the topic: U. Eskildsen (ed.), *Fotografie in deutschen Zeitschriften: 1924–1933* (Stuttgart, 1982); B. Weise, 'Fotojournalismus. Erster Weltkrieg – Weimarer Republik', in K. Honnef (ed.), *Deutsche Fotografie: Macht eines Mediums 1870–1970* (Cologne, 1997), pp. 72–87; H. Hardt, 'Negotiated Images: The Rise of Photojournalism in Weimar Germany', in H. Hardt (ed.), *In the Company of Media: Cultural Constructions of Communication,*

1920s–1930s (Boulder, 2000), pp. 60–88; H. Hardt, 'Pictures for the Masses: Photography and the Rise of Popular Magazines in Weimar Germany', *Communication Theory* 8 (1998), pp. 7–29. There is also a recent trend to 'discover' Weimar photographers. See D. Kerbs (ed.), *Der Fotograf Willy Römer 1887–1979: Auf den Straßen von Berlin* (Berlin, 2004).

3 Only a few important studies by historians, like Gerhard Paul's 'Revolt of Images' which deals with the Nazi use of visual media, have set a path which has remained mostly untrodden: G. Paul, *Aufstand der Bilder: Die NS-Propaganda vor 1933* (Berlin, 1990).

4 A recent exception is J. Jäger, *Photographie: Bilder der Neuzeit. Einführung in die Historische Bildforschung* (Tübingen, 2000).

5 W. Benjamin, 'Kleine Geschichte der Fotografie [1931]', in W. Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften. Vol. 3* (Berlin, 1991), pp. 368–85; S. Kracauer, 'Die Photographie [1927]', in S. Kracauer, *Das Ornament der Masse* (Frankfurt/Main, 1971), pp. 21–39.

6 U. Keller, 'Photojournalism around 1900: The Institutionalization of a Mass Medium', in K. Collins (ed.), *Shadow and Substance: Essays on the History of Photography* (Bloomfield Hills, 1990), pp. 283–303; B. Weise, 'Pressefotografie I. Die Anfänge in Deutschland, ausgehend von einer Kritik bisheriger Forschungsansätze', *Fotogeschichte* 9 (1989), no. 31, pp. 15–40 (following parts II–V in nos. 33, 37, 52, 59); D. Halfbrodt, 'Philipp Kester – Bildjournalist: Fotografien und Reportagen 1903–1935', in D. Halfbrodt & U. Pohlmann (eds), *Philipp Kester – Fotojournalist* (Munich, 2003), pp. 8–16, 44–77.

7 H. Ermann, *August Scherl: Dämonie und Erfolg in wilhelminischer Zeit* (Berlin, 1954), p. 188.

8 K. Tenfelde (ed.), *Bilder von Krupp: Fotografie und Geschichte im Industriezeitalter* (Munich, 1993).

9 V. Schwartz, *Spectacular Realities: Early Mass Culture in Fin-de-Siècle Paris* (Berkeley, 1998).

10 See Bernhard Fulda's chapter in this volume (Chapter 11). See also P. Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge, MA, 1996).

11 F. Bösch, 'Das Private wird politisch: Die Sexualität des Politikers und die Massenmedien des ausgehenden 19. Jahrhunderts', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 52 (2004), pp. 781–801.

12 *Zeitungs-Verlag* 5 Mar. 1908, cited after H. Gebhardt, '"Halb kriminalistisch, halb erotisch": Presse für die "niederen Instinkte"', in K. Maase & W. Kaschuba (eds), *Schund und Schönheit: Populäre Kultur um 1900* (Cologne, 2001), p. 186.

13 K. Walter, 'Die Ansichtskarte als visuelles Massenmedium', in Maase & Kaschuba, *Schund*, p. 48.

14 For a short overview see P. Albert & G. Freyel, 'Fotografie und Medien: Die Veränderungen der illustrierten Presse', in M. Frizot (ed.), *Neue Geschichte der Fotografie* (Cologne, 1998), pp. 358–69.

15 Walter, 'Ansichtskarte', p. 55.

16 J. Gaulke, *Die ästhetische Kultur des Kapitalismus* (Berlin, 1909), p. 141.

17 Halfbrodt, 'Kester', p. 42.

18 Weise, 'Fotojournalismus', p. 72.

19 E. Kaufhold, *Heinrich Zille: Photograph der Moderne* (Munich, 1995).

20 P. Knoll, *Die Photographie im Dienst der Presse* (Halle, 1913), p. 3.

21 It even preceded Edward Steichen's famous exhibition of pictorial photography in New York in 1902.

22 E. Kaufhold, *Bilder des Übergangs. Zur Mediengeschichte von Fotografie und Malerei in Deutschland um 1900* (Marburg, 1986).

23 Halfbrodt, 'Kester', p. 53.
24 B. von Dewitz, 'Schießen oder fotografieren? Über fotografierende Soldaten im Ersten Weltkrieg', *Fotogeschichte* 12 (1992), no. 43, pp. 49–59; B. Hüppauf, 'Kriegsfotografie', in W. Michalka (ed.), *Der Erste Weltkrieg: Wirkung, Wahrnehmung und Analyse* (Munich, 1994), pp. 875–909.
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26 Oberzensurstelle des Kriegspresseamtes (ed.), *Zensurbuch für die deutsche Presse* (Berlin, 1917), pp. 14–15.
27 T. Eisermann, 'Wahrheit oder Pflicht? Der Erste Weltkrieg in der deutschen Pressephotographie', in T. Eisermann, D. Maczkiewitz & R. Zühlke (eds), *Von der Macht des Wortes zur Macht der Bilder* (Hamburg, 1998), pp. 147–85; T. Eisermann, *Pressephotographie und Informationskontrolle im Ersten Weltkrieg. Deutschland und Frankreich im Vergleich* (Hamburg, 2000).
28 Weise, 'Fotojournalismus', p. 80.
29 W. Marckwardt, *Die Illustrierten der Weimarer Zeit* (Munich, 1982), pp. 32, 43.
30 Halfbrodt, 'Kester', p. 69.
31 Hardt, 'Negotiated Images', p. 73.
32 Cited after ibid., p. 68.
33 Ibid., p. 67.
34 Weise, 'Fotojournalismus', p. 85.
35 Ibid., p. 79.
36 J. Pultz, 'Strenge und Klarheit. Die Neue Fotografie in den Vereinigten Staaten', in Frizot, *Geschichte*, pp. 476–86.
37 P. Renner, 'The Photograph', in C. Phillips (ed.), *Photography in the Modern Era: European Documents and Critical Writings, 1913–1940* (New York, 1989), p. 165.
38 H. Sieker, 'Absolute Realism: On the Photographs of Albert Renger-Patzsch', in ibid., pp. 113–14.
39 A. Renger-Patzsch, 'Aims', in ibid., p. 105.
40 W. Born, 'Photographic Weltanschauung', in ibid., p. 156.
41 Cited after Hardt, 'Negotiated Images', p. 82.
42 A. Eggebrecht, 'Die Rolle der Photographie', in A. Kümmel & P. Löffler (eds), *Medientheorie 1888–1933: Texte und Kommentare* (Frankfurt/Main, 2002), p. 469.
43 D. Kerbs, W. Uka & B. Walz-Richter (eds), *Die Gleichschaltung der Bilder: Zur Geschichte der Pressefotografie 1930–1936* (Berlin, 1983).
44 Halfbrodt, 'Kester', p. 69.
45 E. M. Hight, *Picturing Modernism: Moholy-Nagy and Photography in Weimar Germany* (Cambridge, MA, 1995).
46 *Literarische Welt*, 19 July 1929, cited after Eskildsen, *Bilder*, p. 10.
47 Weise, 'Fotojournalismus', p. 84.
48 'Belauschte Staatsgeheimnisse', *Berliner Illustrirte Zeitung* 38 (1929), no. 13, p. 234.
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50 H. Willmann, *Geschichte der Arbeiter-Illustrierten Zeitung 1921–1938* (Berlin, 1978); A. Lüdtke, 'Ikonen des Fortschritts: Eine Skizze zu den Bild-Symbolen und politischen Orientierungen in den 1920er und 1930er Jahren in Deutschland', in A. Lüdtke, I. Marszolek & A. v. Saldern (eds), *Amerikanisierung: Traum und Alptraum im Deutschland des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart, 1996), pp. 199–210.
51 See C. Brothers, *War and Photography: A Cultural History* (London, 1998).
52 D. Apel, 'Cultural Battlegrounds: Weimar Photographic Narratives of War', *New German Critique* no. 76 (1999), pp. 49–84.
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54 E. Jünger, 'Photography and the "Second Consciousness"', in Philipps, *Photography,* pp. 207–10.

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56 See D. Reed, *The Popular Magazine in Britain and the United States 1880–1960* (London, 1997), pp. 103–94.

57 Ibid., p. 164.

58 Indispensable: R. Sachsse, *Die Erziehung zum Wegsehen: Fotografie im NS-Staat* (Dresden, 2003); R. Sachsse, 'Fotografie als Staatsdesign: Ein Medium und sein Mißbrauch durch die Macht', in Honnef, *Deutsche Fotografie*, pp. 118–34; B. Weise, 'Pressefotografie als Medium der Propaganda im Presselenkungssystem des Dritten Reiches', in Kerbs, Uka & Walz-Richter, *Gleichschaltung*, pp. 141–55.

59 See B. Hüppauf, 'Emptying the Gaze: Framing Violence through the Viewfinder', *New German Critique* no. 74 (1997), pp. 3–44.

14

'Smut and Trash': Germany's Culture Wars Against Pulp Fiction

Patrick Major

From the late nineteenth century, 'Schmutz und Schund', or 'smut and trash', became the German moral establishment's battle cry against all forms of ephemeral mass literature, from 'penny dreadfuls' and dime novels to comic books and later even films. For its critics, it signified modernity in its worst form, mass culture and *Vermassung* ('massification'), as well as Americanization, or perhaps more accurately 'Anglo-Saxonization', and thus an early form of cultural imperialism. Whereas from the later 1950s such fears were transferred to other media, such as film and television, it was the masses' reading habits which provoked the first waves of conservative cultural pessimism. With the growth of a national school system after 1871 based on the Prussian model, reading was no longer an elite pursuit. Imperial Germany enjoyed some of the highest literacy rates in the world by 1900. Even the working class during the second industrial revolution of the 1880s and 1890s was beginning to find the leisure time to devote to new hobbies and pastimes, including reading for pleasure. New production techniques in newspapers meant that books and magazines, with illustrations, could be produced cheaply enough to sell to a mass readership. Yet rapid industrialization and urbanization generated anxieties among the political classes. The moral guardians of the new nation-state took upon themselves the task of protecting the working class and a youth in danger, as they saw it, of ethical corruption and 'un-Germanization' in the *Kulturnation* of 'thinkers and poets'.[1] Later, in the twentieth century, however, both German dictatorships were to see the possibilities of using popular literature to augment their own propaganda techniques, while still posing as the moral guarantors of the nation against cultural imperialism. Pulp fiction was therefore to become a double-edged sword in the culture wars of the Third Reich and Cold War.

The origins and growth of pulp fiction

Ever since the Enlightenment, German cultural critics had distinguished between 'high' and 'low' culture, alarmed by the 'trivial novel' which began

to flourish in the 1770s. To Enlightenment rationalists, the ideal novel should be didactic and morally uplifting, not simply aesthetically pleasing. Yet the *Trivialroman*, which soon spawned sub-genres such as the knight and robber adventure novels, as well as the more romantically inclined 'garden arbour novel', allegedly pandered simply to the reader's entertainment. Although Enlightenment discourse acknowledged the human need for 'Innerlichkeit', for an interior world of the emotions, many of these early bestsellers were perceived to be privileging the sentimental over the rational. Thus, a hundred years before national unification, literary critics were pillorying kitsch which masqueraded as art, produced, in Schiller's damning words, by 'mediocre scribblers and profit-hungry publishers'.[2] 'True' art instead opened a door onto the metaphysical universe, a secret garden for the educated. The cultural debate thus concealed a dual political agenda, as a new, upwardly mobile elite, the educational bourgeoisie or *Bildungsbürgertum*, peculiarly strong in Germany, sought not only to control a perceived underclass, but also to carve out an area of cultural autonomy from the imperial German state hovering above it.

Early attempts to control this mass readership had foundered on the informal nature of the market. The traditional form of mass literature in the early nineteenth century was the *Kolportageroman*, a cheap, serialized novel – effectively, a printed soap opera – which was hawked from door to door by vendors or *Hausierer*.[3] This informal distribution network had proved particularly difficult for the censor to control. *Kolportage* had reached a peak in the 1870s, but even in 1900 some 26,000 hawkers still operated. Yet by the turn of the century door-to-door sales were being replaced by the *Groschenheft*, so named because it cost a *Groschen* or ten pfennigs (but often in reality 20 or 25 pfennigs). This was usually a large-format, self-contained story, often with a colourized cover, and increasingly retailed at railway stations, tobacconists and street kiosks, thus catering to a more concentrated, urban market. With its high reliance on advertising and mass readerships, it was one of Germany's first encounters with consumer capitalism, growing directly out of the American dime novel of the 1860s, whose mass production and distribution were enabled by the steam rotary press and railway network. German literary entrepreneurs took some time to realize the gap in the market, but by the turn of the century were beginning to buy up the syndication rights to American series, before commissioning their own writers to emulate them. So it was that in 1905 the first German *Groschenhefte* proper began to appear *en masse*, ushering in a contentious decade of mass popular literature on the eve of the First World War. Berlin and Dresden were to establish themselves as the two pre-war pulp capitals, to be joined by Leipzig between the wars, reaching a reputed turnover of around 50 million Reichsmarks a year. After the Second World War there was a Cold War shift westwards of the centres of publishing, first to Austria, then to Hamburg and the Bergisches Land near Cologne with its mammoth Bastei Verlag.

From the outset, the authorship of the novels also became industrialized, written to order by teams of hack writers churning out formulaic copy. Initially these workers simply translated English texts, but gradually an indigenous German grub street evolved. Yet, very often, pulp 'made in Germany' still chose foreign trappings and settings, especially Anglo-Saxon ones, to lend their stories a certain exoticism. The readership was chiefly composed of white- and blue-collar workers.[4] The noted cultural critic, Siegfried Kracauer, indeed viewed pulp as the archetypal reading matter of the petty bourgeoisie, permitting an escape from the awful realization of their socio-economic proletarianization.[5] According to contemporary guidelines for the *John Drake* series, for example:

> Readers should register their fantasies and daydreams, which are not often bourgeois and decent, with rapture. The anonymous forces, the abuse of the person as a pawn in the game, the exploitation of the individual for an idea, and the automatism of power, these are all the battle-lines of ideas against which John Drake has to fight.[6]

Yet it was added that there should be no 'opposition against the *Obrigkeit*', or the powers-that-be – cultural resistance, yes; political opposition, no! Nevertheless, there was always to be a certain tension between the anti-authoritarianism of the heroes and the often rather staid, artificial moral resolutions by the authors, which explains their subversive quality in the eyes of so many critics. It should also be noted that increasing numbers of middle-class boys and girls began to read this brand of mass literature, feeding anxieties about cultural proletarianization of the bourgeoisie.

A number of sub-genres can be discerned. Among the earliest popular sellers was the Wild West pulp, often based around a real figure such as Buffalo Bill and purporting to be his memoirs. Thus, the early Dresden pulp tycoon Alwin Eichler launched *Buffalo Bill* in 1905, reaching weekly runs of 80,000 and syndicating his stories across Europe, but eventually over-expanding and ending in financial ruin. (Eichler committed suicide in 1912.) Other westerns traded on the popularity of Fenimore Cooper's Leatherstocking stories of the 1840s or Karl May's Winnetou novels of the 1880s; or they were new inventions such as Texas Jack or Billy Jenkins, the latter a real-life German circus cowboy, Erich Rosenthal, whose strip appeared in the 1930s, but, like Alaska Jim the Canadian mountie, was banned in 1939. In the Federal Republic there was then a brief Red Indian pulp revival in the late 1940s and 1950s, providing frequent opportunities for brawls and scalpings which were to offend the censor. It was also in the Wild West pulp that the *Groschenheft* became most heavily linked with Americanization, and where the popular German imagination formed a romanticized image of the United States as a land of endless opportunity.

The detective pulp was another early favourite, but usually with more British affinities. It grew out of the popular taste for court scandal in the

Revolverpresse emerging in the 1880s, as well as the global phenomenon of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes in the following decade (so much so that the *Börsenblatt des deutschen Buchhandels* complained of 'sherlockism', a 'literary disease similar to Werther mania or romantic byronism'),[7] and later the Edgar Wallace thrillers. This spawned a whole series of anglophile pulps, such as *Lord Percy vom Excentric Club*, or borrowed from the hard-boiled American stereotype, starting with Nick Carter, but spun off to include *Nat Pinkerton, der König der Detectivs* (1907), or the inter-war *Frank Allan, der Rächer der Enterbten*. After 1945 this variant famously turned to humour with the much-read comic strip *Nick Knatterton*, drawn by Manfred Schmidt and appearing in *Quick* magazine from 1950. As Schmidt explained, 'I undertook to parody this most primitive of all narrative forms so thoroughly that people would lose their pleasure in the moronic, speech-bubble-filled literature aimed at illiterates.'[8] But the readership loved it, and Schmidt found himself drawing the eccentric, plus-foured detective for the next 12 years. Knatterton's wry wit also allowed a gentle critique of the early Federal Republic, such as the detective's encounter with a 'native' American chief thinly disguised as Chancellor Adenauer (whose high cheekbones lent themselves to the role). Referring to the latter's controversial rearmament policy and corresponding public disapproval, Knatterton learns: 'He wants to unbury the hatchet even against his tribe's will'.[9] Yet, most popular of all was *G-Man Jerry Cotton*, the 1954 invention of the Bastei Verlag in Bergisch Gladbach. Cotton's former East German creator broke with 'British' convention, whose foggy London streets had become *de rigueur*, by writing a hard-boiled detective series set in New York (although tellingly he had never visited the USA, familiar with it only through other pulp fiction).[10] Cotton was to offend the literary Left, who suggested that this anti-hero exhibited many of the traits of the fascistoid, authoritarian personality posited by Adorno.[11] Nevertheless, *Jerry Cotton* reached astounding circulation figures of several hundred thousand weekly, was translated into various languages (apart from English!) and can lay claim to being one of Germany's greatest mass media successes.

A further popular dime novel variant was the science fiction pulp. *Der Luftpirat und sein lenkbares Luftschiff*, an early hit, coincided with the Zeppelin mania of 1908, starring a Nemo-like captain, with flights into space and the Moon. High-tech was often allied to imperialism, allowing the European powers to police the far-flung corners of the world. Certainly the most popular inter-war utopian series was *Sun Koh: Der Erbe von Atlantis* (1933–36), whose quest for vestiges of the world's great mythical civilizations bore some affinities with National Socialist cultural atavism, but whose author, Lok Myler (aka Paul Müller), increasingly hid behind banal adventure themes.[12] The real twentieth-century German science fiction bestseller, however, was *Perry Rhodan*, launched in 1961 by Munich's Moewig Verlag, as a conscious successor to Sun Koh. By the 1980s the series had reached syndicated annual global sales of 800 million, outstripping even *Jerry Cotton*, to become the biggest science

fiction publication of all time. But Rhodan was likewise to be dogged by accusations of crypto-fascism, with alien species acting as 'Untermenschen' in a galactic colonial spree by the superior 'Terraner' in their 'Solar Imperium'.[13] The popular science writer Robert Jungk, for instance, accused Rhodan the 'grand administrator' of acting as a substitute *Führer* figure in the minds of readers.[14] Certainly, this became a common feature of cultural-studies analyses of the Rhodan phenomenon, although if this was fascism, it was a hybridized form with strong American overtones.

One of the key features of *Groschenhefte*, and one of the reasons why cultural purists objected to them so much, was their ability to fill niches in the market and adapt to their readership. Pulps also consciously appealed to girls, in particular so-called *Backfisch* stories in which adolescent girls were endlessly getting into and out of scrapes. Emmy von Rohden's *Der Trotzkopf* (1885) had set the tone for a generation of well-intentioned, if somewhat patronizing, girl-power stories, and in 1909 Eichler began its *Prinzessin Übermut* series which ran until 1923. The forthright heroines of these stories were, nevertheless, too much for some observers. According to one 'they are enough to make any upstanding man sick and can at best ensnare such youngsters as have already succumbed to every lust and consequently care to see in the woman only the instrument of satisfaction of the sensual urges.'[15] This was also the recurring problem with the erotic dime novel which, by today's standards, would appear positively tame, but at the *fin de siècle* was seen as decidedly risqué. Titles such as *Mädchenhändler*, *Liebfrauenromane* and *Tropenglut und Leidenschaft*, as well as illustrations showing a pair of bare female legs, although more titillating than pornographic, were likely to provoke the intervention of the censor.

Moral panics and censorship from Empire to Third Reich

So much for the thematic scope of the German dime novel; what of its treatment by the moral establishment? The first concerted attempts at control came in the 1890s, in the wake of the parliamentary debate surrounding the Lex Heinze. In connection with a Berlin sex scandal, Kaiser Wilhelm II had called in 1891 for more stringent legislation against the dissemination of 'depraving' texts. The Catholic Centre Party piloted the legislation through the Reichstag, and there were calls for the censorship of artistic works which included nudity, although in the final act of 1900 many of its artistic clauses were dropped, representing something of a defeat for the would-be censors.[16] Young people were nevertheless still part of its purview, and paragraph 184 of the new criminal code made it illegal to retail immoral texts to youths under 16. In parallel, but in particular in the decade before the First World War as *Groschenhefte* became established, a series of reform groups emerged, often including a high proportion of schoolteachers, welfare workers and church leaders, with many women members, but also more liberal voices not

normally associated with knee-jerk reaction.[17] These engaged in a mixture of direct action and lobbying, seeking to test the boundaries of civil society, but were often at loggerheads with a more permissive state control apparatus undergoing a process, as Lenman summarizes, 'of transition away from the traditional "police-state" attitude of German governments towards the mass of the population, its amusements and moral welfare', toward a more pragmatic stance. 'Rather than any liberalization of official outlook, the principal reason for this appears to have been the sheer scale of the problem, resulting from modern technology and marketing methods, which threatened to explode control mechanisms'.[18]

Pedagogues had from an early stage been organized into youth literature commissions, which in 1893 were amalgamated into an umbrella body which published their *Youth Book Watch* as an unofficial index of dangerous texts. Parallel church bodies included the Catholic Barromäus Association, as well as individual parish committees, but these were complemented by liberal humanist organizations such as the Dürer League (1901) which targeted parents. The latter was particularly concerned to reach 'decent' working-class families: 'Do you let your children drink schnapps? The lumpen proletarian does that perhaps, the corrupt, the conscienceless or even the stupid, but certainly not the sensible man or the alert woman', who wanted a little more for their children.[19] In 1910 the German Poets' Memorial Foundation even launched a travelling anti-*Schund* exhibition. A number of tirelessly campaigning individuals also emerged, prominent among them Otto von Leixner (1847–1907), a literary historian and lay preacher in Berlin who coined the term 'smut and trash' itself.

In 1891 Leixner founded the Association for People's Literature to reform the reading habits of the lower orders, and in 1904 the People's League for Combatting Filth in Word and Image, in conjunction with his ally Pastor Friedrich Bohn. Its ulterior target was clearly the legislators in Berlin. Leixner bemoaned the attacks on the upper tiers of society to be found in popular literature, as well as what he viewed as the glamorization of criminality, reminding supporters '*that we are living in a domestic war situation*'.[20] 'I have observed young people before the kiosk displays, seen the immature glint in the eyes of immature lads, the flickering fire from the deep-sunken eyes of half-dead young men. Half-embarrassed or knowing looks from young girls.'[21] Yet, although Leixner could be seen as a conservative, and although some cultural critics perceived a danger of social democratization in the pulp novel, there were also critics on the Left. Heinrich Wolgast (1860–1920), an elementary schoolteacher with SPD and pacifist leanings, was not afraid to criticize Hohenzollern hagiography and colonialism in pulp fiction and, with long experience on the regional pedagogical committees of Hamburg, headed a juvenile literary movement for artistic didacticism, aimed particularly at middle-class boys. Wolgast wished in fact to take advantage of the mass circulation of popular literature but to inject this with 'classical' texts from the likes of

Theodor Storm and Emile Zola. His classic 1896 *Das Elend unserer Jugendliteratur* thus advocated a 'juvenile text in poetic form'; in other words, even popular literature should be part of an aesthetic movement.[22]

Such aestheticism, however, aroused the ire of patriotic conservatives, and a form of 'smut and trash' civil war broke out among reformers. In the vanguard for the Right was Baden local historian and grammar schoolteacher Karl Brunner, and his journal *Die Hochwacht* (1910). Brunner soon became the official voice of the Berlin police on matters of youth protection. His ally, Wilhelm Kotzde, accused the 'Hamburgers' around Wolgast of making themselves 'guilty of a dangerous one-sidedness. In their fight against exploitation the ethical, religious and patriotic ideas have suffered rather than being cultivated.'[23] A pamphlet war ensued, in which conservatives called for a 'German culture full of strength and manliness', unlike the social democratic 'aesthete culture'.[24] Religion and fatherland were to be the watchwords of youth. In 1911 the conservatives then formed yet another umbrella organization, the *Zentralstelle für Volkswohlfahrt*, or Central Agency for Popular Welfare, which co-ordinated a whole network of interested parties, including teachers and church leaders.

The concerns of most moral guardians revolved around a number of endlessly repeated issues. Sex, unsurprisingly, proved to be one of the first taboos. Bourgeois commentators feared that undue eroticism would lead to a weakening of the body politic, for instance if onanism ('Selbstschwächung') were to threaten the healthy popular instinct to reproduce. There was consequently a social Darwinian, *völkisch* subtext to the debates, in which the nurture of the nation was at stake. The language of the reformers medicalized the issue, warning of brutalization ('Verrohung') and intellectual pestilence, and of fevered imaginations leading to stultification and even suicide among an alienated lost generation. Criminality was another favourite hunting ground, with claims of copy-cat crimes from pulp stories being perpetrated by misled youths, championed especially by the criminologist Albert Hellwig.[25] One 16-year old schoolboy was thus frequently supposed to have strangled a comrade in imitation of a *Texas Jack* story. Indeed, delinquents called before magistrates soon learned to invoke the nefarious influences of Sherlock Holmes and others as mitigating circumstances, in the hope of a more lenient sentence. The protection of youth was becoming part of a civil society network of self-appointed youth professionals, complete with their own journals, associations and charities, going beyond the amateur church-led initiatives to something perceptibly more modern.

In the absence of outright bans, reformers tried instead to channel the reading desires of the masses into healthier channels, into so-called 'volkstümliche Kultur' ('folkloristic culture'). The result of these efforts were illustrated family journals such as *Der gute Kamerad* (1887 onwards) or *Das Kränzchen* (1888 onwards), which included stories by acceptable authors such as Karl May, or the later 'Bunte Bücher' series by the Enßlin Verlag, aimed at 12–14

year-olds with a selection of authors such as E.T.A. Hoffmann or the explorer Sven Hedin, or its junior counterpart 'Bunte Jugendbücher' which favoured Fenimore Cooper and Defoe as well as German authors such as Gerstäcker, attempting to secure a readership by subscription. Librarians joined the struggle, opening reading rooms with 'healthy' texts. In 1892 the Association for the Dissemination of Good Folkloristic Texts was founded in Berlin. Furthermore, from 1905 the German Poets' Memorial Foundation issued its 'Fount of Health' which acted as an index of 'safe' texts. The publisher Reclam also introduced its slot-machines for cheap copies of the classics, the precursor of the famous yellow series. Indeed, the reformers clearly hoped that improvement did not have to be unprofitable. Yet their success was limited: the books were often seen as dull and pedantic, and young people often preferred to stick with the 'hard stuff' of Anglo-Saxon provenance.

The lobby movement built up enough momentum to put a so-called 'shopwindow bill' before the Bundesrat in 1913, aimed at curbing sales to minors, but the pulp barons were effectively saved by the bell when war broke out in 1914.[26] Yet shortly before the First World War a number of local school bans were achieved, including the ritual burning of pulp fiction in some schoolyards. In Stettin in October 1910 one school offered an amnesty for pulp in return for 'good people's writings'. And although the Prussian Landtag in July 1909 had rejected a motion to alter the criminal code to deal with dime novels, in a so-called 'Lex-Nick-Carter', there were some regional legislative breakthroughs. In 1908 the Bavarian state issued decrees against trash literature, and the following year Württemberg banned the sale of pulps at railway stations. When war did come, some *Groschenhefte* bought themselves a stay of execution by a judicious dose of jingoism. Yet despite the frantic efforts of publishers to jump on the patriotic bandwagon, rewriting stories to bring back their heroes from overseas to enlist in the armed forces, the growing martial law operating in wartime Germany saw more and more bans. Thus, in December 1915 the military governor of Münster province banned 135 series, to be followed by other army commanders, and even though in 1917 a number were allowed back, paper shortages saw a wholesale cull of the wartime *Groschenheft*.[27]

Following the revival of many of these series after the defeat in 1918, there were further attempts at control, even in the supposedly more liberal atmosphere of the Weimar Republic. In 1920 opponents of inferior literature (and film) banded together in 'youth rings', concerned at what they perceived to be the growing permissiveness of mass society. The campaign took on more national proportions.[28] Finally, in December 1926, a 'Bill for the Protection of Youth against Trashy and Smutty Literature' was passed in the Reichstag by a large majority, pioneered by Reinhard Mumm, a former military pastor and deputy of the ultra-conservative DNVP, who also set the cinema in his sights.[29] For Mumm, *Schund* was 'Jewish Manchesterism', part of the international big business which threatened German values.[30] Yet this was

a broad coalition of cultural warriors, including liberals from the DDP, such as Minister of the Interior, Külz, who explained that the bill had not been drafted by reactionaries, but was 'above party'.[31] In the event, it was highly partisan, supported by the DNVP, Centre and various fringe rightist parties, including the National Socialists, but opposed by the SPD and KPD, and some liberals. The law envisaged the establishment of eight-strong panels in each of the *Länder*, to be composed of representatives of the publishing industry as well as youth and educational experts, which could appeal to an *Oberprüfstelle* in Leipzig, but which pointedly froze private lobbyists out of the process. A balance appeared to have been struck therefore between *Staatsräson* and morality, as well as between the perceived cosmopolitanism of Berlin and the more conservative provinces, mediated through local government and the business community.

Pulp's next serious encounter with the censor occurred, inevitably, under the Nazis, who radically shifted the parameters of censorship on all fronts. Anti-*Schund* sentiments neatly chimed in with much of their popular anti-capitalism. Already in the spring of 1933, during the so-called 'national awakening', book burnings took place in which any literature offensive to National Socialism was dubbed 'Schund'. Even highbrow authors such as Tucholsky and Ossietzky, and above all Remarque, were consigned to the flames on 10 May as 'Schmutz und Schund' literati, alongside progressive children's authors such as Erich Kästner. As the local press reported on local repeats of the book-burnings, 'the day on which German youth decided to open the fight on trash and smut deserves to go down in the history of the national movement.'[32] Nevertheless, as we have seen above with Sun Koh and some of the western pulps, popular literature did not disappear overnight in the Third Reich. Yet, in 1935 the Reich Propaganda Ministry went over to pre-censorship, and in the autumn of 1939, as war loomed, banned all pulps with English-sounding heroes. The industry responded with a process of self-*Gleichschaltung* by 'Germanizing' several protagonists, so that Tom Shark became Wolf Greif, for instance, and the Indian Old Crow ingeniously became 'Alt-Grau'. Jingoistic themes were revived, such as First World War flying-ace stories or colonial tales from South West Africa, while the National Socialist Party itself sponsored three new youth publishing houses to cater for martial and colonial themes. As the journal *Kriegsbücherei* announced in December 1939:

> It shall serve the self-conscious pride of German youth and the role-modelling of their growing sense of sacrifice, and their deep ties with the men at the front. The magazines, with their iron content and their soldierly, no-nonsense language, heed the demands of the active youth of our age![33]

Indeed, it could be argued that, rather than suppressing *Schund*, much of mainstream Nazi propaganda adopted some of the comic-book stereotypes

of what it purported to detest. *Wehrmacht* publications such as *Signal* thus romanticized the lonely fighter, while the party press resorted to cartoon-like visions of the dying army at Stalingrad.[34] This brand of militaristic pulp was to have a further lease of life in the Federal Republic from 1957 on, in the notorious *Landser* magazines, whose celebrations of Second World War battles were seen as a chief culprit in the failure of the post-fascist state to engage in meaningful *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*, or 'coming to terms with the past'.[35]

Pulp and censorship in divided Germany

Following total defeat in 1945, paper shortages and Allied military government scrutiny ensured that there were relatively few new magazines in the immediate post-war years in the western occupation zones. Instead, second-hand copies passed from hand-to-hand, and Austria became the main source of imported popular publishing in the late 1940s and 1950s, producing approximately 300 series from 1946 to 1966. But the young Federal Republic began to notice a surge in the *Groschenheft* market in the mid-1950s, sparking a renewed effort to curb the phenomenon. This occurred in parallel with the debate about comics in the USA, lobbied by groups such as the American Legion and the Catholic National Organization for Decent Literature, but above all the educational psychiatrist Dr Fredric Wertham, which culminated in a Senate investigation in 1954 into horror comics and the dangers of juvenile crime. The result was a voluntary industry self-regulator, the Comics Code Authority, which literally applied its seal of approval.[36] These debates were widely reported in West Germany. Yet the Federal Republic pursued an arguably even more interventionist approach, born of its previous experiences. As early as 1949 a 'Schmutz und Schund' law had been called for in the Bundestag, and in June 1953 the Law on the Dissemination of Youth-Endangering Literature was duly passed, which would index 'texts which by their nature morally endanger children and adolescents', 'above all immoral, brutalizing works or texts inciting to violence, criminality or racial hatred as well as glorifying war'.[37] A Federal Vetting Office (*Bundesprüfstelle*) was then set up in 1954. In its statute it stated, rather revealingly, that it 'proceeds from a firm morality which represents the ethical core of occidental culture'.[38] (In the 1950s the 'occident' or *Abendland* represented a novel hybrid of post-Nazi spiritual values and transatlantic anti-communist affinities.) And, like the USA, the West German comics industry set up its own watchdog, the *Freiwillige Selbstkontrolle für Serienbilder* (FSS) (Voluntary Self-Regulator for Comicstrips) in 1955, which exerted a form of pre-censorship.

The big pulps in the FRG, such as *Jerry Cotton*, went to great lengths to cultivate a good working relationship with the Vetting Office, to the extent that Bastei-Verlag employed its former head as their own house lector.[39] As before the First World War, private lobby groups continued to pressurize young people to abandon bad reading habits, and in the 1950s amnesties occurred for

suspect reading, in which a 'wholesome' book could be traded for a pulp, and in some cases there were renewed ritual book-burnings or even book-burials. It is also clear that there was no shortage of upright citizens willing to denounce what they saw as cases of 'Unkultur' to the Interior Ministry, although most of these were ignored.[40] The height of this anti-comics campaign was reached in 1956–57, with violence gradually replacing sex as the main concern. Yet, as in the United States, from this point on it was film, television and rock 'n' roll which became the chief lightning conductors of public concerns about the corruption of youth. It can also be safely stated that from the 1960s, those interested in the moral welfare of young West Germans tended to adopt a more liberal attitude to the dangers of Americanization, viewing delinquency as an outgrowth of the difficulties and disorientation of adolescence rather than the end of civilization as they knew it.[41]

Apart from Heinrich Wolgast's pre-1914 aesthetes' movement, the anti-*Schund* movement had been firmly in the hands of cultural conservatives until the 1950s. The Social Democrats and the Communists had voted against the 1953 law, for fear that it would be used for political censorship. But the Left was not absent from debates on mass culture, and ever more so from the 1960s and 1970s onwards, when comics and pulps became viewed as arch-commodities of late-industrial capitalism. The spiritual fathers of this cultural criticism were undoubtedly Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer of the Frankfurt School, who, in their wartime American exile, had published their pessimistic diagnosis of the 'culture industry'.[42] In it they accused American corporate interests of creating a 'circle of manipulation and retroactive need' in which art took on an economic rather than aesthetic function, and in which Kantian critical judgement was replaced by predigested formulae. Although they were most critical of Hollywood cinema, and to a lesser extent jazz music, a whole generation of Germanists and PhD students emerged in the 1960s and 1970s who set about applying critical theory to pulp, paying particular attention to the social psychology of reading mass literature. Adorno's 'authoritarian personality' thesis was applied, for instance, to the best-selling inter-war novels of Hedwig Courths-Mahler, suggesting that sentimentalized notions of nobility bred deep-seated deference mechanisms.[43] Soppy romances were analyzed as instances of 'repressive tolerance'.[44] Pulp was guilty of creating a false consciousness or a compensation culture for the alienation caused by 'late capitalism' with its reliance on consumerism. It bred fatalism and an acceptance of the status quo.[45] Despite some experiments, the 'sixty-eight' generation in the Federal Republic subsequently developed at best an ambivalent love-hate attitude to American popular culture, praising it when it served to batter down the entrenched cultural conservative values of the older generation, but rehearsing an anti-globalization discourse which rejected mass culture as a veiled form of US cultural imperialism.

In communist East Germany the official line was likewise to decry pulp fiction as an affliction of Western capitalism. Especially before the building of

the Berlin Wall in 1961, the open border in Berlin allowed young people to buy large quantities of pulp in West Berlin and import it into the GDR, despite the best efforts of the East German People's Police. Indeed, on occasion, the confiscators were themselves found to be reading forbidden fruit. The Communist Party's Institute of Social Sciences sponsored a number of pseudo-scholarly studies of popular publishing, which diagnosed pulp as part of the West's cultural malaise.[46] Besides the usual suspects of militarism and anti-communism, the party objected to what it saw as neo-Nazi tendencies in vocabulary and ideology, 'the enthusiastic depiction of SS and Gestapo methods, transferred to the milieu of as yet unpolitical gangsterism'.[47] This fuelled the GDR's anti-fascist continuity thesis between the horrors of National Socialism and the perceived 're-fascistization' of the new West German state. Yet there was another layer to the conspiracy theory, including NATO's psychological warfare: 'Thus criminal and gangster literature, although mostly posing as utterly "unpolitical", becomes a key component in the ideological warmongering of German imperialism and its overall programme of unleashing an atomic war.'[48] Critiques also claimed that pulp literature was a useful vehicle for the Western notion of personal freedom (for which, read self-deluding 'bourgeois individualism'). Later studies suggested that something akin to a cultural cold civil war was under way, in which it was the GDR's duty to fight on behalf of a humanist fifth column against the 'corporate cultural hostility of the state monopoly ruling system'.[49]

Nevertheless, within the GDR the party had already become wise to the propagandistic possibilities of popular fiction in influencing young minds. Certainly, before the building of the Wall this had a pre-emptive function to counter readily available Western literature; a direct ban in the East would only have led to greater demand for Western products. Part of it followed the peculiar mirror logic of the Cold War: if the West had something, the East should have its own socialist version. Thus, after Rolf Kauka's hugely popular *Fix und Foxi* comic-strip appeared in the FRG in 1953, starring two diminutive foxes, the GDR responded with *Fix und Fax*, two socialist mice.[50] In a number of East German magazines satirical comic strips began to appear in the 1950s, in which Adenauer would appear as a treacherous Red Indian (again!), working for the 'great white father in Washington'.[51] The satirical magazine *Frischer Wind* (1946–54) and its successor *Eulenspiegel* (from 1954) aimed more at an adult audience, and included political strips.[52] Most significantly, a home-grown comic, *Mosaik*, was introduced in 1955, not dissimilar from Disney in graphical style (although for a long time the GDR frowned on speech bubbles as 'anti-culture'), with its cartoon heroes, the Digedags, succeeded in the 1970s by the equally mischievous Abrafaxe. With a starting circulation of 120,000, by 1989 it had reached a million and was clearly read by adults as well as children. Yet *Mosaik* was not without its embroilments with the Communist establishment. Under pressure from the Free German Youth leadership, its house publisher, Neues Leben, explained

how it was going to make *Mosaik* less humanist (in other words, neutralist) and more socialist, using the space race:

> The Sputniks have finally demonstrated that in the socialist social order the creative forces of mankind are unfolding in unforeseen dimensions. Dig and Dag will experience, for instance, the formation of the solar system, the development of organic life, construction, significance and function of artificial satellites, rockets with photon drive etc., and with them the reader will understand that the materialist explanation of the world leaves no place for religious superstition.[53]

And indeed, at the end of 1958 *Mosaik* produced its space series, in which its diminutive heroes visited the planet Neos, which bore striking similarities to an idealized GDR.[54] The Digedags also travelled through history, helping to liberate slaves from their ancient oppressors, or to the other side of the iron curtain to explore the 'Wild West'. Other popular magazines, such as *ATZE*, continued to celebrate the 'achievement' of the building of the Wall even twenty years after the fact, or to deny the existence of environmental problems under 'real existing socialism'.[55] Nonetheless, *Mosaik*'s creator, Hannes Hegenbarth, walked a tightrope with the GDR's cultural apparatchiks, who constantly accused the periodical of insufficient partisanship, or, like some journalist critics, of crass primitiveness.[56] Orthodox communist newspapers constantly sniped against what they regarded as a 'Disneyfied' fifth column of liberalization throughout the GDR's lifetime. Yet there was very little scope for a genuinely critical *samizdat* popular literature, and it was only after 1989 that underground writers and artists could pull from their top drawers the sorts of savage satire that the polit-bureaucracy had perhaps feared.[57]

Conclusion

In summary, therefore, one can state that the study of Germany's culture wars against mass literature exhibit striking continuities between regimes and epochs which were perhaps not apparent at the time. The East German system evinced a cultural conservatism which would not have been out of place in imperial Germany. The Anglo-American heroes and settings of many of the pulps provided a taste of cosmopolitanism which was starkly at odds with both militaristic nationalism and state socialism. Smut-and-trash literature therefore had an internationalizing effect on a public during a period when a young nation-state and a Cold War demi-state were both trying to assert their identity during the onset of high modernity with all its fragmenting side-effects. It is striking, moreover, that even during the international confrontations of the Cold War, both Germanys shared a basic cultural conservatism, at least until the 1960s, when the West German Federal Republic more consciously embraced popular culture. Yet it seems clear that

any model representing popular culture as simply 'Americanization' does not do justice to the intricacies of the culture wars being fought, which were just as often domestic battles as campaigns against invasion from outside.

Nazi Germany also posed as the cultural protector of Germanic values against Western decadence. Yet, the National Socialists were perhaps the least convincing cultural snobs of the three, exhibiting a high degree of philistinism, and engaging in a bastardization of the language, as Victor Klemperer, the noted Jewish philologist, instantly recognized. The heroic stereotype was a staple of Nazi propaganda, requiring its own vocabulary.[58] It has indeed been mischievously suggested that Hitler himself embodied the superhero qualities of a German Captain America, implying that inter-war Germany had been subconsciously acclimatized to the leader figure, not least by mass culture.[59] It was later noted by educated consumers of East German propaganda that they too believed that the regime was speaking the language of the gutter, especially in its press.[60] The mass communication of the two German dictatorships, both of which launched extensive campaigns against the pernicious influence of popular literature, thrived on the kind of stereotyping and simplification essential to pulp, and so, perhaps unwittingly, already spoke the purple prose of the bestseller. Consequently, it is important to understand not only the ways in which the state could influence the cultural sphere, but also the reverse process of popular acculturation of the state itself.

Any history of censorship is, of course, likely to tell us more about the cultural elites in any given system than about the recipients of the censored texts. Many of the interests represented in the moral establishment were traditional, such as the church or the humanist education system, and collided with the modernizing, liberal capitalist instincts of the state. Reading between the lines, one might also see a psycho-sexual dimension, especially as so many of the censorship themes touched on sex and violence, in which the collective repression of imperial German society was giving way to a more individualized, and therefore modern, readership. Yet there is a danger of reading mainstream German culture and its tastes solely through the actions of its cultural busybodies, and therefore as truistically reactionary and intolerant. We should perhaps recognize instead that the bulk of Germans were absorbing a heady mixture of technological and libidinous fantasies, alongside highly sympathetic images of 'the enemy' as it was to emerge in the two world wars. A cultural generation gap was to emerge, in which, for instance, young Germans in the Third Reich were to be witnessed identifying with the casual chic of British dandy culture or the hot rhythms of American jazz culture. Again, in the Cold War, embracement of popular culture from the West became a marker of cultural resistance against the stuffy mores of an older generation. Thus, in the context of regimes that attempted to control the everyday behaviour and tastes of their citizens, popular culture became necessarily political. When politicians realized that they could not beat popular culture because of its ubiquity, they attempted to channel it into safer currents.

Nevertheless, because there always remained a globalized reference point to a 'bigger and better' pulp abroad, it was often a strategy that backfired against pulp 'Made in Germany'.

Yet, historians of popular culture need to move beyond the political to the subtleties of genre history in order to understand the very close intrinsic relationship between text and reader. This is especially true of pulp fiction, as dime novels and comic-books were tailor-made for their readers and specifically designed to promote a spending habit. Although moral crusaders often saw pulp fiction as a Trojan horse through which various cultural diseases could be 'injected' into the bloodstream of the body politic by malicious agencies, the texts may more frequently have reflected values which already existed within German society. The censor often lags behind public opinion, so that popular fiction can be a useful indicator of popular attitudes and obsessions, and is a route into *Alltagsgeschichte* or 'the history of everyday life'. Again, this interpretation of German popular reading habits presents a more 'normalized' image of the German reader than many previous political histories have suggested. Twentieth-century German culture was immensely more variegated, cosmopolitan and modern than those bent on uncovering a cultural German *Sonderweg* would admit. And although social psychology is clearly treacherous terrain, bearing a huge burden of proof for the alleged alienation of the modern individual under capitalism, it would be a great pity if the critical theorists were to ignore the prime function of pulp: reading for fun!

Notes

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3 R. Schenda, *Die Lesestoffe der Kleinen Leute: Studien zur populären Literatur im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Munich, 1976), pp. 11–15.
4 P. Nusser, *Romane für die Unterschicht: Groschenhefte und ihre Leser,* 5th edn. (Tübingen, 1981), p. 8.
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6 I. Jekeli, 'Erregte Zeiten: Schmutz und Schund im Kaiserreich', *Parapluie* 3 (1997/98), p. 6.
7 From June 1908: H.J. Galle, *Groschenhefte: Die Geschichte der deutschen Trivialliteratur* (Frankfurt a.M. and Berlin, 1988), p. 29.
8 M. Schmidt, *Nick Knatterton: Alle aufregenden Abenteuer des berühmten Meisterdetektivs* (Oldenburg, 1983), p. 5.
9 Ibid., p. 32.
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11 P. Wesolleck, *Jerry Cotton oder 'Die verschwiegene Welt': Untersuchungen zur Trivialliteratur am Beispiel einer Heftromanserie* (Bonn, 1976), pp. 310–13.
12 H. Galle & M.R. Bauer (eds), *Sun Koh oder der Erbe von Atlantis und andere deutsche Supermänner: Paul Alfred Müller, alias Lok Myler, alias Freder van Holk – Leben und Werk* (SSI, 2003). An ideologically sanitized version was reissued in the Federal Republic.
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32 *Pforzheimer Rundschau*, 19 June 1933.
33 Galle, *Groschenhefte*, p. 133.
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